



# St. James News

Equipping and Empowering Families and Students through Christ

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## A Look at the Seasons of Christmas and Advent

*The following is an introduction to provided from Concordia Publishing House to their worship materials for the Advent and Christmas season. Though congregational tradition will not necessarily agree, it's good to be informed of good practices.*

Advent is the first season in the “Time of Christmas.” The calendar of the Church begins with Advent (from Latin *adventus*, which means “coming into”), a four-week period of preparation before Christmas. The Savior’s birth is second in importance only to His resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Traditionally, Advent encompasses a spiritual preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus Christ at Christmas. The Western Church sets the season of Advent as beginning on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Day, or the Sunday that falls closest to November 30, and lasting through the daytime services of December 24. Christmas begins with the evening services (Vigil) on December 24 and extends through the twelve days of Christmas. The Christmas octave (eight days) includes the Nativity on December 25; Feast of St. Stephen, the first Martyr, on December 26, the day after Christmas; the Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, on December 27; the Feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28; and the Festival of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus on January 1.

## Advent

“Behold, your king is coming to you.” —Matthew 21:5

Like the season of Lent, Advent affords the penitent a time of preparation for celebrating the fulfillment of the Father’s plan of salvation in the incarnation of His Son, Jesus. Though Advent is not as “deep” as the preparatory season of Lent, the Church does

exercise some restraint in the Divine Service during Advent.

- In keeping with the tone of repentance, the Hymn of Praise/Gloria in Excelsis (the angel’s proclamation at the birth of Christ) is omitted from the Divine Service, even on the Sundays in Advent.
- Responses appointed for Advent may replace the general responses.
- Depending on local custom, the organ playing may be restrained before and after the service.
- In many places, flowers are not used at the altar.
- Christmas hymns and carols are not sung until Christmas Eve.

## Paraments

The traditional color of Advent, and that which still best fits the historic pericopes of Advent, is violet/purple, which is both the color of repentance and the royal color of the coming King—the two main themes of the One-Year series. When possible, the paraments used in Advent should be different from those used in Lent, as the symbols used to express the character of the seasons are quite different. The only symbol common to both is the Agnus Dei, the Lamb of God.

Since the adoption of Vatican II reforms of the liturgy by much of the Western Church, the use of blue as the color of Advent has been adopted as well by many Lutheran congregations. There is a historic tradition of Advent blue among the Swedish Lutheran churches. Blue suggests the color of anticipation and hope, a theme that is seen in the readings of the Three-Year series. A congregation

should be attentive to use the paraments that carry the theme of the lectionary being used.

### *The Advent Wreath*

The Advent wreath is an arrangement of four candles, originally used in home devotions to count the weeks of Advent and symbolize the approach of the Coming One. The traditional Advent wreath featured white candles, but the custom of using seasonally colored candles has become common. If the church's Advent paraments are blue, four blue candles should be used. If the paraments are violet/purple, then three violet/purple candles should be used, with a rose candle included as part of the set. The rose candle is placed in the Advent wreath at the three o'clock position, and the candles are then lit from week to week starting with the violet candle in the nine o'clock position. The rose candle is lit on *Gaudete* ("Rejoice"), the Third Sunday in Advent in the historic lectionary. With its colored candles, the Advent wreath is better displayed in the nave than in the chancel.

"The use of the 'Christ Candle' . . . is definitely to be discouraged. First, it should be discouraged because it is an importation of the idea of the paschal candle; second, because the Advent wreath belongs to the season preparatory for Christmas, and on the festival of our Savior's birth the wreath should be removed from the chancel or nave." Removal of the Advent wreath for the services of Christmas allows the two seasons to be well-defined and distinct.

### *Decorations During Advent*

The decoration of the church during Advent should not be too elaborate. A problem has arisen in many congregations when the cultural celebration of Christmas in the season between Thanksgiving and Christmas is followed. The season of Advent helps us prepare for something greater. While not as austere as Lent, Advent does call for some restraint in deference to the "tidings of great joy" that will be proclaimed on the Nativity and during the season of Christmas. Candles as decoration should be kept to a minimum. Greenery may be hung but should remain undecorated. Banners may be hung but should be simple in style and decoration in keeping

with the mood of the season. If the press of obligations makes it absolutely necessary to erect the tree before the Fourth Sunday in Advent, the lights should not be turned on until after service on the Fourth Sunday to help guide and highlight the transition from Advent to Christmas.

### **Christmas**

"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."

—C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

The Christmas season follows as the fulfillment of the Advent expectation. The long-expected first coming (the Nativity) and birth in Bethlehem is the promise and guarantee of the second and final coming on the Last Day (see Propers for the First Sunday in Advent).

Christmas is the celebration of the victory of the True Light born into the world dark in sin. God Himself visits us in our darkness. Heaven and earth are to be renewed by God's coming.

The Gloria in Excelsis is the preferred Hymn of Praise. The restraint that characterized Advent is lifted. Second only to Easter, Christmas is observed in great joy and with high celebration.

### *Decorations*

The **color** of Christmas and its season is white. Seasonal flowers and greens may decorate the area around the altar.

Beginning with the Christmas Eve service, the Advent wreath has been removed. A crib or crèche may be set up in the nave; it remains in the church through Epiphany, when the Magi join in the adoration of the Christ Child.

Because of the association of light with Christmas, one of the most effective decorations of the church building is the candle. If candelabra were removed during Advent, these are returned. If extra candelabra or candle stands are available, these can be placed around the altar. Candles on the windowsills or candle stands lining the center aisle of the nave would be fitting.

Much could be said about decorations appropriate for use in the church and the need to exclude anything that is gaudy or cheap. Also, it should be kept in mind when decorating the church that the altar always remains as the center of attention and focus, and anything that fights for that attention or distracts the focus should not be used.

## The Colors of the Church Year

As the seasons change in God's creation, so do the colors of the landscape. Color is God's way of filling his world with beauty and giving pleasure to those who live in this colorful world. The same is the case for the changing seasons of the Church Year. For centuries, Christians have used color in services on the Lord's Day to emphasize the redemptive action of God through His Son. Also known as liturgical colors, each color complements the message of the season, reinforcing a specific chapter in the life of our Lord and His Church, retold annually by the church calendar. The paraments, vestments, and banners provide decorative accent to the services in the church and help promote a reverent presence before the blessings of God's care for His creatures through Word and Sacrament. Each color has a particular purpose and meaning. The following is a description them.

### Blue

Blue is a contemporary color increasingly used by many congregations during the season of Advent. Advent, a penitential preparatory time of waiting and watching, communicates the message of hope. Blue, the color of the sky, helps convey that powerful message. Our Christian faith rests on the hope that Christ, who came in history assuming our flesh, will also return on the last day of time from that same blue sky He ascended long ago. Blue has taken the place in some congregations for the historical color of Advent, purple.

### Rose

Rose represents joy. It is the liturgical color worn on Gaudete Sunday, which is the third Sunday of Advent, as well as Laetare Sunday, which is the fourth Sunday of Lent. The idea behind the color rose is a lightening of the color violet. For centuries, violet, or purple, has

had associations with royalty or wealth. Dye for cloth was expensive, and purple was just about the deepest color, requiring the most dye. In the Bible, Lydia was "a seller of purple" (Acts 16). Just before Jesus was taken out to be crucified for being "the King of the Jews," the soldiers mocked Him, and, besides putting a crown of thorns on his head, put a purple robe around Him. Violet, or purple is used in penitential seasons for this reason. But, on these "Rejoice" Sundays, some of the darkest dye is removed. The color left is rose. It is a reminder that, even in the darkest of days and seasons, Christians still have reason to rejoice. The penitential veil is lifted and the Scripture lessons point us to the comfort that the Word and Sacraments provide amidst the struggles of life.

### White

White is the color of purity, completeness, and light reinforcing the message of joy in the birth of the long-awaited Messiah. The color White along with Gold is used for the most festive observances in our liturgical calendar. White is the appointed color for such festive Sundays as Christmas and its twelve days; Epiphany (Jan. 6) and the first Sunday following it, observed as the Baptism of Our Lord; the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, also known as Transfiguration Sunday; Holy Trinity Sunday; and twenty-one minor festivals and occasions within the church year.

Also, the theme for the "great fifty days" of Easter is supported by the use of white. This color, used primarily during these Sundays, assists in bearing the message that "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Christ's triumph from the grave on the day of the Resurrection is the cause for our rejoicing. His purity before His Father becomes our purity. White reinforces that message of joy. In addition to its use during Eastertide,

### Green

Green is used for the seasons of Epiphany and Trinity since it has traditionally been considered the color of life, the symbol of vegetation and growing things. Therefore, it represents our growth in faith as we follow Jesus.

Epiphany's message of Christ's revelation to the Gentiles along with the season's traditional emphasis on extending Christ's kingdom through missions, calls for the use of green—the color symbolic of growth.

The Sundays following Pentecost, observed as "the time of the church," share a somewhat similar theme as that of Epiphany. Affectionately called the season of the "green meadow," no doubt due to the fact of green being the established color, these Sundays also emphasize the subject of growth.

Green is a neutral color, but there is nothing colorless about our need to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. That's why the "green meadow" time of the church year is so lengthy

### **Black**

Black is seen very seldom during the year. The calendar calls for its use only twice; on Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. There's no mistaking the message that this sober color gives. Black is the absence of light. Good Friday, or Black Friday in combination with Ash Wednesday, calls for sober reflection on the cost of our redemption. Without Christ's sacrifice on the day the sky turned dark and hid the light of the sun, there would be no bright Light of Christ to live in, nor new life in Christ to enjoy.

### **Scarlet**

Scarlet is used by some congregations during Holy Week; from Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday. It is a color worth investing in because it stands in contrast to the traditional red that is used on Festival Sundays such as Reformation Sunday and Feast Days. Scarlet's use during the somber days of Holy Week help to offer a different message. Scarlet is a color anciently associated with the passion . . . the color of blood.

### **Purple**

Purple is a penitential color, in contrast to a festive one. It is appropriately used during Lent and, still in many parishes, during the season of Advent. The forty days of Lent, including the six Sundays that fall during this season, use this deep, rich color which has come to represent somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer.

Violet or purple was a very cherished and expensive color in the world Jesus lived. The dye used to make the color was painstakingly acquired by massaging the neck of a Mediterranean shellfish that secreted a special fluid. It was therefore afforded only by the rich and worn most exclusively by the royalty.

Jesus, the king of the Jews, wore a purple robe only once. As the soldiers mocked and tormented Him, the Scriptures record they placed on Him a "purple

garment" in order to ridicule Him and belittle the claim that He was a monarch.

Therefore, purple is used during this penitential season of Lent as a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn he endured, and the subsequent sacrifice he made for our eternal salvation. Purple reminds Christians of their daily need to humbly give attention to leading a life of repentance.

### **Gold**

Gold is the optional color for Easter Sunday. It is also the suggested color for the last Sunday in the church year when that day is observed as Christ the King Sunday. Its use may not be popular, but its emphasis is undeniable. Gold represents value and worth. The golden festival of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the event that gives our lives meaning and worth. He is worthy of our praise as we adorn His altar with the color of splendor.

### **Red**

Red is a power color and is appropriate for use on Pentecost Sunday. On this day we remember the power and fire of "the Lord and Giver of Life," who revealed himself as the promised one. The color red communicates the motif of strength— strength and power the Holy Spirit gives in order for God's people to call on the name of Jesus Christ and share that powerful name with others.

There is no question that red is a compelling festive color. Consequently, it serves well as the traditional color for the heroic martyrs of the church. The Lutheran Service Book church year calendar provides propers for martyr festivals and recommends red as the appropriate color. Their red blood shed in defense of the Gospel offers perpetual encouragement for God's people to be resolute in living the faith.

Additional uses of red are Reformation Sunday; Holy Cross Day (September 14); on such festive occasions as dedications, anniversaries, and festive days celebrating the office of the public ministry, such as ordination and installation.

Dear Friends,

In the season of Advent the Church looks forward to celebrating Jesus' first arrival at Christmas, as well as anticipating our Lord's second arrival on the Last Day. There are fun activities and traditions for this time of year, like Elf on a Shelf, crafting paper snowflakes, Shepherd on the Search, etc., that bring family together. At St. James Lutheran Church our emphasis is on abiding in God's Word and maintaining a family devotional life, so here is an idea to add to your family traditions: a Nativity treasure hunt.

What you will need: a Nativity set, a Bible, this article's schedule, candy of choice (optional), a hymnal (optional).

Here's how it works. Our family has the slightly-inaccurate-yet-indestructible wooden Melissa & Doug™ children's Nativity set. It has the usual Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, angel, shepherds, and wise men. Following the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany reading schedule provided below, the parents hide the figures from the evening's readings somewhere in the house so that even the littlest kid can find them. Tailor this to the ages of your children. Our family also hides a piece of chocolate for each child along with the figures. We do the hiding immediately before devotions start, and once the devotions and readings are done, we release the kids to find the figures we've hidden (and yes, the chocolate). The figures are brought back to be placed on the family altar shelf (or place where the manger scene will be on Christmas) where they sit until replaced by the next set of characters. Finally, they get to eat the candy(!), we have a discussion of the reading, then we end with prayers and a song or two.

While this activity could be done every night (you'd just need a daily reading schedule), my suggestion is for about twice a week (more during Christmas week) as provided below. Some of the readings could include a character not normally part of a Nativity set, such as the prophet Isaiah. We try to be creative and use what we have available for those characters (like using a shepherd as a substitute). The kids enjoy the excitement of a treasure hunt set up by Mom & Dad, and the whole family benefits from reading the Bible together, building a deeper

appreciation for the season of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

Following is a suggested reading schedule for the 2021-22 season, with potential characters to hunt for (hide one or all of them), and song ideas from the Lutheran Service Book (LSB) or to listen to online.

**Sunday, 28 Nov.** ~ The Annunciation of John the Baptist: Luke 1:5-25. Look for Zechariah (use one of the wise men), Elizabeth (we've taped a lady face over another wise man; we're cheap), Angel Gabriel. LSB 344 *On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry*.

**Wednesday, 1 Dec.** ~ The Annunciation of Jesus: Luke 1:26-28. Look for Mary, Angel Gabriel. LSB 356 *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*.

**Sunday, 5 Dec.** ~ The Angel Visits Joseph: Matt. 1:18-25. Look for Joseph, Angel Gabriel, Isaiah. LSB 863 *Our Father, by Whose Name* / 517 *By All Your Saints*, stanzas 1, 14, 3.

**Wednesday, 8 Dec.** ~ Mary Visits Elizabeth: Luke 1:39-45. Look for Mary, Elizabeth. LSB 385 *From East to West*.

**Sunday, 12 Dec.** ~ Mary's Song: Luke 1:46-56. Look for Mary, Elizabeth. LSB 248 *The Magnificat*.

**Wednesday, 15 Dec.** ~ The Birth of John the Baptist: Luke 1:57-66. Look for Baby John (use Baby Jesus with a covered halo), Elizabeth, Zechariah. LSB 346 *When All the World Was Cursed*.

**Sunday, 19 Dec.** ~ Zechariah's Song: Luke 1:67-80. Look for Zechariah, Elizabeth, Baby John. LSB 226 *The Benedictus* / 936 *Sing Praise to the God of Israel*.

**Wednesday, 22 Dec.** ~ The Journey to Bethlehem: Luke 2:1-6. Look for Joseph, Mary, Donkey, Manger (no Baby Jesus yet!). LSB 343 *Prepare the Royal Highway*.

**Christmas Night/Morning, 24/25 Dec.** ~ The Birth of Jesus: Luke 2:1-7. Look for Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, stable animals. LSB 359 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* / 361 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* / 363 *Silent Night*... pick your favorites that sing about Jesus' birth.

**Christmas Day, 25 Dec.** ~ The Shepherds and the Angels: Luke 2:8-20. Look for Shepherd(s), sheep, Angel Gabriel, angels, Mary, Baby Jesus, Joseph, stable animals. LSB 358 *From Heaven Above* / 366 *It Came upon the Midnight Clear*... pick your favorites that sing with the angels.

**Saturday, 1 Jan.** ~ The Circumcision and Name of Jesus: Luke 2:21; Gen 17. Look for Joseph, Mary, Baby Jesus. LSB 900 *Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love* / 896 *Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year*.

**Thursday, 6 Jan.** ~ Epiphany: Matt. 2:1-12. Look for the Three Wise Men, King Herod (a shepherd with taped on crown and angry face), Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the Christmas Star. LSB 394 *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise* / 397 *As With Gladness Men of Old*.

My hope is that this idea will inspire you to think of ways you can open up the Scriptures more in your homes this new church year. The Nativity Treasure Hunt has been a tradition in our family for several years now, and the kids are excited about it every time. And, while treats are involved in small quantities, it has definitely helped them appreciate the deeper themes that Christmas is all about: the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who brings us the forgiveness of sins through His holy, precious blood and death, and wins for us eternal life through His glorious resurrection.

I wish you a blessed Advent full of God's Word. Peace to you in Christ! ~ Vicar Klumpp

*Our Parish Nurse*

## BLESSINGS FOR YOUR WINTER AND HOLIDAY SEASON,

“AND THERE WERE”..... three little words, but with so much meaning. No question, no doubt, scripture makes clear that is what happened at the time of Jesus birth. Do you recall where this is written? In the book of LUKE. Chapter 2. Luke here says in verse 8-“and there were Shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.”

How clear and concise are we when we communicate with others? Do people know what we mean when we say things? Makes me stop and think about what I say and how I say things. Not by any means comparing us to scripture, but it clearly got my attention and should all of us in our communication with others. It certainly is not easy to articulate, especially when in a discussion that may initiate strong emotions. Holiday season often brings out the difference in opinions when family members gather. It is not easy to remember “good will to all”, but taking a deep breath and changing the subject may make the difference in a verbal battle vs. a friendly disagreement.

A reminder about washing your hands frequently- hand sanitizer is ok, but should not be depended upon all the time. I have heard that after every 4<sup>th</sup> time of using the hand sanitizer, you should wash thoroughly with soap and water.

Drink plenty of water, get the rest you need and exercise the best you can in this winter weather. These are the primarily best actions to keep the viruses and respiratory illnesses away.

Ending the year well and starting the new year is important to your over all health. Do not leave estranged relationships unresolved. Who have you planned to call or talk to-but still haven't done it? Take care of it and you will feel so much better. Not having regrets is the most freeing feeling. Wishing God's richest blessings for this Christmas season and for the coming New Year!

Your Parish Nurse,  
*Darlene*

**Our Church Records**

Church Attendance

Sunday, October 31	100 & 134
Sunday, November 7	118 & 90
Sunday, November 14	92 & 175
Sunday, November 21	101 & 127

### Communion Attendance

Sunday, October 31	82
Sunday, November 7	88
Sunday, November 21	79

### Funerals

**Roland Krohn** on October 30, 2021. He was called to his eternal rest on October 25, 2021 at the age of 81 years, 1 month and 7 days.

**Tim Munson** on November 1, 2021. He was called to his eternal rest on October 28, 2021 at the age of 69 years, 10 months and 24 days.

### Baptism

**Evan Roland Dischinger** infant son of Richard and Kelsey Dischinger on November 7, 2021 by Pastor Loder. He was born on March 5, 2021. His sponsors are Karisa Justen and Gino Marchetti II.

### Transfer Out

**Al & Kathy Uecker** to St. John's Lutheran Church, Buffalo, MN on November 8, 2021.

### New Members

**Richard & Kelsey Dischinger** and their son Evan joined our church on November 7, 2021. If you see them at service, please introduce yourself.

1. Fill in the blank: "And the Word was made \_\_\_\_\_ and dwelt among us."
2. Which is the only gospel of the four to give an account of the birth of John the Baptist?
3. What kind of animal does the New Testament say Mary rode from Nazareth to Bethlehem?
4. Whom did King Herod call to ascertain the time that the star of Bethlehem appeared?
5. Who "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart"?

**Answers:** 1. Flesh (John 1:14) 2. Luke 1) 3. It doesn't 4. The Magi or wise men (Matthew 2:7) 5. Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 3:19)



### **December 2021**

December 5

#### **"Because We Belong"**

The world tells us we must be useful in order to belong, but that's now how God sees us. (Luke 1:5-25)

December 12

#### **"When You're Expecting"**

The season of Advent is about living in the middle of a story that is still unfolding, between what is already and what is yet to come. (Luke 1:20-80)

December 19

#### **"Charlie Brown Christmas Tree"**

The drama surrounding the first airing of "The Charlie Brown Christmas Special" 56 years ago, against all odds, it gave viewers the true story of Christmas and doomed aluminum Christmas trees to near extinction. (Luke 2:1-15)

December 26

#### **"Rite of Passage"** (Luke 2:21-40)

✝ **Bible Trivia** ✝

See answers below

*Lutheran Women's*  
*Missionary League*



The November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the LWML began with Bible study, “Merciful Care,” led by Pastor Loder. Our value in life comes from where God has placed us. God gives and we respond, living as servants to others. Our neighbor is our responsibility, as Jesus instructs us to share His love and merciful care.



10 round, white dining tables have arrived to be used in the Fellowship Hall. A suggestion was made to use gifts from family funeral reception donations to help fund this purchase. A thank-offering was received which will be included in the Christmas gifts to St. James staff and additional mission donations. A report was given by Viann, chairman of the fall chicken dinner and country store. A donation of 10% of the net profits will be split between Love Inc. and St. John’s sandwich ministry.

*All the women of the congregation are invited to join the LWML at their Christmas meeting on Monday, December 6 in the school. The evening will begin with a meal at 6:00 PM followed by Christmas activities and entertainment.*

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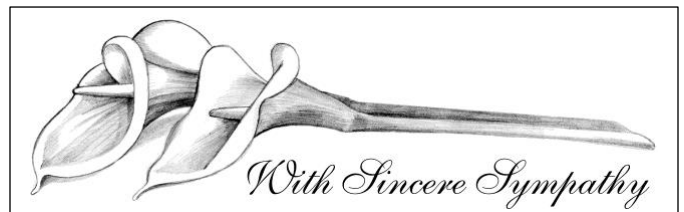
Newly elected officers will serve beginning in January: Barb Schmieg, president, Diane Borg, treasurer, Bonnie Engel and Angela Gabbert, executive board. Additional positions will be appointed by the executive board. Updated funeral luncheon committee lists were distributed for approval.

***Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.***

**Romans 12:13.**

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

An updated funeral committees list beginning November 2021 has been completed and is available on the tract table in the choir room or the church office entry. Committee chairmen may also find a copy in their church mailbox. Committee 1 has already served so Committee 2 is up next. All our members are asked about once a year to serve at a member’s funeral. Please check to see what committee you are on and be prepared to help out when called. If your telephone number is incorrect, please call your chairman or the church office with your new number.







**December:** Matty Lanars (2), Mary Jo Painschab (2), Rick Baumann (3), Jaime Diers (4), Christina Gruenhagen (4), Mary Marschel (4), Jessica Stueven (4), Bernard Marketon (5), Carol Zander (5), Steve Bonnick (6), Keenan Zillmer (6), Tyler Miller (7), Ethan Peterson (7), Christopher Main (8), Ashley Nowak (8), Cora Glessing (10), Kathryn Main (10), Kaitlyn Marschel (10), Holly Zillmer (10), Kathryn Lutter (11), Ruth Oestreich (12), Kurt Bobrowske (15), Cody Jones (16), Ruth Latzig (16), Loren Stueven (17), Ben Halverson (18), Bonnie Kowbow (18), Jennifer Bistodeau (19), Dennis Lauzer (19), Marie Longfors (19), Jesse Cardinal (20), Joey Drusch (20), Joshua Stillwell (20), Connie Gruenhagen (21), Darrin Blanchette (22), Amy Fredricks (23), Justin Yager (23), Nicole Bobrowske (24), Travis Kotila (24), Syrillis Reek (24), Brain Barth (25), Jacob Boss (26), David Doster (26), Grace Marketon (26), Amanda Skiles (26), Xander Loch (27), Nickolas Main (27), Donna Munson (27), Alexander Ogle (27), Jody Strohschein (27), Dorothy Anderson (28), Daniel Doster (28), DuWayne Latzig (29), David Oestreich (30), Bridey Boese (31), Josiah Hagemann (31), Scott Salmela (31).

**January:** Madison Linder (1), Braxton Gulso (9), Clayton Helinske (2), Dennis Klammer (2), Aaron Stueven (2), Connie Zander (2), Nancy Diers (3), Crystal Jones (3), Wayne Koosman (5), Christine Hassa (7), Jennifer Wikoff (7), Dale Burau (8), Lois Strohschein (8), Mark Luchsinger (10), Isabella Wellnitz (10), Hannah Bobrowske (11), Amy Kruetter (11), Aleah Lanars (11), Steven Comstock Sr. (12), Erma Hechsel (12), Tanner Koch (13), Keith Koosman (15), Lois Engel (15), Rhonda Frey (15), Noreen Horsch (15), Kelly Marketon (15), Daniel Schmiege (15), Donna Carlson (16), Wayne Diers (16), Steve Koosman (16), Abigail Main (18), Bruce Burau (19), Terry Thorson (19), Maggie Miller (20), Jessica Morrissette (20), Abby Niesen (20), Connie Koosman (22), Kaia Olson (22), Owen Davis (23), Lois Oltmann (23), Kylie Dahlin (24), Myra Laway (24), Kelly Wiegand (24), Abbie Bobrowske (25), Christine Cardinal (25), Johnny Heber (25), Susan Bonnick (26), Randy Gruenhagen (26), Carson Hirsch (26), Beth Koch (26), Nathan Marschel (26), Paulette Goepfert (27), Kylah Zillmer (27), Brian Borg (28), Jeffrey Diers (28), Jennifer Power (28), Jenna Brabec (29), Russell Miller (29), Mike Thorson (29), Kalvin Olson (30), Doris Schendel (30), Bruce Dahlin (31).

12/1 Jerry & Michelle Brady  
 12/1 Christena & Ben Dickens  
 12/6 Robert & Doris Schendel  
 12/7 Bradley & Dellarae Brabec  
 12/13 Travis & Sara Kotila  
 12/20 Dan & Seena Glessing  
 12/27 Dwane & Linsa Kotila  
 12/30 Barry & Teresa Schmiege  
 12/31 Joel & Stacy Hirsch  
 1/1 Tom & Ruth Young  
 1/15 Donald & Noreen Horsch  
 1/21 Michael & Kathryn Main  
 1/27 Wayne & Connie Koosman

## The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Newsletter article – December 2021

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great physician of both body and soul, healed a man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1–6). Dropsy is a paradoxical ailment, with an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body is over inflated with fluid, a craving that, when indulged, served not to ease but to feed the disease.

And so, if a man drinks a great deal but is never filled, he sees a doctor to inquire about what ails him, what is wrong with his body, and how to remedy it. For that is not thirst but a disease (Seneca, *Consolation to His Mother Helvia*, 11.3).

But if the owner of five couches goes looking for 10, or the owner of 10 tables buys up as many again, and even though he has plenty of land and money, he remains unsatisfied and desires yet more, losing sleep and always in discontent, does he not also require a physician to diagnose the cause of this distress?

For this is not want or lack, it's a disease (Aristippus, quoted in Plutarch, *Love of Wealth*, 524b). As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, “we may rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man: For the more the one is swollen with excess of water, the more he thirsts; so also the other: The more he abounds in riches . . . the more eagerly he desires them” (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 4:135). Both require physicians. Both require diagnosis and medicine applied from the outside to the inward being. For these are not desires to be fulfilled but diseases to be cured.

This is why our Lord instructs us to not to be consumed by money. “No one can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and money” (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We think, “If I just had this much then I would be happy.”

But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, happiness evades us. The desire for more is never satisfied. It demands our constant energy, either in procuring more or protecting what we already have. When this happens, God, in His mercy, shows us that the money that He has given is no longer serving us, but we it. We have another master.

To overcome this, we need a physician's diagnosis and a physician's remedy. And our Lord Jesus Christ, our great physician of both body and soul, applies His Word to us as He did to the man healed of dropsy. He shows us how we have put our fear, love, and trust in our money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things.

In essence, He says, “Stop chasing after these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. You cannot have two masters. Repent!” And in seeing our great error, we are sorry that we have not fully feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. And, in the mercy and grace that He earned for us on the cross, He takes away this sin, restores us to health, and bids us to live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has given? Do we simply go back to our old ways? “By no means!” St. Paul says (Rom. 3:31; 6:2). We do not just go back to the old ways, the ways that lead us to death. No, we live a new life, a life filled with the grace, mercy and love of God toward us. And God's great mercy, grace, and love toward is so abundant that it overflows and pours out onto those around us.

So we no longer hoard money and possessions. We no longer scrape and crawl our way to amass more. We give to those around us, as God in Christ has given to us. We press our money and possessions into service for those who need it: our family, our society and our church. For money is God's gift to us to serve us and others. Not the other way around. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.