



LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS

+ December 2021 +

On the Cover:

Annunciation

Annetto Pullicino

1723

Life in Christ

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The Three Advents

We are entering the season of Advent. Advent is simply the Latin word for 'Coming'. It is a period of waiting, where we watch for the coming of Christ in the flesh, that is, in His Incarnation on Christmas Day.

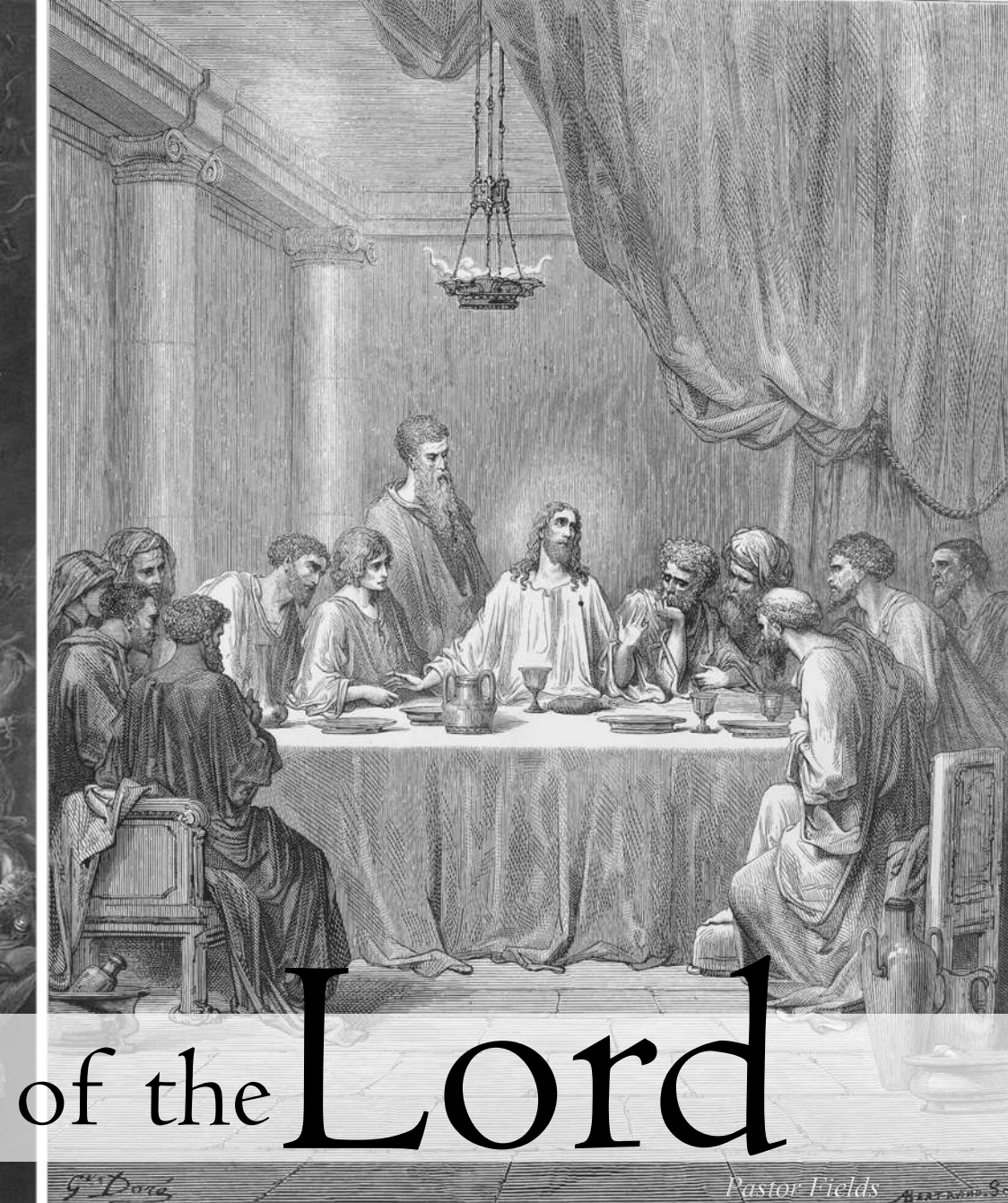
Much could be said of Advent, of its many customs and traditions. Of the candles lit during its four week celebration and the wreaths decorated during this time; of the saints' days traditionally observed by Lutherans during this season, that of St. Andrew, St. Lucy, and St. Nicholas, all with their own joyful traditions.

But we should first and above all remember the most ancient remembrances of Advent: that of the three 'comings' of Christ.

The first will be a surprise to no-one: the coming of Christ in the flesh on Christmas Day. We await this day, for on this day, heaven and earth are joined; *mercy and justice kiss one*

another, and God is made man, that man might be made God. It is both the beginning and end of our salvation as Christians, for though our forgiveness is bought upon the cross, what that forgiveness entails, that is, what it leads to, is shown to us in the Incarnation, that we shall *be like God*, for we shall *see Him as He is*.

Traditionally, the 'second coming' of Christ celebrated during Advent is, well, the Second Coming, when the Lord will come to *judge the living and the dead*, and to invite the faithful into everlasting joy, but the disbelieving into everlasting darkness. Advent, therefore, is not merely a big preparation for the fun of Christmas, but a season of penance, for we should *work out our faith with trembling*, for we *know not the day nor the hour*. Let us *watch therefore*, that we may be prepared for the coming of our God, that we may not be caught without oil, but may *enter into*



of the Lord

the joy of our master.

So what is the third coming? Though we do not think of it very often, Christ's third coming is the one we enjoy the most often: His coming in the bread and the wine, that is, in the Holy Sacrament of Communion. Advent is a time to devote ourselves to the weekly, regular, coming of our Lord to us under the humble elements of the most common earthly goods. He comes to us in humility, bread to become His body. Wine to become His blood. In humility He comes to us.

Therefore, as we approach Christmas, let us be humble, knowing no pride, for once He came to offer atonement for all. And every week He comes to proffer the forgiveness of sins. And in the end, He shall come to take all the forgiven with Him to the perfect halls of heaven.

Oh ye Christian, bow down, for your Lord comes to you, lowly, that He might make you great. *Blessed be his name.* ■

Keeping Watch

Pastor Fields

Advent is a season devoted to 'keeping watch' and 'holding vigil' for the coming of the Lord. Traditionally, people would not put up any Christmas decorations until the week of Christmas. The season of Advent had its own 'decorative motif': that of candles. During Advent, Lutherans would place candles throughout the house, and, come nightfall, light them all to symbolize that the household was staying awake and waiting in expectation for Christ's return. The custom, traditionally understood to have been invented by Martin Luther, of having an Advent Wreath is a reflection of the larger practice of illuminating one's house with candles during the season of Advent.

I will admit that this is a custom that I am particularly fond of. In my youth, during Advent, my mother would not leave any electric lighting on after nightfall. Rather, the house would be filled with several dozen candles, burning on every table and surface. Nothing made one wait with greater expectation for Christmas Day than ending every night surrounded by the flickering natural light of myriad candles.

So whether you wish to fill your house with a hundred candles and tempt the fire-department, or if you find it more fitting to keep an Advent wreath and light a just a few candles in the evening, this ancient custom is a wonderful observance, and brings ever to mind the quiet expectation of the Coming of the Lord for which we all await.■



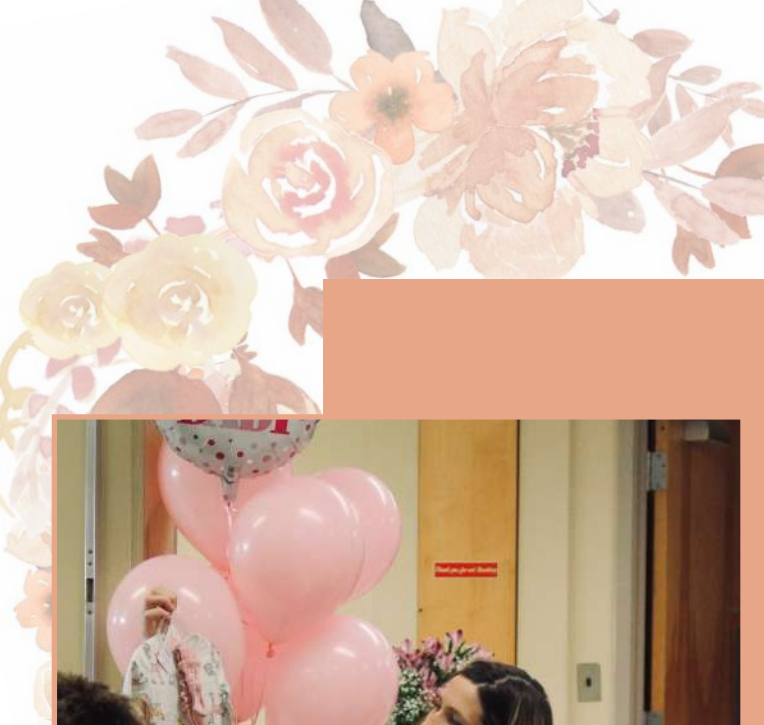


Pastor Fields, Sister Sara, Raija Stebbins, Seraphine, Rev. Christopher Clark

On November 14, the Lord bore Seraphine Ophelia Fields through the waters of Holy Baptism, into the new life of His Son. Christ Lutheran, along with the whole Body of Christ, welcomes Seraphine into the number of her saints. We rejoice with Pastor, Sister Sara, and Elysia, and look forward to watching Seraphine grow up unto Life Everlasting!

*All who believe and are baptized
Shall see the Lord's salvation;
Baptized into the death of Christ,
They are a new creation.
Through Christ's redemption they shall stand
Among the glorious, heav'nly band
Of ev'ry tribe and nation.
(LSB 601, St. 1)■*

baptism
of Seraphine Ophelia

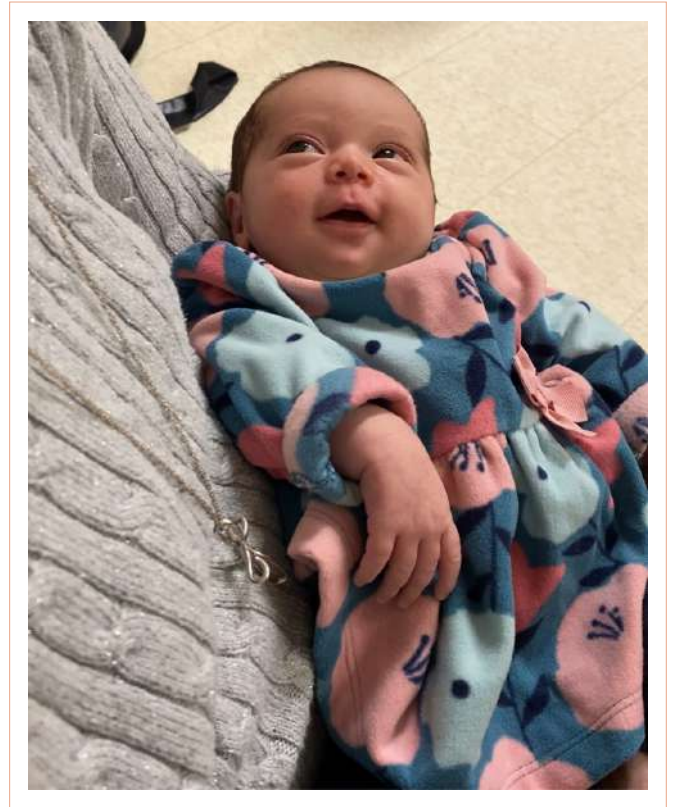


Baby Shower

for SERAPHINE OPHELIA

With our newest little Lutheran finally here, the ladies of Christ Lutheran celebrated God's gift of life with a baby shower on November 13th! Complete with a delicious brunch and game of Baby Bingo, the shower was rounded off with Sister Sara opening a mountain of generous gifts.

Many thanks to Allison Agent, Mary Atchley, and all who helped to arrange this lovely morning, and thank you to all who came to welcome Seraphine Fields into our Christ Lutheran family! ■



Traditional



Christmas Food

Pastor Fields

There are many Christmas foods Americans consider traditional, from yams to turkey to ham to, well, whatever you make at Christmas. However, there are many Christmas dishes that are traditional for Christian reasons. They may not be good reasons, but at least they are entertaining reasons. So let us look at a few, and at least be entertained, if not delighted, during the coming season of Christmas!

Roast Goose

Goose is probably the most universal Christmas dish. In America, it was replaced by turkey, due to the fact that America has turkeys. But originally, people ate goose on Christmas. The reasoning for this was that geese only lay eggs once a year (in contrast to chickens), and Christ's ministry, according to three of the four Gospels, lasted one year. Therefore, to celebrate the one year work of Christ that would be expounded throughout the coming Church Year, a goose would be eaten, since it gave birth but once a year.

Panettone

A simple Italian bread with fruit mixed up in it; in much of Europe it is associated with Christmas. Legend has it that a couple could not afford to be married, so the lady invented this delicious yet cheap bread to sell to raise money for their wedding. It was a success, and they were married. Not long after, it was seen as a symbol not just of marriage, but of the marriage of the divine and human nature in Christ. Panettone can be found in most Costco's around this time of year. Give it a try.

Buche de Noel

A French desert, meaning a 'Christmas log,' is simply a thin chocolate cake that gets rolled up so that it looks like a log of wood. Oftentimes, it is decorated with many intricate confections that look like holly leaves and mushrooms, and is often covered in powdered sugar to look like snow. It is meant to represent the fire of the home being kept lit late into the night in expectation of the coming of the infant Lord.

Lamb

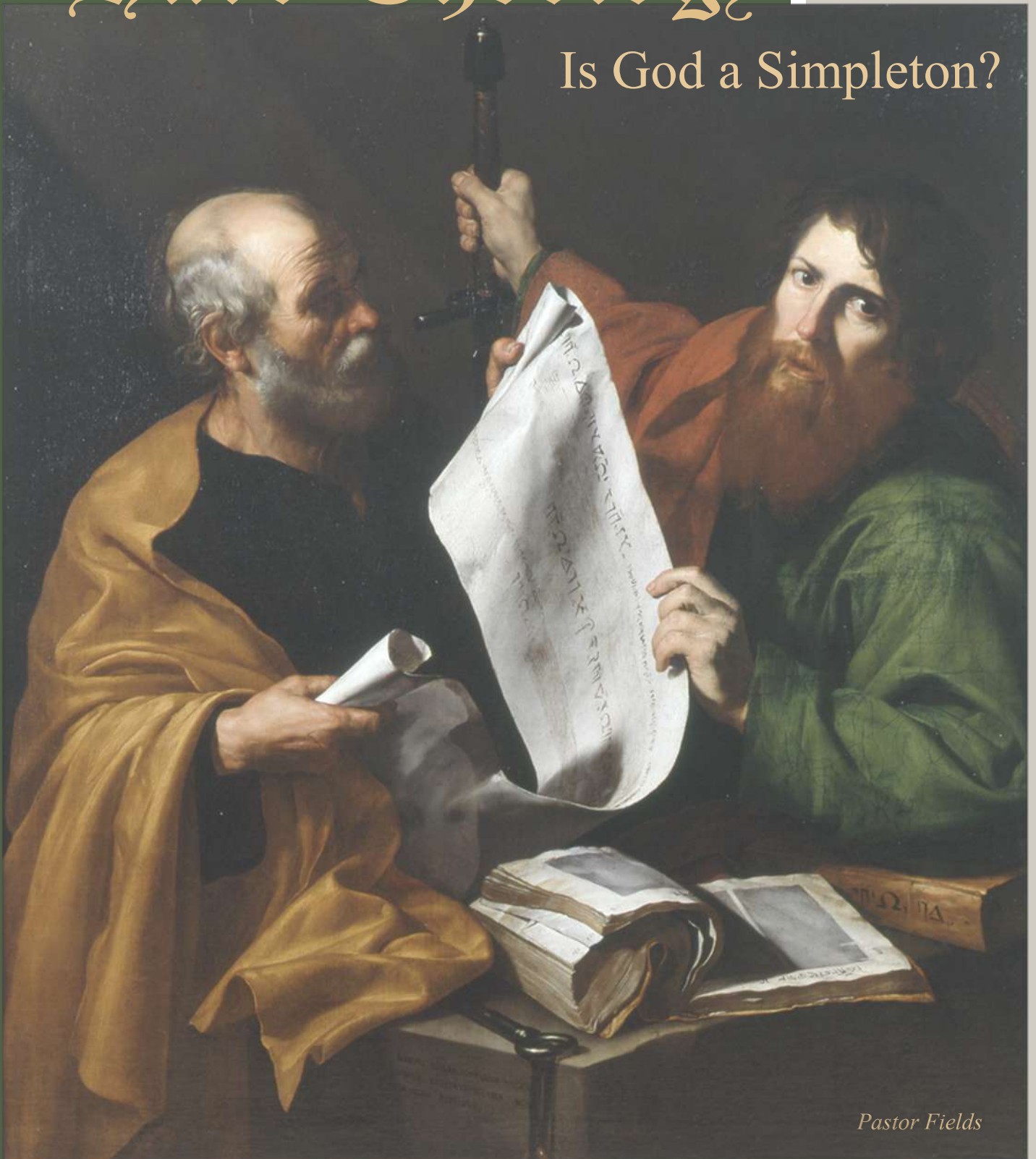
Throughout the world Christians often eat lamb on Christmas for a very obvious reason: this day, the Lamb of God Who Takes Away the Sin of the World was born. Lamb is born, lamb is eaten. It is as simple as the simplicity of God. See above.

Fruit Cake

If man had not sinned, the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ would not have been necessary. Therefore fruit cake was invented, so that even the most holy grandmothers could commit at least one sin. Much like sin, fruit cake will last until the Second Coming. This is the allegorical interpretation of this dessert.■

Hard Theology

Is God a Simpleton?



Pastor Fields

Many individuals, thinking themselves intelligent, often ask, 'If there is a God, why can't I see him?' Or otherwise, 'Why doesn't God just show himself to us.'

To the second question, the Christian simply answers, 'He did,' but that is rarely satisfying to the skeptic.

So let us concern ourselves with the first. The Bible, particularly the Old Testament, is filled with a small but stalwart conviction, that God cannot be seen.

To us who have grown up in a Christian world, we are used to this idea. We would never really think of God, or any spiritual thing, as something that could be visually 'seen.' That would be silly! And yet many

still ask why He can't be seen.

This is not a new question. It was asked often by Pagans in the ancient world, for they believed their gods could be seen, and seen quite easily. They could be seen in the form of statues and idols set up in temples and in market places, and even in homes. To them, those figures, carved from stone and wood were their gods, quite easily seen, quite easily visible. So what is it about the God of the Bible that makes Him invisible?

Well, it is, as the theologians would say, His simplicity.

Johann Gerhard, the great Lutheran theologian, summarizes St. John of Damascus as follows:

"No body is utterly simple, and an utterly simple being cannot be corporeal, because every body is compounded, is passively potential, and is divisible. God is an utterly simple being and is not passively potential. Therefore he is not corporeal."

Let us parse this out. First, what does the theologian mean by 'simple?' He does not mean what we mean. He does not mean 'easy' or 'understandable.' If anything, he means the opposite! What the theologian means is that God is not made up of parts. He is one thing, and only one thing, and he has no components, nor is he a 'component' of anything else.

So, Gerhard argues, all 'bodies', by which he means anything that can be observed or seen, are not simple. They are either made up of parts, or inhabit a world made up of parts (that is what he means by 'passively potential').

If God were made up of parts, he would not be God, because God precedes all things, and if he had 'parts' then his parts would precede himself. Therefore, he would not be God, that is, the first thing, but his parts would 'be God,' since he has to be made out of them.

Now all visible, 'corporeal' things are made of parts, or dwell in a world of parts. Therefore, no visible, corporeal thing can be God.

Therefore, it is logically impossible for God to be visible, for he is simple, having no parts, and dwelling in no realm where he is a part of anything else. He alone is all in all. If he could be seen, he would not be God. The skeptic's question is answered. No true God, by definition, could be seen, and to demand to see him would be to demand that he cease being God. God may not be a simpleton. But he is, and must be, simple.

This answer may not satisfy every atheist, though its logic is thorough. However, if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded by reason or faith, nor by one risen from the dead. ■

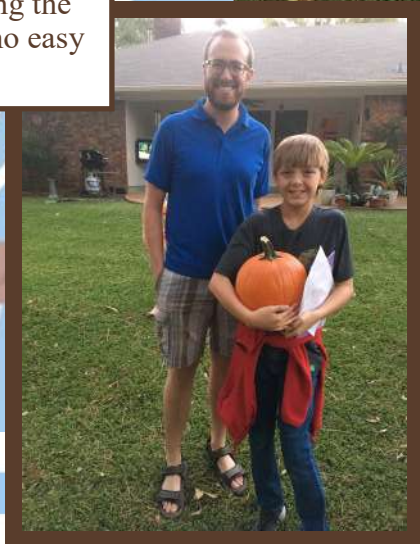
Christ Lutheran

Oktoberfest



Aaaand the Most-Festively-Dressed Award goes to... Mark, Rachel, and Joshua!

William Held won the scavenger hunt! With Jonathan Kettler writing the clues, it was no easy feat!



October means... Oktoberfest!

Break out the brats and don your lederhosen!

Christ Lutheran gathered on what was arguably October's most thoroughly gorgeous Saturday afternoon for some fantastic festivity at the Goodlett house. The afternoon began with games galore for the children, including pumpkin bowling, pin-the-bat-on-the-vampire, and a few rounds of bingo. After burning off all that energy, it was time for food!



♥ Hazel & Emma ♥
CLC has the best babies.
And the best babysitters.



Roger and MariLynn
proudly display their CLC
“church merch” while the
Pedersen clan smiles for the
camera!

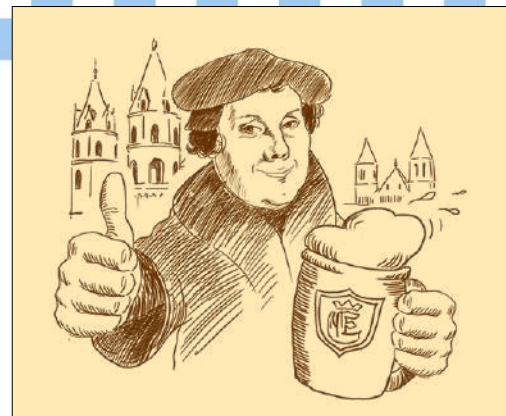
It was a virtual feast, with everything from delicious beer brats and German potato salad to saukraut and German chocolate cake—everything a Lutheran could wish for! Food and fellowship was had by everyone, and then a firepit was lit for s’mores.

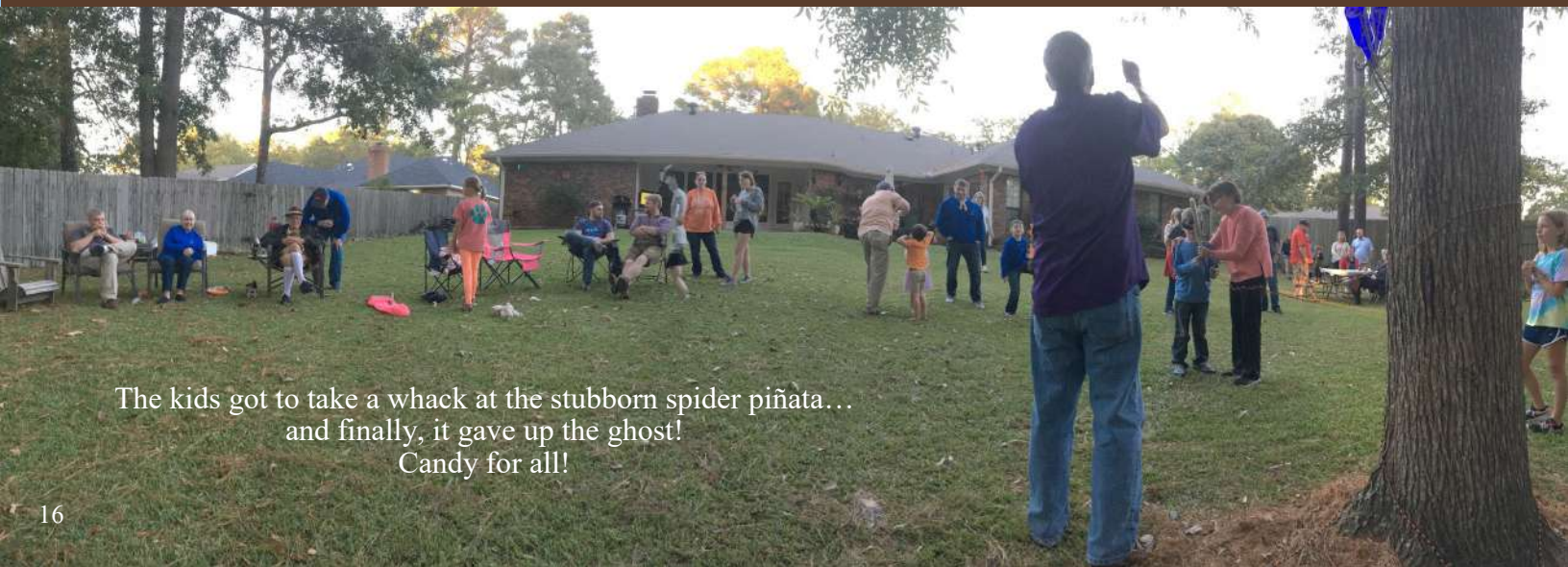
Because the evening began with games for the younger kids, it was only fair that the older kids get in on the action... and so commenced a scavenger hunt around the backyard! Adults were strictly forbidden to help. The questions were tough, but the kids were tougher! William Held won the prize pumpkin in the end.

The evening concluded with—of course!—the piñata! But this tough spider wouldn’t crack... the string suspending it gave way before the spider did, so the kids got to toss the hardy piñata around until it gave up its candy. All worth the effort!



Gary, Glen, Jake, and Pastor.
Each personality perfectly
depicted in visual form,
right here.





The kids got to take a whack at the stubborn spider piñata...
and finally, it gave up the ghost!
Candy for all!

The older kids did a superb job of organizing and leading the activities for the children. They put forethought and planning into the day, and their effort paid off—the children had a blast!



Up & Right: Pumpkin bowling!
Left: Bingo time...
Below: Pin-the-bat-on-the-vampire is harder than it looks.



**Thank you for
hosting, Goodletts!■**

Good Tidings

A CHRISTMAS SERMON





*The following is a Christmas sermon preached by
Rev. Christopher Esget, Fifth Vice-President of the LCMS.*

*To you who are faint-hearted;
To you who are weary;
To you who feel the burden of your sins;
To you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**.*

*To you who are broken-hearted;
To you whose children are not home;
To you who know the fear of darkness;
To you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**.*

*To you pompous;
To you proud;
To you who have trusted in your own merits and strength;
To you also is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**.*

In the mad rush of December, will what you bought still have meaning a year from now?
What will you get? Will it bear the name Savior?
Nothing on earth can bring back the one you lost.
Nothing on earth can create heaven for you.
But out of heaven comes God's message to you: **"On earth peace, goodwill toward men!"**

God is glorified in the high places by sending His Son to us.
God becomes man to bring man back to God's peace. God becomes man, and in this man Jesus is God's good pleasure.

*To you without peace is born this day the Prince of Peace.
To you helpless ones is born this day the Helper.
To you sons of Adam is born this day the new Adam.
To you battered by the storms is born the One who stilled the storms with a word.
Are you weak? Look, Jesus became weak for you!
Are you sad? Look, Jesus comes to share your sadness, and give you His joy!*

O you dying ones, see in the manger your Life!
O you lonely, see in the manger the Friend of sinners!
O you unrighteous, see in the manger your Righteousness!
You who hunger and thirst for righteousness, see in the feeding trough the living bread!

Is there good news coming from Afghanistan? Syria? Iran? Russia? The history of the fallen world is one of wars and rumors of wars. Fox News, CNN, NPR and the BBC cannot report the one news story you cannot live without: **"Behold, I bring you good [news] of great joy [for] all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."**

To you caught in conflict;
To you filled with anger;
To you burdened by doubt;
To you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**.

To you who far have wandered;
To you who much have squandered;
To you who feel useless and cast off;
To you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**.

To you widows;
To you orphans;
To you lonely ones;
To you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**.

To you who are depressed;
To you who are downcast;
To you are downtrodden;
To you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior, who is Christ the Lord**.

Put everything else outside of your mind. Yes, care for your family and do your work. But spend no more anxious nights. He has heard your sad and bitter cry. This Child comes to you and says, "Peace! Do not be afraid. I have come *for you*. I come to save you. I come to bear your guilt. I come and bear your thorns as My crown. I have come to be your life. Be not anxious!"

Merry Christmas, dear friends, **For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."**■





THIS MONTH

At Christ Lutheran

Order Your Poinsettias!

You can help provide the beautiful plants to be displayed in our sanctuary on Christmas Day. The cost is \$13.50 per plant. After the service, you may take home the number of plants you purchased.

A sign-up sheet is available on the table in the narthex.

Thank you for your help in providing a festive atmosphere on this special day!



Saints' Days in December

- 4 St. John of Damascus, Confessor
- 6 St. Nicholas of Myra, Bishop & Confessor
- 7 St. Ambrose of Milan, Bishop & Confessor
- 13 St. Lucia, Martyr
- 15 St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop & Martyr
- 17 St. Daniel the Prophet & the Three Young Men
- 19 St. Abraham, Patriarch
- 20 St. Katharina von Bora Luther
- 21 St. Thomas, Apostle
- 24 Sts. Adam & Eve
- 25 Feast of the Nativity
- 26 St. Stephen, Martyr
- 27 St. John, Apostle & Evangelist
- 28 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
- 29 St. David, King of Israel

Sacred Music
for the
Advent Season
lutheranpublicradio.org



Advent Dinner

soup — salad — sandwich

6:00 p.m.
Wednesdays
Beginning December 1

Dine with us as we hold
vigil for our Lord's birth!

Sign up in the Fellowship
Hall as you are able to
contribute.





December Worship Services

SUNDAYS — 8 & 10:30 A.M. DIVINE SERVICE

WEDNESDAYS — 7:00 P.M. VESPERS

CHRISTMAS EVE — 4:30 P.M. LESSONS & CAROLS

CHRISTMAS DAY — 10:30 A.M. DIVINE SERVICE

VOTERS MEETING December 5

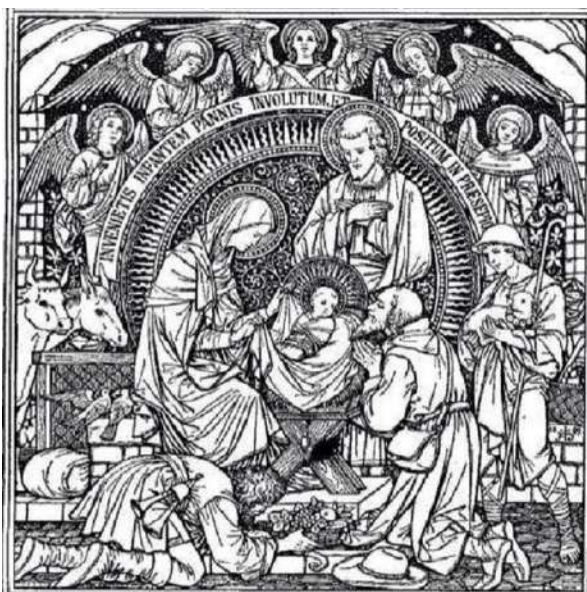
The regular bi-annual Congregation Voter's Assembly will convene immediately following the worship service **Sunday, December 5th, 2021** to approve the 2022 Budget Work-plan. All members are encouraged to attend.

STEW POT

Community Services

"Faith Meeting Needs in Our Community"

Spread the Christmas cheer! Bring non-perishable food items for those less fortunate in our community. Leave your donation at the back table in the Fellowship Hall by December 15.



THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

+ December 25 +
10:30 a.m.



Decoration Day
isn't just for grown-ups!

**Saturday
December 11
9:00 a.m.**

Christ Lutheran Kids, wear your crazy Christmas jammies and join us for some festive fun!

Join us for a

κοινωνία

KOINONIA CHRISTMAS

Sunday
December 12
Burkhalter Home

Come for supper and
bring a gift for a game
of Unsanctified Santa!

Merry Christmas!



A monthly publication, *The Lutheran Witness* offers synodical news, reports from Lutheran around the world, and more. You may subscribe through the church for only \$13 for a year, and it will be delivered to your home. Checks may be made out to Christ Lutheran Church with the notation "Lutheran Witness." Please see Sister Sara for more information.



Artwork in This Issue:

Cover: *Annunciation*, Annetto Pullicino, 1723.

Page 4: *Nativity*, Gustave Dore, 19th century.

Page 4: *The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism*, Gustave Dore, 1899

Page 5: *The Last Supper*, Gustave Dore, 19th century.

Page 12: *Saint Peter & Saint Paul*, Jusepe de Ribera, 1616.

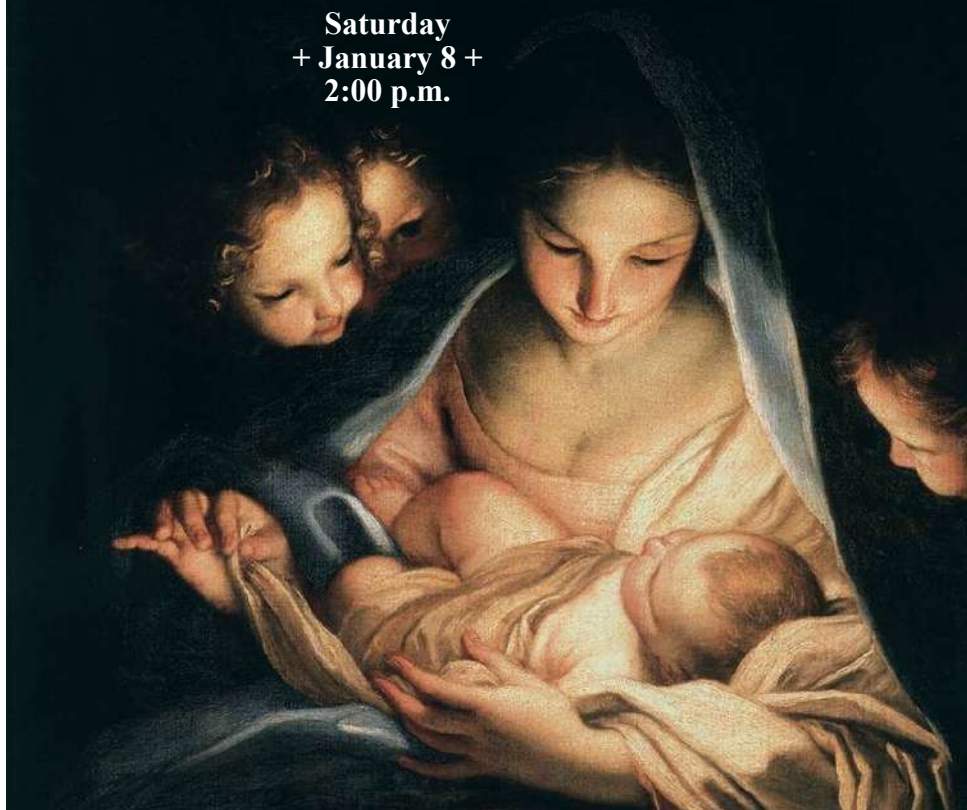
Page 18: *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, Bartolome Esteban Murillo, c. 1650.

Christmas Recital

— Christ Lutheran Church —

Mark Your Calendars for the
Christ Lutheran Christmas Recital

Saturday
+ January 8 +
2:00 p.m.



Christmas Work Day

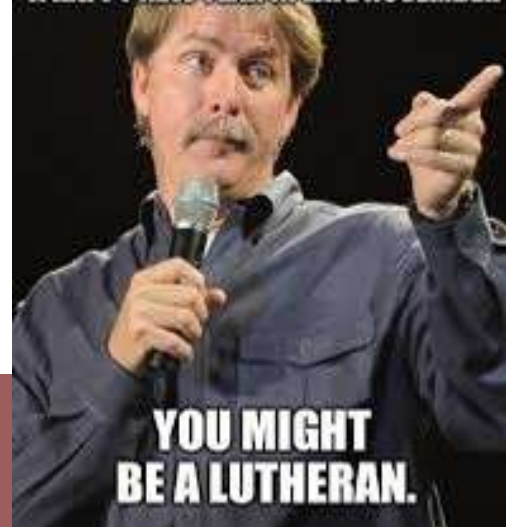


Help us spruce up the church grounds as Christmas draws near!

Come ready for coffee, cocoa, and Christmas cheer!

Work Day
Saturday, December 11
8:30 a.m.

**IF YOU'RE WISHING EVERYONE
A HAPPY NEW YEAR IN LATE NOVEMBER**



**YOU MIGHT
BE A LUTHERAN.**

December 2021

PRAYER FAMILIES and BIRTHDAYS		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bobbie Mutter 3—Nathan Hansford 3—William Hansford		<div>Serving this month: Elder—Keith Martin Greeters—Rush & Allison Agent</div>			1	2	3 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	4 St. John of Damascus
Nelson Family 5—Leslie Riddlehoover 8—Bob Pedersen 9—Allison Agent 11—Savannah Kettler		5 ADVENT II 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 11:30 a.m. Voters' Meeting	6 St. Nicholas 6:15 p.m. Elders Mtg.	7 St. Ambrose	8 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Vespers	9	10 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	11 8:30 a.m. Work Day 9:00 a.m. Decoration Day: Kids!
Beulah Nunnery 13—Bill Cookston 14—Gloria Pedersen 14—Natalie Rudenske 16—Lori Held 16—Margaret Haynes 17—Curt Dickens		12 ADVENT III 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Koinonia Christmas	13 St. Lucia	14	15 St. Ignatius of Antioch 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Vespers	16	17 6:30 a.m. Bible Study St. Daniel & the Three Young Men	18
Mark Ochs 19—Chuck Rubisoff 21—Jo Rudenske		19 ADVENT IV 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service St. Abraham	20 St. Katharina von Bora	21 St. Thomas	22	23	24 Sts. Adam & Eve CHRISTMAS EVE 4:30 p.m. Lessons & Carols	25 FEAST OF THE NATIVITY 10:30 a.m. Divine Service
Bob & Gloria Pedersen 27—Joshua Bowman 29—Eddie Gallarno 30—Allen Goodlett		26 CHRISTMAS I 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service St. Stephen	27 St. John	28 The Holy Innocents	29 St. David	30	31	