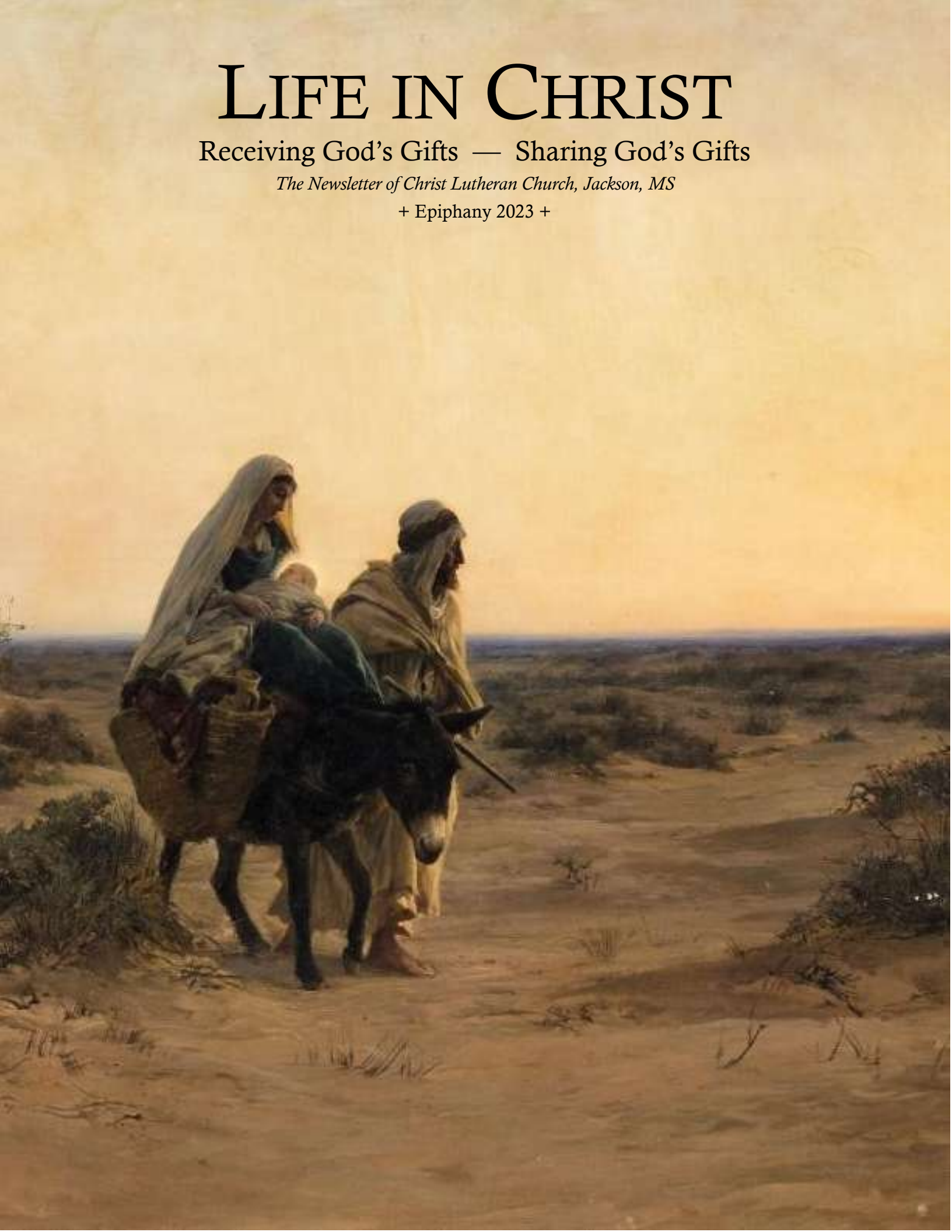


# LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

*The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS*

+ Epiphany 2023 +



On the Cover:

*The Flight into Egypt*

Eugene Girardet

1853-1907

*Life in Christ*

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Rev. George Fields  
Sr. Sara Fields



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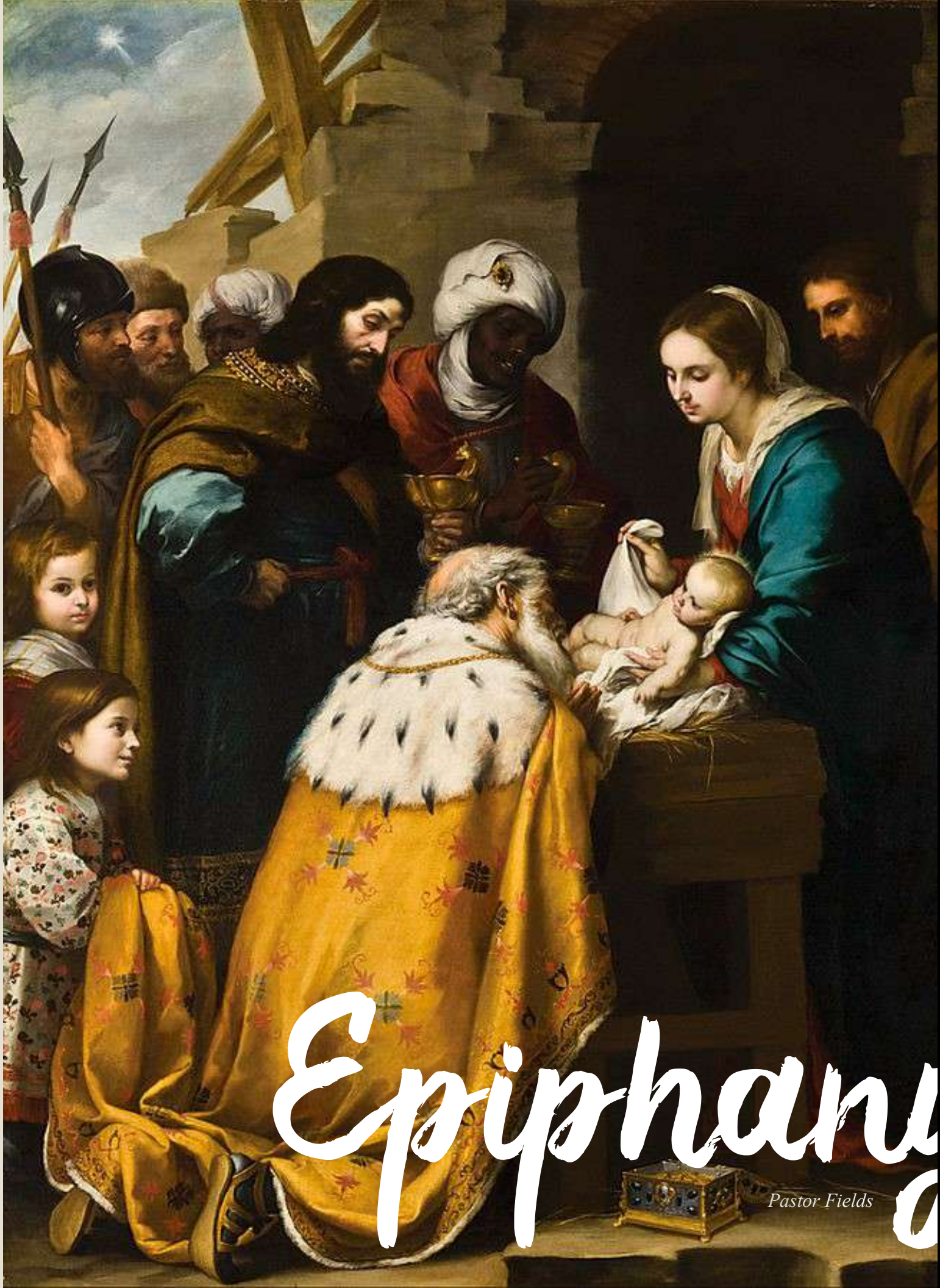
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# Epiphany

Pastor Fields

We often speak of having epiphanies. Usually, we mean a sudden understanding of something that we did not understand before.

We see something clearly that was clouded in our mind previously.

The word *epiphany* is Greek. It means literally 'to show up.' In this season of the Church Year we celebrate God's 'showing up,' something we have all longed for since the day of our birth. The magi, who were indeed wise, were ecstatic when Christ 'showed up' for them in Bethlehem. The Apostles were transfixed when they saw Jesus shrouded in light on Mount Tabor, for as God He showed Himself to them. And now, every Sunday is an *epiphany*, for does not God 'show up'?

If He did not, in His Word and Body and Blood, I would not come, much less wear the holy vestments that hide me in the presence of the visible God. Yet He does come, He does 'show up.' In Body and Blood and spoken Word. And he appears not as He appeared before the Hebrews, clothed in fire and cloud, but as a child, and then as a man, to be approached, and spoken to.

We all know that there is more to life than mere living. More to life than mere desire. We know there is something else, something higher up. Something we might call 'God.'

Yet we see something in our mind that is cloudy; yet now we see it clearly.

What we did not understand before, we suddenly understand.

We have had an epiphany, for the Lord treads the earth in flesh. ■









# *Advent* **Work** **Day**



# ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ

## KOINONIA CHRISTMAS

Christmas comes early at... Koinonia! We gathered for our annual Koinonia Christmas at the Held home, and as ever, the festivity was unrivaled. The evening began with fantastic food but soon erupted into some intense thievery as we played a game of "Unsanctified Santa."

Many thanks to the Helds for hosting, and thanks to all who came and made the evening merry! ■





So much good food... and fellowship...



Merry Koinonia Christmas! Cheers!





“For if you ask: What is the gospel? you can give no better answer than these words of the New Testament, namely, that Christ gave his body and poured out his blood for us for the forgiveness of sins... Therefore these words, as a short summary of the whole gospel, are to be taught and instilled into every Christian’s heart.”

—Martin Luther,  
*The Misuse of the Mass* (1521), AE 36:183

“Everything depends on these words. Every Christian should and must know them and hold them fast. He must never let anyone take them away from him by any other kind of teaching, even though it were an angel from heaven [Gal. 1:8]. They are words of life and of salvation, so that whoever believes in them has all his sins forgiven through that faith; he is a child of life and has overcome death and hell.

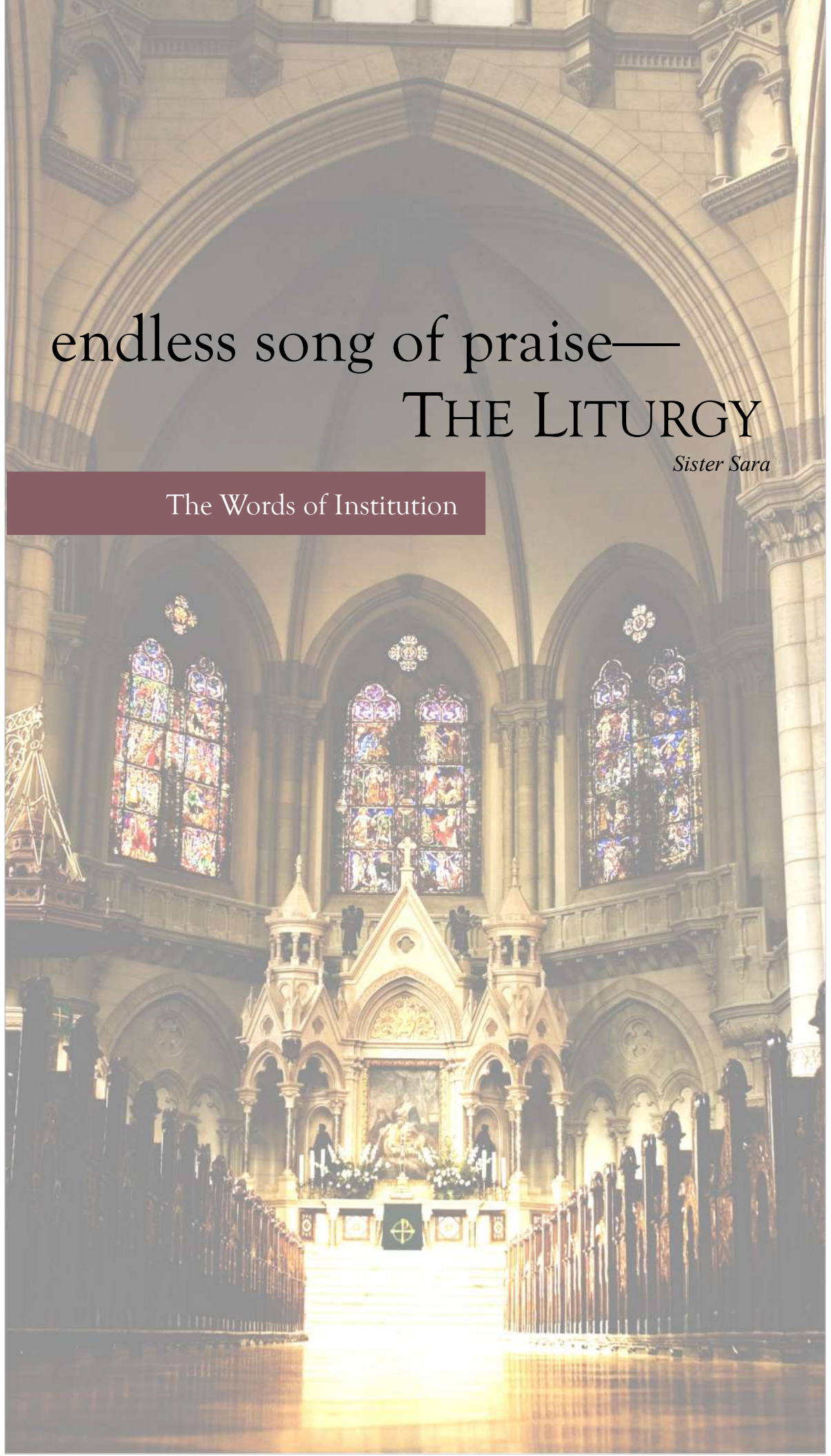
Language cannot express how great and mighty these words are, for they are the sum and substance of the whole gospel.”

—Martin Luther,  
*The Adoration of the Sacrament*, (1523), AE 36:277

# endless song of praise— THE LITURGY

*Sister Sara*

The Words of Institution





We have come to Mount Zion, to the highest point of the liturgy—indeed, to the holiest moment any of us will ever experience. We have come this month to the moment of the Lord’s Supper, beginning with the Words of Institution.

These Words of our Lord (or the *Verba Domini*, as they are famously known in Latin) were spoken by Christ Himself when He instituted the very first Lord’s Supper with His disciples the eve of His death, on what we now call Maundy Thursday. As all good Jews, they gathered in Jerusalem that night to celebrate the Passover, the remembrance of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt so long ago. In accordance with the Passover liturgy, Jesus presided at the table and led the ceremony of the meal; but, He gave it a whole new significance. Whereas the slaves of Egypt broke their matza, or unleavened bread, anticipating freedom from Pharaoh and the hope of a Promised Land, Jesus broke a *new* Bread—His own Body—freeing us from the slavery of sin and giving us the ultimate Promised Land of heaven. Building upon the images, or *types*, of the Old Testament Israel, Jesus shows Himself to be a greater Moses: the One who delivers His people not just from earthly bondage, but from eternal damnation.

It was in this Upper Room that He spoke the words: “Take, eat. This is My Body... Take, drink. This is My Blood.”

No longer a mere reliving of a past miracle, this meal has become the inauguration of heaven itself.

Needless to say, there’s a lot going on here. Let’s take a moment to unpack it. So, first things first: where do these words actually come from? They, along with the

Lord’s Prayer, are the oldest attested parts of the liturgy, and they derive from the accounts of the synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, and Luke) as well as from St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. Jesus commanded His disciples, and therefore all the Church after them, to “Do this in remembrance of Me.” And so, ever since, the pastors of the Church speak these words as Christ Himself, feeding His people with His very Body and Blood.

We know from the Catechism (and hence, from Scripture) that sacraments require God’s *Word* in combination with *physical elements*. God, of course, *is* the Word; and in His first act of creation made the physical world. Both of these, therefore, are obviously near and dear to His heart, and He made each with deliberate purpose. It comes as no surprise, then, that He locates Himself just as deliberately in the Word-and-physical-element in which He has promised us to be: specifically, in Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. So, as we examine the *Verba Domini* this month, we focus specifically on the Word of this sacrament in combination with the physical elements of bread and wine.

Jesus said, “This is My Body... This is My Blood.” He held in His hands the same physical elements which we use: unleavened bread, and wine. And yet, knowing what these elements are, He still imputed into them His very *physical* existence. Although the human experience sees only bread and wine, yet God has humbled Himself to be present in such as these. He came into our own sinful flesh... can we be surprised that He could be present in bread and wine?



**Why Bread?** Bread is that which sustains life, for it has been the staff of human existence from the Fall. “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,” said God to Adam (Genesis 3:19), dooming him to a constant toil for the sustenance of life. But Christ has taken upon Himself the curse of Adam, coming into our flesh and bearing our curse. In His own flesh He sustains our life, giving Himself to us with these very words: “This is My Body.” This Bread sustains us not just in this life, but unto Eternal Life.

**Why Wine?** Wine is that which makes the heart glad—the drink of rejoicing. Men do not grow grapes in drought and famine, nor do they dull their wits on the eve of battle; rather, wine is a sign of peace and plenty. But why must this new wine be made of blood? God once forbade His people from drinking blood, for “the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is blood that makes atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11). *Life is in the blood.* When blood pours forth from a body—whether by slaughter, or sacrifice, or the savagery of war—we know that life has left the body. God accepted the sacrifices of beasts and birds, their blood poured upon the altar for the atonement of sinful men, but not even their blood could pay the ultimate debt of our disobedience. The life of their blood was fleeting, even as is ours. **But there is One whose Blood bears eternal Life.** He poured out His Blood as a drink offering, upon the very altar of the cross, that sinful men might be truly redeemed. Nowhere in Scripture were the people of God allowed to drink blood, for no blood truly bore Life... until this moment, when the true Blood of Life was given for our salvation. The tide of this flow ended our long drought and won the dreadful battle; by this Blood, we enter into a land of plenty, and we recline at peace with God. Surely, this is the wine of eternal rejoicing.

So, when Pastor utters the words of Christ Himself, “This is My Body... This is My Blood,” he offers to you the very food of immortality. Bread and wine lie upon the altar, but more than that, Jesus’ Body and Blood await you there. Here, you see God in Flesh and Blood.



### The Fullness of Remembrance

Jesus said, “This do, in remembrance of Me.” The English word *remembrance* is indeed an apt translation of this phrase, for it is made up of *re-* (again) and *-member* (part; e.g. “my body and all its members”). To remember something is not simply to recall a memory, but in fact, to join disparate parts back into a whole again. In the Eucharist, God remembers us: He draws those who left Him back into Himself, joining the members of His own Body with our own. Secondly, we remember Him, for we are now His Body, and we come to be re-membered with Him, with each other, and with all the Church throughout time and space. To “do this in remembrance” is not to reenact a symbolic event, or recall something fondly, but to actually participate in the eternal reality of the Lord’s Supper, even in this present moment. Coming to the rail on Sunday morning is coming to heaven itself. ■





*Charlie, her parents Chase and Rebecca, and her grandparents*

On Christmas Day, the Lord bore Charlie Rae Sumrall through the waters of Holy Baptism, into the new life of His Son. Christ Lutheran, along with the whole Body of Christ, welcomes Charlie into the number of her saints. We rejoice with Chase and Rebecca, and look forward to watching Charlie 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 **Charlie Rae**



# ADVENT

## DECORATION DAY



Our beautiful chrismons emerge from their long slumber to grace the tree in all their glistening radiance!



The women apply their aesthetic expertise as Jake keeps them caffeinated and Bob keeps him company!



Stringing the lights...



Our muscle moves in the tree!



The glorious spread of Christmas calories!



Every decoration, placed with care. ♥



Meanwhile, in the next room... →



christ Lutheran

# Decoration Day

Kids edition



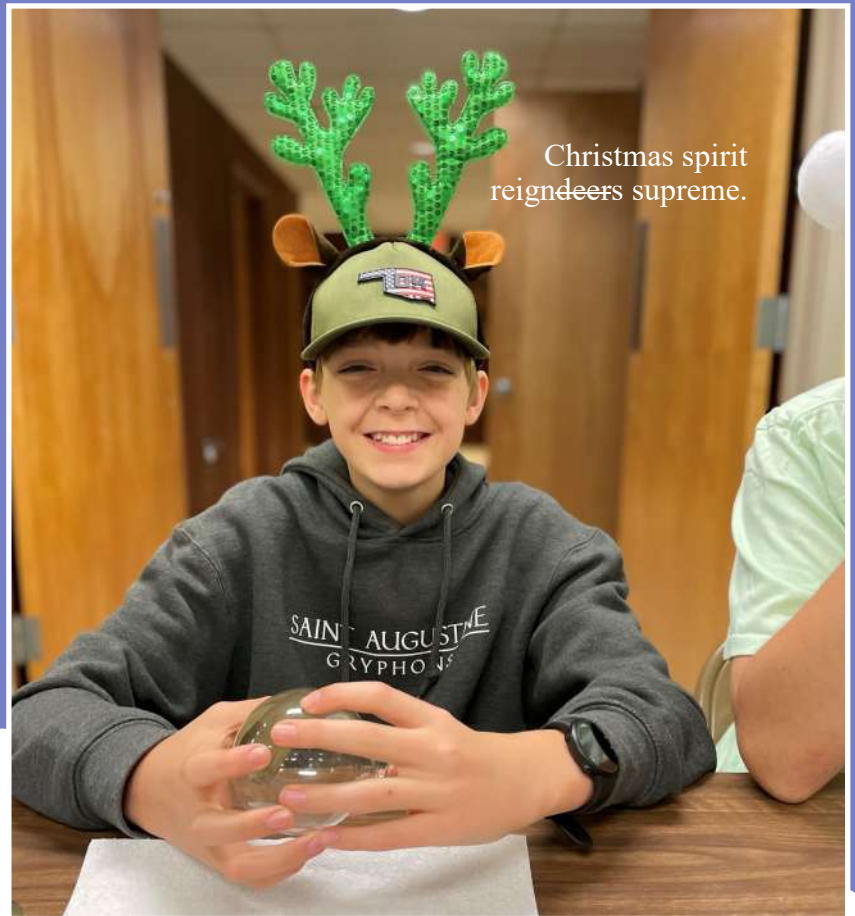


Christ Lutheran members decked the halls on our annual Decoration Day, complete with...

cocoa and cookies,  
tree decorating,

Christmas ornament crafts,  
and crazy games,

A merry time was had by all!



Christmas spirit reigns supreme.



Stickers galore!  
The littles got their own special Christmas craft.



Oh, the decisions!







One tree...



Two tree...



Okay, Pastor, try not to look too excited, now.



Stringing more lights!



Our barista! We are all eternally grateful!!

Pastor gives life advice: how to decorate a tree.





Kid-chrismons go up!



The littles make their craft... with a little loving help.



Game of the Day: Decorate the Living Tree!







So much Christmas cheer in one little photo. ♥

Coffee and cocoa bar. Yes, please.



Margaret's shirt says it all: "Get your sparkle on!"



Crafts galooooooooooooore!





Each sticker, placed with greatest care...



Making Christmas ornaments!



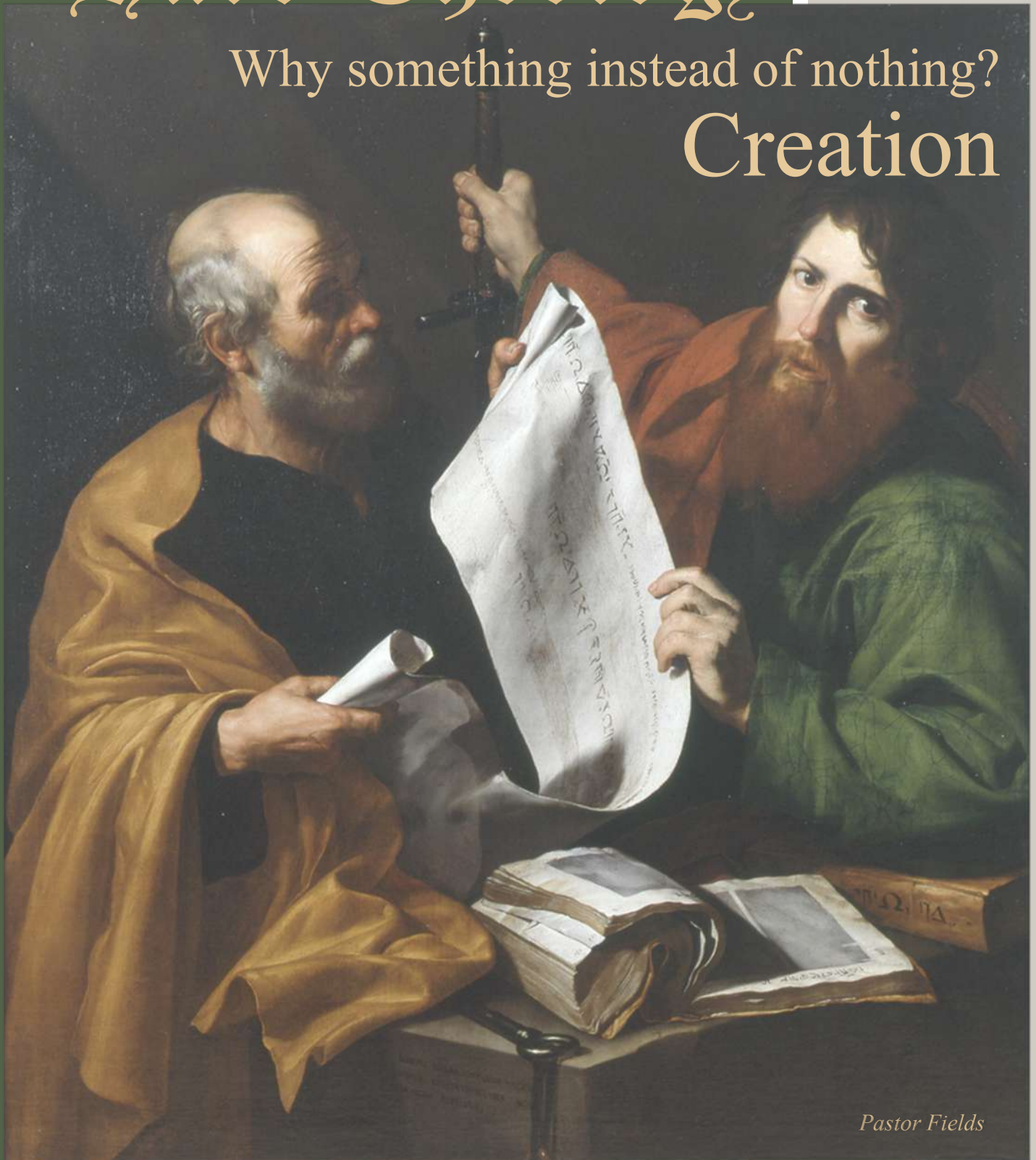
Good old-fashioned fellowship!





# Hard Theology

Why something instead of nothing?  
Creation



*Pastor Fields*



An honest physicist will give you an answer to many questions. Why do chemicals bond? Well it is something to do with electromagnetism. Why does the sun shine? Well it has something to do with the so-called 'weak nuclear force' and W-Bosons. Why are W-Bosons called W-Bosons? Because physicists have very little appreciation for the English language, and name new particles in a way that is both clumsy and sounds stupid.

This is what an honest physicist will tell you. An honest physicist will also tell you one more thing. If you ask, 'why is there something instead of nothing?' He will

first say 'well there is this idea and that idea' but he will ultimately say 'I don't know.'

The theologian is faced with the same question, though perhaps put a little differently, 'why did God decide to create the world if the first place?'

After all, God seems to be happy enough in heaven by Himself being God, why does He need all of us?

There are many good and valid answers to this question, but, as usual, we will focus on one, given by a great theologian:

St. Ambrose, St. Augustine's teacher, preached:

*"So that God, who is by nature invisible, could be known by visible things, He did a work that by its visibility revealed Himself as the demiurge. This entire world, like a written book, implies the glory of God."*

Well this does not seem too deep. It seems to say that God made the world so that created things like you or me could know Him.

*But why?*

Why does God care that anyone or anything know Him? It almost seems petty for Him to seek to praise of others, even others that He Himself created.

Yet the important part is at the end of the quote, '*the entire world, like a written book, implies the glory of God.*' Which is to say that the world is glorious, and filled with God's glory, His beauty, His mastery.

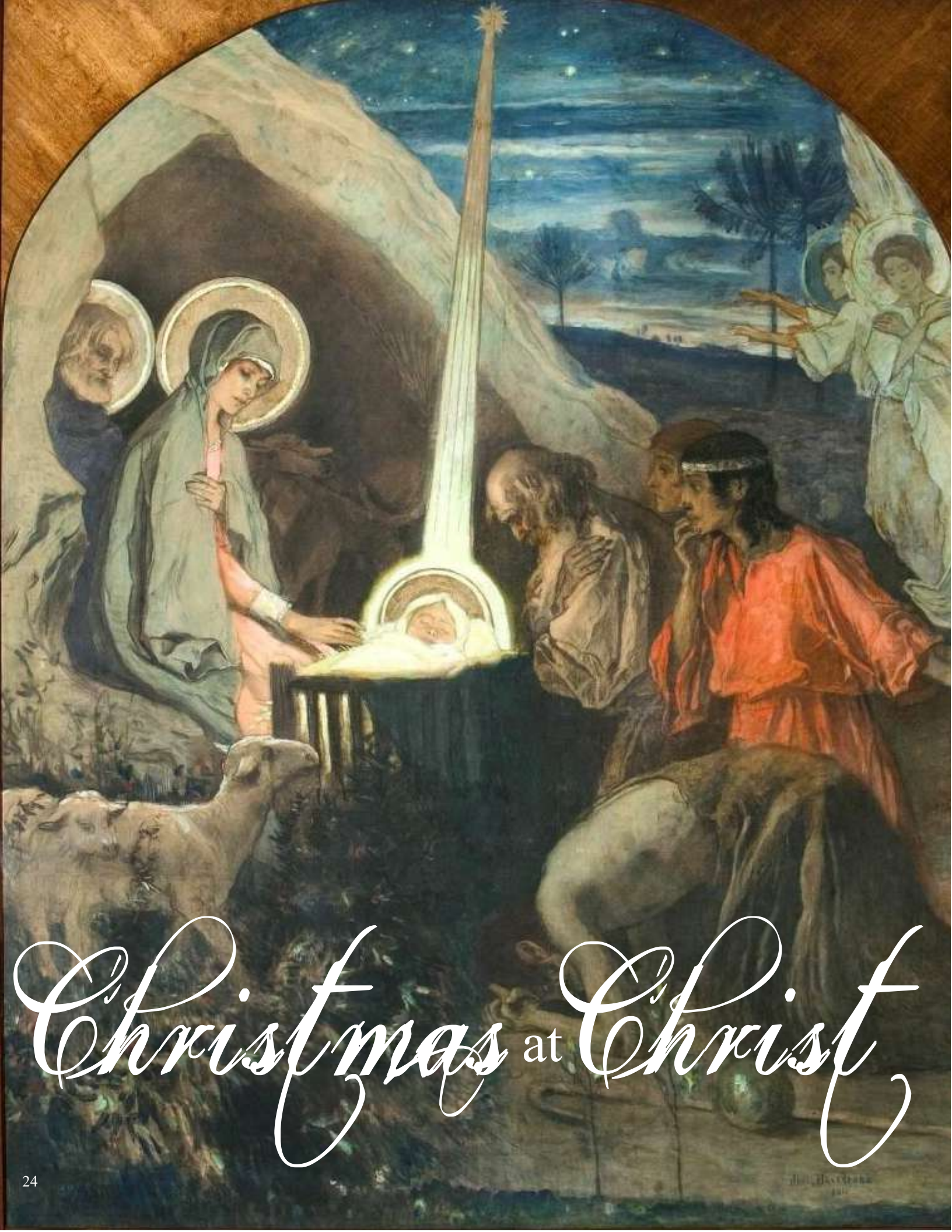
Yet what fun is it for God to show forth this infinite work of art if there is no one to enjoy it with Him?

For this reason, it is written '*let us make man in our image.*'

You see, man was made that might *enjoy* the visible things made by God, and through them, enjoy the invisible God. It is for our joy that there is something instead of nothing.

But a child is born in Bethlehem, and the invisible is made visible. For this reason we sing both at the end of the Church Year and at the Beginning, *Joy to the World.* ■





*Christmas at Christ*



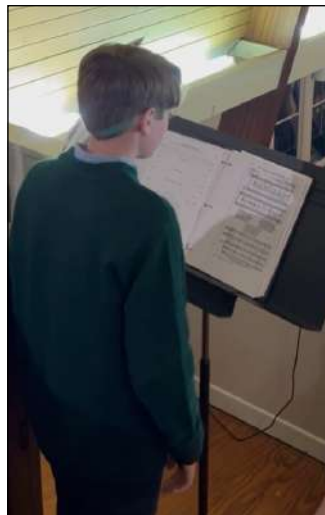


Horns and trumpets rang out this Christmas at Christ Lutheran, heralding the Savior's birth with fanfare fit for a King.

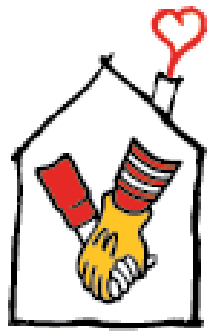
The Advent season culminated on December 24th in Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols. We heard of the promised Christ prophesied in ancient Scripture, finally revealed in the nativity story of the Gospels. Beloved carols punctuated the night, and choir and flute and even guitar floated through the candlelight.

We left that night only to return again in the fullness of Christmas joy the next morning—and Sunday this year, no less! Our incarnate Savior met us in the flesh upon the altar, and our joy was made complete.

Thank you to all who contributed their gifts and talents to this holy day, and thank you to came to partake in the celebration of our Savior's birth! ■







# Ronald McDonald House Charities® Mississippi

Keeping families close™



In December, Christ Lutheran collected laundry detergent donations for the Ronald McDonald House. This charity provides lodging for families whose children are hospitalized, often with long-term or serious conditions. Eloise Springer delivered the donations. She writes,

One of the projects of Christ Lutheran Women Missionary League was quilting and contributing to Charities that supports families and children. The Ronald McDonald Home Charities was one of her favorites. This home-based charity helps families feel at home away from home to be near their child/children when they are in the hospital. Elmira and I would visit often, taking items.

Thanks to all who contributed!■



## Christmas clean-up

Epiphany is upon us— which means away with the Christmas décor! Right after the Christmas Recital, everyone hit the ground running. Grab the vacuum, change the paraments, down with the Christmas tree! It is time to greet the Wise Men. Thank you to all who helped! ■







Norman  
Rockwell

♯ Christmas  sing mercilie



# Christmas Recital

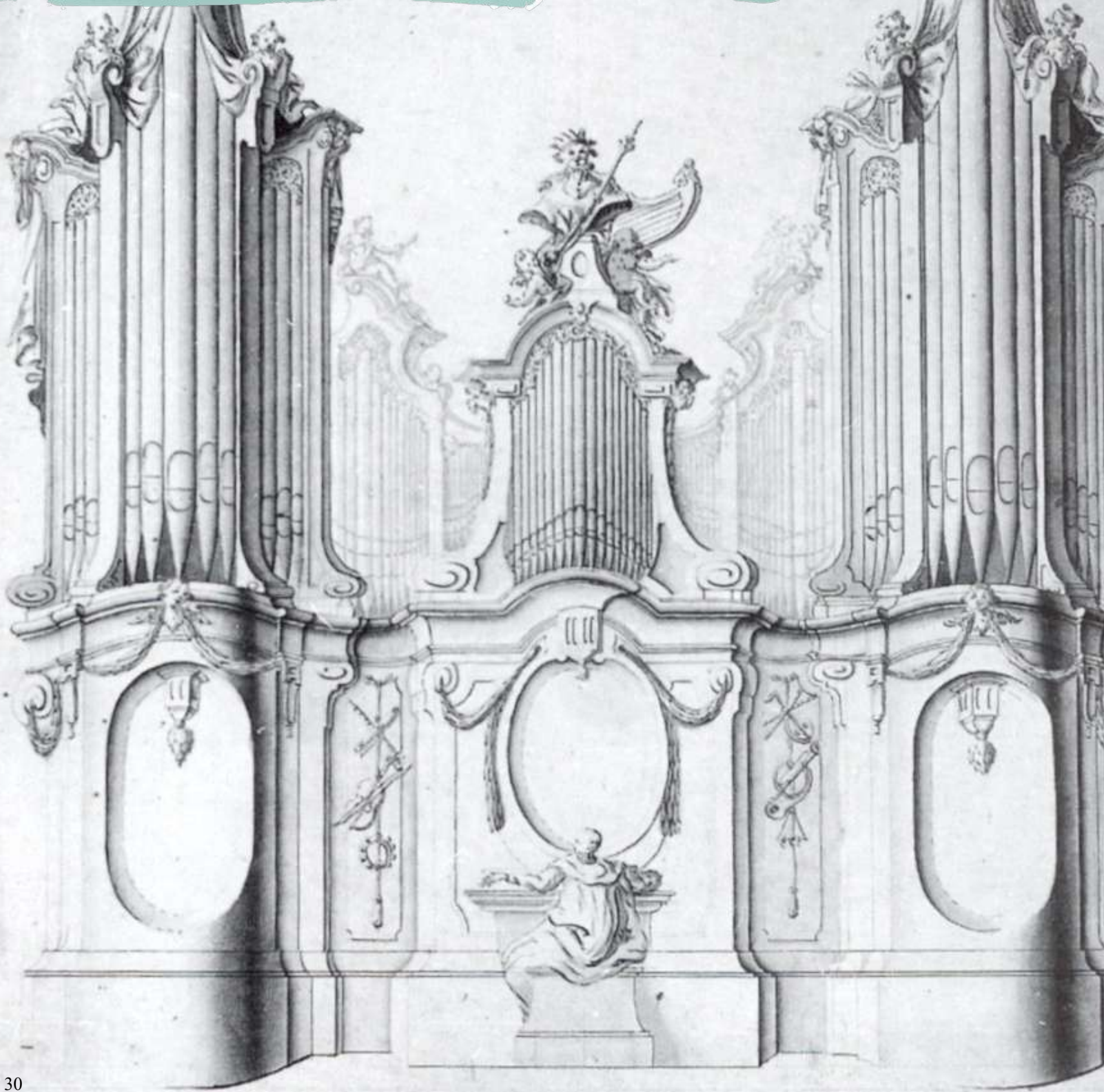
On January 7, Christ Lutheran held its fourth annual Christmas Recital! It was an altogether lovely beginning to the New Year. The program featured piano and organ, guitar and voice, and our talented members—notably Emma Agent, Miles Agent, Emily Held, Christa Kettler, and Sister Sara—shared their God-given gifts with us. We are grateful for these blessings, and we heartily encourage our young musicians as they continue to be good stewards of these talents. ■





# Hymn of the Month

*Sister Sara*





Epiphany hymns are not quite like Christmas carols. We did not memorize them through years of candlelit Advent services and nights of neighborhood caroling. But, though they are perhaps less familiar to us, they are nonetheless ancient, for they celebrate the revelation of Christ to the nations—a Gentile Christmas, if you will!

Our hymn this month dates at least as far back as the 1000s A.D., as the Latin “office hymn” (i.e., main hymn of the day) for the Feast of the Epiphany itself. This feast day, which we all remember because of the infamous Three Magi, is the celebration of God’s revealing Himself to all men. He may have been born in an obscure little stable in an backwater little town, unknown to Caesar and the rajas and the kings of the world; but when three strangers from the East seek Him, King Herod is startled and all Jerusalem with him. Jesus is no longer a secret known only to lowly shepherds, but royalty known to the nations.

Curiously, our hymn does not mention the Magi, or Herod, or anything we generally associate with Epiphany. Where are the frankincense and myrrh? But that is because it recognizes the *meaning* of the Epiphany, beyond the mere trappings of the day. From ancient days, God shook the earth with His voice, veiled in cloud and darkness. But now, He reveals Himself as a little Child, come to dwell among us and take all humanity’s ills and woe into His own flesh.

## Fun Facts

Lost in our English translation is the poetic form as an alphabetical hymn: each line in the original text begins with the next letter of the Latin alphabet...

*ad, baptisma, cunctos, de, excepit,  
facturam, gaudia, hoc, inlabere,  
klaumque, lumen, mane, noctem, omne,  
piam, quem, redire, spectrum, tuo, vita,  
Christe, ymnum, zelum*

Reminiscent of the Creed, the hymn traces the Son’s journey from heaven into fallen creation. It is this Gospel story which unveils the face of God to us men. “Beginning from His home on high, In human flesh He came to die” (st. 2). We see the Creator come among us, now to heal our fallenness: “Creation by His death restored, And shed new joys of life abroad” (st. 2). Recognizing this Child as the Light revealed to the nations, we sing in stanza three, “Glide on, O glorious Sun,” imploring Him to enlighten “every dull and clouded sense.” This He does by His Word and sacrament, the latter making an appearance in stanza one (“By death the font to consecrate, The faithful to regenerate”), and stanza four (“Abide,” a verb highly associated with the Lord’s Supper, in combination with “take away the stain of sin”). Looking forward to His glorious return on the Last Day, we beseech the Christchild to “be with us on the battlefield, From every harm Your people shield.” And, concluding in doxology, we praise the Triune name of God, revealed to us by Christ Himself—an apt ending indeed!■

January—

From God the Father,  
Virgin-Born

LSB 401





# THIS MONTH

*At Christ Lutheran*

## March for Life 2023



Join your fellow Lutherans in the 51st annual March for Life this January in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit [lcms.org/marchforlife](http://lcms.org/marchforlife) or [eyesoflife.org](http://eyesoflife.org).



### THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Observed  
+ January 8 +  
10:30 a.m.

## National Squirrel Appreciation Day

— January 21 —

Collect Nuts

Hug a Squirrel

Pray for  
Pastor Holowach



## ~ Altar Flowers ~

Sign up on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board to provide altar flowers in 2023. They are \$45, and you may take them home after the worship service.

Thank you for beautifying the Lord's house!







38th Symposium on Exegetical Theology  
"Faith, Family, and Formation"  
January 17-18

46th Symposium on Confessional Theology  
"Theological Perspectives"  
January 18-20

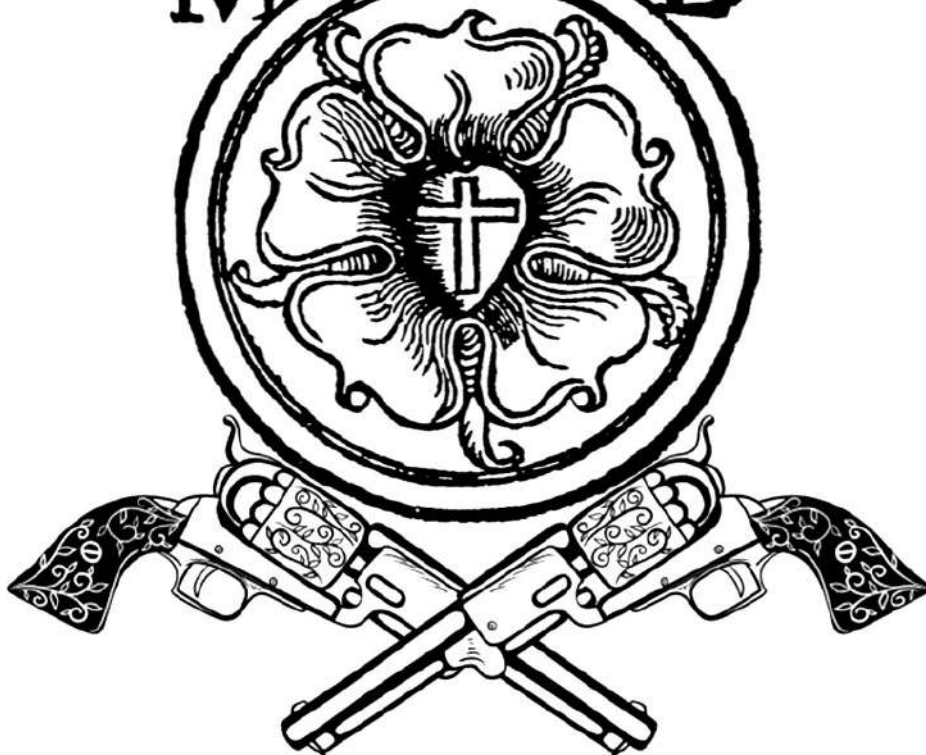
## Symposia Series 2023

**Calling All Quilters!**  
(And Non-Quilters, too!)

We will be quilting on  
**Saturday, January 14**  
at **9:00 a.m.**

Come for a relaxed morning  
of fellowship.

M L



## Guns N' [Luther] Roses

Join us for an Enhanced Carry Training course  
on Saturday, January 28, at 8 a.m.  
Ask Sister Sara for details!



**THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD**  
+ January 8 +

**Issues, Etc.**



*Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio*

[www.issuesetc.org](http://www.issuesetc.org)



### Artwork in This Issue:

Cover: *The Flight into Egypt*; Eugene Girardet, 1853-1907.

Page 4: *Adoration of the Magi*, Francisco de Zurbaran, 1639.

Page 11: *The Sacrament of the Last Supper*, Salvador Dali, 1955.

Page 12: *Allegory of the Eucharist*, Alexander Coosemans, ca. 1641.

Page 16: *Charlie Brown Christmas*, Charles Schulz.

Page 22: *Saint Peter & Saint Paul*, Jusepe de Ribera, 1616.

Page 24: *The Nativity*, Mikhail Nesterov, 1890.

Page 28: *Christmas Carolers*, Norman Rockwell, 1923.

Page 30: *Design for an organ*, Johann Georg Dirr, 18th century.



Sister Sara: A firm understanding.  
\*Chuck, this one's for you!

## Spring LifeLight

Beginning  
Thursday, February 2  
9:30 a.m.

Join us as we delve into a study of  
**Bible Feasts**  
on Thursdays throughout Lent!



## Saints' Days in January

- 1 Circumcision and Name of Jesus
- 2 St. J. K. Wilhelm Loehe, Pastor
- 10 St. Basil the Great of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Bishops and Confessors
- 17 St. Anthony, Abbot
- 18 The Confession of St. Peter
- 20 St. Sarah, Matriarch
- 24 St. Timothy, Bishop and Martyr
- 25 The Conversion of St. Paul
- 26 St. Titus, Bishop and Confessor  
St. Polycarp of Smyrna, Bishop and Martyr
- 27 St. John Chrysostom, Bishop and Confessor
- 28 St. Charlemagne, King





**THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION**

+ February 19 +  
10:30 a.m.

*Ladies Night Out*

Red 8 Kitchen  
Ridgeland  
Wednesday, January 25  
6:00 p.m.

*Please RSVP to Sister Sara  
by February 22*

The **Issues**, Etc.  
**MAKING the CASE  
CONFERENCE**



June 16 & 17 in Chicago, IL

✦

Epiphany House Blessing

**C + M + B + 2023**

The numbers represent the New Year  
*2 meanings for C, M, B*


↻ (Caspar) (Melchior) † (Balthasar) ↻  
*traditional names for the magi*

"CHRISTUS MANSIONEM BENEDICAT"  
which in Latin means  
"MAY CHRIST BLESS THIS HOUSE"

*The "+" signs represent the cross  
and 2023 is the year of the blessing*

House  
Blessings  
+ 2023 +

Epiphanytide means  
House Blessings!  
New house or old, big  
or little, clean or dirty,  
Pastor Fields is here  
for you!  
Contact Sister Sara to  
schedule yours  
as we enter this new  
year!



**20 + C + M + B + 23**




# January 2023

## PRAYER FAMILIES and BIRTHDAYS

*Jo Miller*  
2—Larry Bowman  
3—Christa Kettler

**1**  
FEAST OF THE  
CIRCUMCISION & NAME  
OF JESUS



**2**  
*St. Wilhelm  
Loehe*  
6:15 p.m.  
Elders Mtg.

**3**

**4**

**5**


**6**  
6:30 a.m. Bible  
Study  
FEAST OF THE  
EPIPHANY



**7**  
2:00 p.m. Christmas  
Recital  
3:00 p.m. Christmas  
Clean-up

*Jenny Merry*

**8**  
FEAST OF THE  
EPIPHANY (OBSERVED)  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Divine Service



**9**

**10**  
*Sts. Basil the  
Great, Gregory  
of Nazianzus, &  
Gregory of  
Nyssa*  
6:15 p.m.  
Council Mtg.

**11**

**12**

**13**  
6:30 a.m. Bible  
Study

**14**  
9:00 a.m. Quilting

*Elaine Monaghan*  
16—Will Nelson

**15**  
EPIPHANY II  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Divine Service

**16**

**17**  
*St. Anthony*

**18**  
*Confession of St.  
Peter*

**19**

**20**  
6:30 a.m. Bible  
Study  
*St. Sarah*

**21**  
10:00 a.m.  
Visitation  
11:00 a.m. Funeral  
for David Teal  
12:00 p.m.  
Committal

*Bobbie Mutter*  
23—Lesley Dickens  
24—Sherrri Smith  
28—John Weidner

**22**  
EPIPHANY III  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Divine Service

**23**

**24**  
*St. Timothy*

**25**  
*Conversion of St.  
Paul*  
6:00 p.m. Ladies'  
Night Out

**26**  
*St. Titus  
St. Polycarp*

**27**  
*St. John  
Chrysostom*

**28**  
*St. Charlemagne*  
8:00 a.m. Enhanced  
Carry Training

*Nelson Family*

**29**  
EPIPHANY IV  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Divine Service  
5:00 p.m. Koimonia

**30**

**31**

**Serving this month:**  
Elder—Eric Held  
Greeters—Rush & Allison Agent  
Ushers—Bruce Bodkin, Mark Ochs