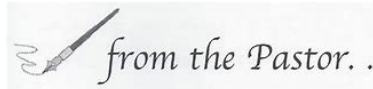


New Era Lutheran Church



December 2022 Newsletter

Pastor Kirsten Lee
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Worship Services: 10:30 am

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each week
Newsletter Items due by the 20th of the
month

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[NewEraLutheranChurch](https://www.facebook.com/NewEraLutheranChurch)

Dear beloved in Christ,

Welcome to Advent. As the world around us picks up the pace of going through each day, God beckons us to breathe and be still. As we rush from Thanksgiving to Christmas as if in a race to see who will reach the end of the preparations first, God beckons us to wait. To watch. To wonder. In those small moments, the Holy Spirit whispers God's promise to you I am bringing love to you in a new way.

The Holy Spirit persists in drawing you closer to God's heart, to show you even as God promises to come in the flesh of Jesus Christ, God is already with you because of Christ's resurrection. The Holy Spirit persists in nudging you to ponder where God can be seen and heard in your day. Where have you felt God's love for you? Where do you need to see God's love and hope in your day today?

As we anticipate the birth of our Savior, we cling to the promise of Christ already in our life. This is a mysterious promise and a powerful promise. God's love for you is faithful and attentive. God knows you need signs of God's gracious hope in your life so God never stops showing you glimpses of love and hope.

During Advent, God invites us to slow down and watch for Christ. Watch with hope-filled expectancy and see Christ's grace in your life. This hope of Christ draws us closer to God and gives us courage to live as disciples in the mystery that Christ lives today and will come again.

Wherever you look for Advent this year, I pray you see glimpses of God's surprising grace. I pray you are fed and nourished by the lifegiving power of the Holy Spirit. And I pray you experience the hope of God whose light shines in our darkness. Watching and wondering with you,

Pastor Kirsten



In the past month, you may have noticed our paraments in worship switching colors nearly every week. At the end of October, we had RED to signify the Holy Spirit's guidance during the Reformation. The following week was WHITE as we gave thanks for the Saints who have been welcomed home to God's eternal kingdom. For a few weeks after that, we went back to GREEN, only to switch again to WHITE for Christ the King.

I've been asked by a few people at both congregations why we switch colors and what these colors mean. The following is some insight that I've received from the ELCA website and from my own knowledge. I hope this is helpful.

"Many of the colors associated with the seasons are closely linked with the experience of Christians in the Northern hemisphere. Christians in the Southern hemisphere will experience the church year differently in that

context, perhaps calling forth different color associations. It is also helpful to realize that colors have different associations across the globe, just as they have had different associations over the course of the church's history. For example, white is the color North American and European Christians typically associate with Christmas and Easter, the color white signifying the purity of Christ, light or joy. In many Eastern cultures, however, white connotes mourning. "(elca.org)

ADVENT

Blue is associated with Advent, suggesting hope. This association originated in Scandinavia, probably because purple dye was too expensive for churches to use. Some assemblies use purple in Advent, a color associated with royalty as the church awaits the newborn king. Advent is a season of preparation. At home we make Christmas cookies and put up the tree, but at church we prepare for God incarnate in Jesus Christ. For four weeks, we follow the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

CHRISTMAS

White, calling to mind the purity of the newborn Christ, and to our light and joy in Christ. This is also the color used for Epiphany. During Epiphany, we think about seeing Jesus, the light of the world. We work on sharing Jesus, the light of the world. White is also used for Baptism of Our Lord (January). White is also typically (though not always) used for weddings and funerals as we celebrate and remember the promise of the resurrection.

TIME AFTER EPIPHANY

Time after Epiphany: Green is used for its symbolism of our growth in Christ. Green, in a

sense, is a "neutral color," used when more festive or more somber color is not appointed.

LENT

Purple is typically associated with Lent, suggesting repentance and solemnity. Lent is the time of the church year when we put some pleasures away, we deliberately slow down and think about what it means that Jesus, who is God incarnate, God in the flesh, ends up dying on the cross. This is the time of year we engage in spiritual practices like listening, calmness, reflection, and other practices that draw you closer to God.

EASTER

After a somber season of Lent, we celebrate our Lord's triumph over death. We celebrate the promise of new life after death and look for signs of new life- both spiritually and physically as our seasons turn from winter to spring.

PENTECOST

The last season of the church year is Pentecost. This is the time when we recognize and celebrate that the Holy Spirit is among us, God is still speaking, still working, still serving. We STILL have more to listen and learn. Pentecost starts with the color red – the color that symbolizes the Holy Spirit who comes in flame to change us.

TIME AFTER PENTECOST

Time after Pentecost: Green is used, to indicate our growth in faith as we follow the teachings and ministry of Christ. Some assemblies use differing shades of green throughout the Sundays after Pentecost, a lighter green in summer and a darker green in fall.

CHRIST THE KING

Christ the King: The final day of the church year uses white, a festive color suggesting light, joy, and the celebration of our Lord.

NOTICE!

A Congregational Meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, Dec 11, 2022, to discuss and approve repairs and painting for in the Fellowship Hall.



Remember in Prayer

Janet & Tom Kindler, Kayla Pfluger, Ryan Gladwell and Alexandria Brush and Emory Ann Gladwell, Porche Carle, Vicki Loving, Mary Dickinson, Alice Hermann, Troy Davis, Linda Meador, Catherine Dittmer, Emogene Sorgenfrey, and loved ones who are in need of prayer support. Sincere condolences to the families of Robert "Bud" McMahon who passed away.

DECEMBER

Ushers – ??

Alter Guild – Ann Mayes

Communion Asst. – Gloria Batteau &

Viola Hubbs-Shankle

Readers

Flowers

Dec 4	Ann Mayes
Dec 11	Maureen Ruser
Dec 18	Eric Leacox
Dec 25	

Fellowship Hostesses

Dec 4	Janet Kindler, Lynn Bendt
Dec 11	Janie Swails, Vicki Hampton
Dec 18	Carolyn Leach, Vicki Hampton
Dec 25	No Treats



Birthdays

1 – Peggy Miller
4 – Zoe Lee
8 – Amaya Lee
17 – Janet Hull
18 – Rachelle Gladwell
Harris
20 – Lynne Leacox
25 – Shirley McDaniel
28 -Vivian Jean Turner
30 -Janice Lichtenwald
30 -Wiladene Yankee

Anniversaries

31 – Bill & Mary Maxson-Turner

Thank you to Lynn & Eric and all their helpers for our wonderful meal last Sunday (Nov. 13). It was great!

Thanks again! Viola Levetzow



Salvation Christmas Tree Angels are available at the back of the church. All unwrapped gifts are due at Calvary Church, 501 US 61, Muscatine, by Friday, Dec. 9. If you would like to obtain more Christmas Tree Angels, stop by the Salvation Army, 1000 Oregon Street, Muscatine.



Thank you for allowing us to use the gym. Here is a donation for our appreciation. We hope you will allow us the same opportunity this year. We continue to grow. Thanks again.

The Cats 5th Grade Boys Basketball Team



The Old Stone Church will have a Christmas program on Sunday, December 11 2022 at 4 pm. Pastor David Woods will be officiating.



Senior Resources has 10 Christmas recipients and includes their wish list. If you would like Senior Resources to deliver the items for you, please have them at the Senior Resources office at 1808 Mulberry Ave by Dec 15th. You may deliver the items yourself any day before Christmas Eve. Please call the recipient to make arrangements for delivery. Most of the sponsors will place items and gifts in a laundry basket, for each senior. This makes it so much easier when delivering.

Many, many thanks to all the young and very young who prepared and served the Senior Dinner!

God Bless You! Jerry & Jan Lichtenwald

New Era Lutheran Church
Council Meeting – Tues., Nov 8, 2022

President Becki Petersen called the council meeting to order at 6:10 pm. Dick had devotions.

Present: Joan Dietrich, Vicki Hampton, Dick Leach, Pastor Kirsten, Becki Petersen, Adam Turner

Next meeting will be December 13. Adam will have devotions.

Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. Vicki made motion to approve minutes; Dick seconded motion. Motion approved.

Treasurer's report was discussed. Adam made motion to approve treasurer's report; Joan seconded motion. Motion approved.

Care & Concern: Cards are being sent out; some people stop to see shut-ins. May make cold calls or send out letter.

Property: Becky Bettis and Dick Leach painted (primer) outside the entrance to the Fellowship Hall. Next spring Becky will finish up. Dick bought new dehumidifier and new batteries for the thermostat at the parsonage.

Baseboards need to be taken off in parsonage basement and wall and baseboards cleaned for mold. Carpet should be done professionally. Dick will let Joan know when baseboards are taken off to call carpet cleaner.

Need congregational meeting to discuss and approve repair and painting at the Fellowship Hall. Bid forms can be requested from Joan.

Adam discussed whether analyses of buildings and prioritizing assessment of building (structural and electrical) should be done. Adam suggested Steve Haggerty to quote free estimate.

Stewardship/Fellowship/Outreach: Will contact Salvation Army for Children's Angel Tree tags and Senior Resources resident gift lists.

Worship & Music: Pastor will be gone from Nov. 21 thru Nov. 27 (1st Sunday in Advent). She will put together lay-laid service and omit communion. She will get someone to read devotions or share a faith story where their faith grew or a Bible passage they would like to share.

Christmas Eve Service is at 7 pm. Christmas Day will be Lessons and Carols. No service on New Year's Day.

Youth: NA

Old Business: NA

New Business: Orchestra Christmas Concert will be held at 7 pm on December 3 at First Presbyterian Church.

Advent is Sunday, Nov. 27. There will not be a soup lunch after worship. There will be Hanging of the Greens. Advent soup supper will begin Wednesday, November 30 @ 6 pm and continue every Wednesday in Advent.

Adam made motion to adjourn meeting; Joan seconded motion.

Respectfully,

Joan Dietrich
Secretary



God came to earth in the Christmas birth of a
tiny baby boy,
Whose life and death are redeeming us yet
with blessings, grace and joy.
Our minds may know this history but stand in
awe at mystery.
So faith becomes the way to make our hearts
like "manger hearts" where Christ can dwell
and God imparts his wondrous love each
day.—Peggy Ferrell

A collaboration across time and place

For Christmas Day worship, many churches use Psalm 98. It is fitting, then, that Isaac Watts, who interpreted 132 psalms as hymn texts, based a now-beloved carol on it.

Watts (1674-1748) was a student of language, religion and philosophy. He wanted to make Scripture more relevant to lay people and thought hymns could help. Watts composed more than 600 hymn texts, many still in use. But Psalm 98:4-9, "Joy to the World," needed music to fit its words.

Enter Lowell Mason (1792-1872), an American choir director. He came across Watts' Psalm 98 hymn text and sought inspiration for a melody from the famous oratorio *Messiah* by George F. Handel (1685-1759). Mason pulled musical phrases from sections of Handel's work, resulting in the tune we now recognize as "Joy to the World."

So it is that three men who lived across three centuries and never met — along with the composer of the original psalm more than two millennia earlier — together produced a hymn to the Christ-child, which millions have sung and continue to love.



The upside-down of Christmas

Theologian Halford Luccock once saw a shopper "who looked like an animated Christmas tree with packages dangling from every limb." When he retrieved some dropped bags, she grumbled that Christmas "turns everything upside down." Luccock replied, "That is just what it was made for!"

He explained: "Christmas is a story about a baby, and that is a baby's chief business, turning things upside down. ... A baby in a family divides time into two eras, just as Christmas does. There is B.C., which means 'before child,' and A.D., which means 'after deluge.'"

When God became flesh, the lowly, last, least and lost were exalted, added Luccock. As a result, "the locked-up treasures of kindness and sympathy come from the inside of the heart, where they are often kept imprisoned, to the outside of actual expression in deed and word." The Christ-child "enables all [people] to get at the best treasures of their lives and offer them for use."

A prayer to the Christ-child

You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms and pierce our hearts with your soft, sweet cries.
—Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

From trashed to treasured

In December 2017, Jimmy Amisial, a Texas State student home in Haiti on break, noticed a crowd peering into a trash can. A 4-month-old infant lay inside, but no one moved. So Amisial scooped up the baby and took him home to his mom. They washed and clothed him, gave him milk and sought medical care.

After investigators failed to locate parents, a judge asked if Amisial would serve as legal guardian. Sensing "this had happened for a reason," he "took a leap of faith." Now Amisial is raising funds to adopt Emilio. "I'm glad I got the opportunity to transform his life from being abandoned in the trash to being a wonderful treasure," he says.

Likewise, God did not leave humankind trapped amid the trash of sin and evil, destruction and death. Instead, God came to us as Jesus, scooped us into his loving arms and claimed us

as his own. Like Emilio, we've been transformed and are treasured.—Heidi Hyland Mann

A Christmas harvest

Christmas is the harvest time of love. Souls are drawn to other souls. All that we have read and thought and hoped comes to fruition at this happy time. Our spirits are astir. We feel within us a strong desire to serve. A strange, subtle force, a new kindness, animates man and child. A new spirit is growing in us. No longer are we content to relieve pain, to sweeten sorrow, to give the crust of charity. We dare to give friendship, service, the equal loaf of bread and love.—Helen Keller

A prayer for Christmas

The internet reveals little about Wilda English — only that she lived from 1916 to 1997 and once resided in California. No details exist about her family, work or interests. Just this prayer, widely shared online. And it is no small thing. Indeed, the prayer tells much about her faith.

God bless Wilda English for sharing these words with the world. May they continue to inspire many!

God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith;
the warmth of Christmas, which is love;
the radiance of Christmas, which is purity;
the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice;
the belief in Christmas, which is truth;
the all of Christmas, which is Christ.

Puzzle!

Take a break from Christmas preparations to complete this seasonal crossword.

Puzzle!

Take a break from Christmas preparations to complete this seasonal crossword.

DOWN

- 1. song
- 2. keeper of sheep
- 3. Anointed One
- 8. a gift of the magi
- 9. red plants
- 11. coming
- 13. Jesus
- 14. 12th month (abbrev)
- 18. (S&S)
- 20. a form of holly
- 22. heavenly messengers
- 26. he ordered the slaughter of the innocents

ACROSS

- 5. wise men
- 4. author of the most famous Christmas account
- 6. red-suited gift-giver
- 7. of Ephrothah
- 10. presents
- 12. Gabriel came to her
- 15. has a red nose
- 16. "Messiah" composer
- 17. patron saint of children
- 19. made flesh
- 21. home for Mary
- 23. tree decorations
- 24. crib
- 25. he was a carpenter
- 27. a novel

Answer: DOWN 1. carol, 2. shepherd, 3. Messiah, 8. gold, 9. poinsettias, 11. Advent, 13. Christ, 14. dec, 18. inn, 20. mislabeled, 22. angels, 26. Herod; ACROSS 5. Santa, 6. Bethlehem, 7. gifts, 10. Mary, 12. Rudolph, 15. Handel, 16. elves, 17. Saint Nick, 19. incarnate, 21. Nazareth, 23. ornaments, 24. manger, 25. Joseph, 27. star

At home in our hearts

"All hearts come home for Christmas," according to popular sentiment. But what if your heart (and/or home) is hurting or troubled? Does this season have room for

people who are struggling? Does the holiday still have meaning?

Yes, God's word tells us. In fact, that's why God sent Jesus, the Word, from his heavenly home to make "his dwelling among us" (John 1:14, NIV). As fully human, Jesus experienced loneliness and betrayal, loss and physical pain. He was rejected by loved ones, angered by corruption, and abandoned to die. But as fully God, Jesus provides answers, healing and hope. Through his resurrection (which first required an earthly birth), Jesus offers salvation to all who believe in him.

As we await the heavenly home that God's Son is now preparing, we can welcome him and his comforting promises, even into our hurting hearts.

Christmas crackups

Enjoy these kid-friendly holiday jokes!

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?
It's Christmas, Eve!

What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?
Cookie sheets.

What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?
"Freeze a jolly good fellow!"

What is a Christmas tree's favorite candy?
Ornamints.

What goes "Oh, Oh, Oh"?
Santa walking backward.

Why did Rudolph get a bad report card?
Because he went down in history.

What is an elf's favorite kind of music?
Wrap music!

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?
Nothing. It was on the house!

What kind of photos do Santa's helpers take?
Elfies.



Bible Quiz

Complete this Bible verse: "The (1)____ (2)____ in the (3)____, and the (3)____ has not overcome it."

- A. (1) Word; (2) speaks; (3) silence
- B. (1) light; (2) shines; (3) darkness
- C. (1) kingdom of God; (2) reigns; (3) world
- D. (1) Spirit of God; (2) shines; (3) world
- E. None of the above

Answer: B (See John 1:5.)

Come as you are

If you sometimes have a "love-hate" attitude toward Christmas, you're not alone. Theologian Charles Spurgeon bemoaned the "gluttony and drunkenness" that often marked the holiday in 19th-century England. "If there be any day in the year of which we may be pretty sure that it was not the day on which the Savior was born," he said, "it is the 25th of December."

Yet Spurgeon also wished "there were 20 Christmas Days in the year," because Christ's birth represents "supreme joy." In his writings and sermons, Spurgeon urges people to honor Jesus' birthday "all year round," reminding them that they can come "just as you are" because "no forms of etiquette are required in entering a stable." God offers everyone total

acceptance, Spurgeon adds, "for he puts himself into that manger that you may approach him."

Rediscovering Jesus at Christmas

In *Jesus Rediscovered*, Malcolm Muggeridge reflects on visiting the Church of the Nativity, built over a Bethlehem grotto in A.D. 330. Beneath it, "a silver star marks the alleged precise spot where Christ was born." Such shrines are common in the Holy Land, though most "are doubtless fraudulent," he writes. Yet among Bethlehem visitors, "almost every face somehow lights up a little" as "Christ's presence makes itself felt."

A humble earthly shrine reminds us that God's Son arrived as a pauper, not a prince. "Behind all this there is a real man born, growing up, reaching maturity like other men," Muggeridge writes, "trudging through this selfsame dust, and sheltering from this selfsame sun ... this man in whose flesh God deigned to live and die."



Christian symbol

CANDLE—The candle symbolizes

Jesus being the light of the world

(John 8:12), as well as his call for

Christians to be lights (Matthew

5:14). Candles play a prominent

role in the Christmas season. Each candle on an Advent wreath has a special meaning. Many churches have a candlelight worship service on Christmas Eve, often at midnight.



PUZZLE

Seeking the story

Angels joyfully announced a special arrival in Bethlehem at Christmas.

Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.



WORD BANK

Shepherds
Child
Nazareth
Census
Baby
David
Mary
Travel
Town
Register
Born
Night

T	B	W	Y	A	Z	K	E	S	H	N	G	D	J	K
Q	O	Y	A	P	R	A	L	B	F	P	I	C	Q	L
N	R	W	X	B	E	Y	R	M	B	D	M	O	E	E
S	N	O	N	W	G	A	I	B	A	C	D	O	T	D
R	G	X	J	F	I	W	M	V	B	R	R	C	E	O
P	S	C	E	N	S	U	S	H	Y	U	Y	F	P	N
O	T	P	I	G	T	Q	C	N	T	G	M	U	S	T
O	A	N	D	B	E	C	H	I	L	D	N	Z	F	A
A	T	B	A	U	R	W	H	G	F	V	A	B	U	M
T	R	A	V	E	L	J	C	H	V	O	Z	G	N	H
F	B	Q	I	W	D	X	P	T	E	N	A	O	L	Q
Z	C	R	D	Q	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	V
R	U	V	Y	K	N	I	R	T	K	G	E	Y	I	R
K	V	A	Z	X	L	S	H	Y	T	P	T	J	S	K
L	L	E	S	M	J	Z	L	Q	R	U	H	V	W	X












"Today in the town of David a _____
has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV

Answer: Savior

December 2022

November '22							January '23						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30				29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4  THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Choir Practice after Worship	5	6 12:10 pm - Advent Worship & Luncheon at Gloria Dei	7  Advent Soup Supper 6 pm - Soup Supper & Worship	8	9	10
11  THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship Congregational Meeting during Worship	12	13 9 am - Sewing group meet at church. Bring sack lunch. Everyone welcome.  Church Council 6 pm - Council Mtg	14 9 am - Care & Concern Meet @ McDonald's  Advent Soup Supper 6 pm - Soup Supper & Worship	15	16	17
18  FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 am - Sunday Worship  Children's Program Children's Christmas Program during Worship	19	20	21  Happy First Day of Winter!  Advent Soup Supper 6 pm - Soup Supper & Worship	22	23	24  Christmas Eve Service 7 pm - Christmas Eve Service; Choir will be Singing
25  Merry Christmas 10:30 am - Sunday Lessons & Carols	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	Sunday, Dec 4 - 12:30 pm - Celebration of Life at American Legion for Robert McMahon Sunday, Dec 11 - 4 pm - Old Stone Church Christmas Program - Pastor David Woods Officiating				