



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings of joy and peace in our Lord's name.

The first snow has fallen. Colorful lights have appeared on homes throughout the community. Radio stations are playing Christmas music. Stores have Christmas decorations and sales to entice you into their business. We are in the midst of the Christmas season and the celebration of our Lord's birth.

In the midst of the hustle and bustle of the season, people are tempted to overlook the reason we celebrate Christmas. Christmas is the story of God's gift to all mankind. The Father sends His Son into our world as one of us. He comes to make it possible for us to be saved and have a real home with Him in heaven. He comes to change things in our world and our lives.

In 1868, Bret Harte wrote a short story called "The Luck of Roaring Camp." It turned Mr. Harte into an internationally known writer. The story was written about a mining town in California called Roaring Camp. The only woman in the town was a Cherokee named Sal. She became pregnant, but died while giving birth to a son. This left a baby in a town full of single men. Not just men, but rough, tough, rude, and crude men of the WILD west. What are THEY going to do with a baby?

The child was thought to be a sign of good fortune so they gave him the name Thomas Luck. They put him in a dirty box, wrapped in dirty clothes. That didn't look right, so they ordered a rosewood cradle with satin sheets and a soft pillow. The best room they had was filthy, so these men got on their knees and cleaned the floors and the walls. Then they decided that if they were going to take care of a baby, they needed to start using soap. They needed to wash their hands and bathe more often. Then they said, "Maybe we don't need to be gambling so much. Maybe we don't need to be fighting so much. Maybe we don't need to be drinking so much. As the story progresses, the entire town of Roaring Camp was transformed by the arrival of a single baby boy.

We prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth and how the entire world was transformed by His arrival. This baby was and is the Son of God; and because of Jesus' birth, everything is different. He has made a whole new way of life possible. We can know salvation, peace, hope and joy. He shatters the darkness of sin with His love and forgiveness. He turns despair into hope, sadness into joy.

By the power of the Holy Spirit our lives are changed. The one who first loved us, empowers us to love others as He has loved us. Empowers us to bring message of forgiveness and hope to those around us. John writes, "We love because he first loved us." The tiny child born two thousand years ago in Bethlehem came and changed the world; and He comes to change our lives.

On behalf of Barb, Joy and Steve, Myka and Joslyn we wish each of you a blessed Christmas as we celebrate our Lord's Birth.

In Jesus Name,

Pastor J. K. Raether

Pastor Raether

Sent to Tell the Good News

The season of Advent has provided opportunity for us to reflect on God's great love for us fallen sinners that has caused Him to send His very own Son Who came for the ungodly, even for those who will never acknowledge His sacrifice and who reject His free gift of salvation. Along with the joy that we have in our Savior, especially at this time of the celebration of Jesus' birth, the knowledge that not all experience this joy brings a sorrow to us as it does to the heart of our Lord.

Just as God in His love sent His Son into this world to save the lost, so we are now sent to tell others of that love. The shepherds at Jesus' birth did not hesitate to tell others. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen..." (Luke 2:20). Like the shepherds, our joy and mission are to share the good news with all people that Jesus came "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). By grace, we are invited to be participants who declare to the world how God has reconciled us to Himself through His Son. God makes His appeal to unbelievers through us, and, therefore, it is imperative that we share the Gospel, which is the life-giving truth. We are to preach and teach the Word of God.

God calls us to share our faith and to let His light shine brightly. You and I have something to share that is needed by others, and that is the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ, Who came to us as a babe in a manger. In light of what Christ has done for us, we respond with a desire to serve and glorify Him. We are equipped and enabled by the Holy Spirit through His Word and Sacraments (2 Timothy 3:16-17) to be participants in His mission. We are the feet, eyes, ears, mouths, and hands who carry the message, who see the needs, who listen to the cries of those in need, who bring help to them, who tell them the message of reconciliation.

God's Word challenges us to use our time, talents, and money, so we can make an eternal difference in the lives of others. Because God is always with us, we can be faithful in our purpose to be God's participants in His mission to save all people.

May we all keep Christ as the heart of our Christmas and see Jesus as the reason for our joy. God's blessings on your Christmas worship and celebration with loved ones.

Have a blessed Christmas!

FROM: Stewardship Advisors

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS
"The Life of David"

We hope to conclude our study of "The Life of David." During the month of November we did not meet for various reasons. Following is the schedule for the month of December:

- Dec. 3 No Class – Pastor leads our worship and the worship at St. Paul Lutheran
- Dec. 10 Lesson 7 – "David's Problem with Absalom"
- Dec. 17 Lesson 8 – "David's Music and Poetry – Good Medicine for the Soul"
- Dec. 24 No Class Christmas Eve
- Dec. 31 No Class New Years Eve

We will announce the topic for the Sunday Morning Class that will begin in January of 2023 during the month of December.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS
(10:00 am)

We will conclude Lee Strobel's "The Case for Christmas" Consulting experts on the Bible, archaeology, and messianic prophecy, Strobel searches out the true identity of the child in the manger, analyzing the following topics: Eyewitness Evidence--Can the biographies of Jesus be trusted? Scientific Evidence--What does archaeology reveal? Profile Evidence--Did Jesus fulfill the attributes of God? Fingerprint Evidence--Did Jesus uniquely match the identity of the Messiah? Following is a schedule of topics:

- 11-29 "Beneath the Fake News" & "A Mind Bobbling Proposition"
We will show two sessions on the 29th because of technical difficulties
- 12-6 "The Prophetic Fingerprint"

The Wednesday Morning Class, when it resumes on January 10, 2024 will take up Max Lucado's video series "God Never Gives Up On You." This is a study of the life of Jacob.

MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES
Wednesdays at 1:00 pm
"THE LIGHT OF GRACE"

This year's Midweek Advent Services "The Light of God's Grace" honors the 250th anniversary of the hymn "Amazing Grace". We celebrate that Jesus is the Light of the World who shines on us with His amazing grace. Jesus makes His grace known through the undeserved gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love – gifts revealed in special way in the lives of Zechariah, Isaiah, Elizabeth, and Mary. The schedule is as follows:

- Nov. 29 HOPE: Zechariah (Psalm 39:7): In his old age, after years of waiting and not giving up hope, Zechariah is blessed with a son, John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the Light of Grace, Jesus.
- Dec. 6 PEACE: Isaiah (Isaiah 9:6): Isaiah announces to an unsettled people that relief is coming soon through the Prince of Peace, the Son of God, the Light of Grace.
- Dec. 13 JOY: Elizabeth (Philippians 4:4): The boy in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy and so does she when Mary arrives, carrying the little Lord Jesus inside her. The Light of Grace is soon to come.
- Dec. 20 LOVE: Mary (Isaiah 54:10): The mother of the Light of Grace sings a love song to the Lord for his undeserved favor toward her and toward all the world.

THE CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

- Dec. 24 The 9:15 am service will observe the Fourth Sunday in Advent. Holy Communion will be celebrated.
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve, 7:00 pm, the celebration of our Lord's birth. This will include a candle lighting ceremony.
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day Worship 10:00 am. We will celebrate our Lord's birth and celebrate Holy Communion.

NEW YEAR'S EVE WORSHIP
December 31— 9:15 am.

We will bid farewell to 2023 and welcome in 2024 with our regular worship on December 31 at 9:15 am.

Membership Report for November 2023

GAIN

Confirmed +

Baptized +

LOSS

Confirmed -

Baptized -

Communicant =163
Baptized (not confirmed) = 46
Total baptized souls = 209

Financial Report November 2023

Income (Offerings)

Home/Current \$8,376.00, Missions Budget \$172.00, Loose Offerings \$313.78, Thanksgiving Offering \$791.00, Advent Offering \$5.00, Special Offering \$120.00, Miscellaneous \$390.00.

Total Offerings \$10,169.78

Expenses

Pastor \$2,000.00, Payroll \$1,004.78, Organist \$360.00, Pastoral Expenses \$510.90, Ministry Expenses \$13.98, Television Ministry \$51.01, Office Supplies \$64.20, Computer/Internet \$389.52, Water \$105.78, Pest Control \$39.00, Gas & Electric \$732.00, Sanitation \$40.66, Property Repairs \$89.17, Organ \$525.00, W/H Tax \$176.26, Postage \$264.00, Missions \$172.00, Charities \$911.00, Advertising \$295.00.

Total Expenses \$7,744.26

Net Income \$2,425.52

ATTENDANCE

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Communion</u>
11/5	56	
11/12	38	37
11/19	41	
11/26	34	30
Thanksgiving	19	
Advent	18	



Glory to God
in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will toward men.

Luke 2:14, KJV