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# Messenger of Peace

*The monthly newsletter of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church*

**December 2021**



*Messenger of Peace* is a publication of Peace Lutheran Church, Wautoma, Wisc.

**Purpose:** *Messenger of Peace* serves the Peace Lutheran Church family with information about people and events that are part of the Peace ministry and with articles that encourage Christian living.

**Articles:** Please forward information and articles to Christine in the office by the 3rd Sunday of each month. Email it to: [peacelutheranwautoma@gmail.com](mailto:peacelutheranwautoma@gmail.com).



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## Church Decorating

Saturday, December 4  
at 9 am

*Members of all ages can join us to decorate the church for Christmas. See Fred Bohlmann with any questions.*

## Advent Dinners

Thursday, December 9 & 16 at 5-6 pm

*The entire family is invited to join us for a meal and fellowship prior to midweek Advent Worship at 6:30 pm.*



## Advent by Candlelight

*"The Perfect Gift"*

Sunday, December 5 at 1 pm

Ladies of all ages are invited to join us for this once-a-year event. Enjoy an afternoon full of God's Word, music, beautiful decorations, yummy desserts, and great fellowship.

Please invite your friends and neighbors to join you.

**RSVPs** to Christine at 920-787-3856



## Why a Wreath?



Wreaths can be made from holly branches.



The pointy leaves remind us of Jesus' crown of thorns



Jesus is the reason for the season!

We are all familiar with the traditional Christmas wreath. Many of us even have one hanging on our door. Why a wreath?

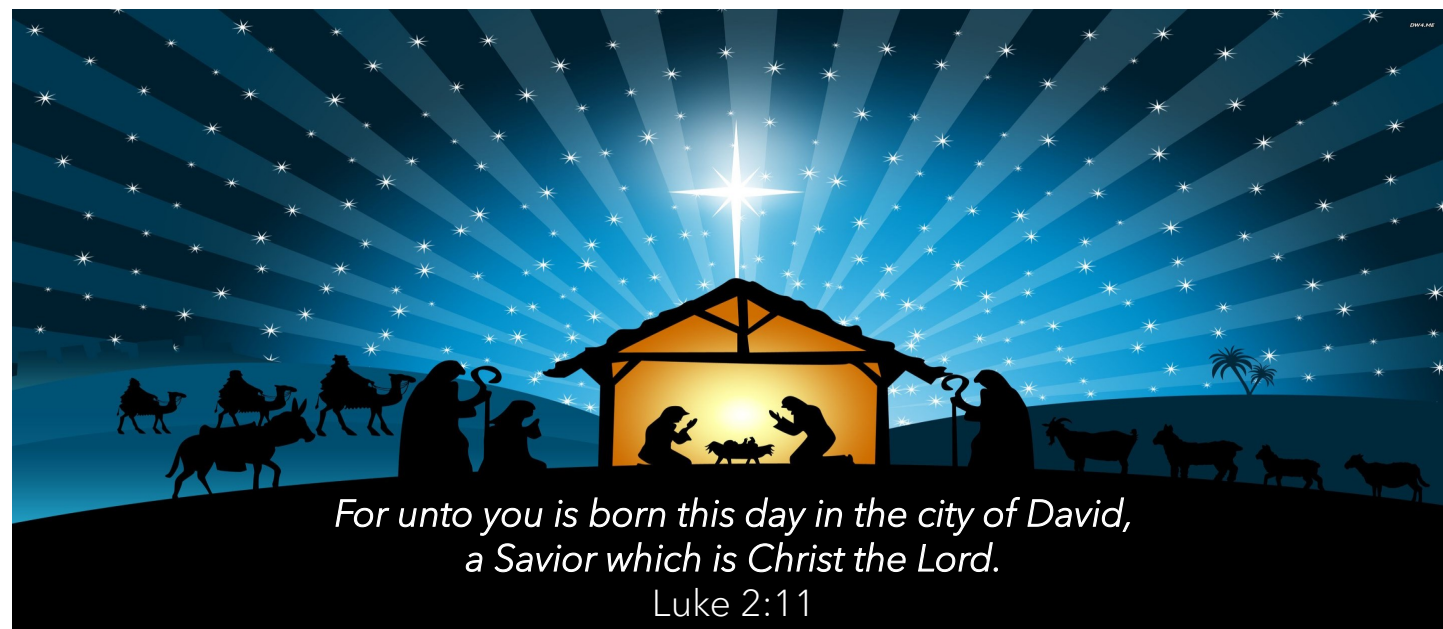
The Christmas wreath is made from holly branches. The holly plant grows a beautiful, white flower not too different from an Easter Lilly. That pure white flower symbolizes the purity and holiness of Jesus, who was born without sin.

The holly plant also produces bright red berries with juice that will stain almost anything. Those berries symbolize the blood that Jesus shed on the cross in order to pay for our sins and grant us forgiveness.

The holly leaves also have sharp points, reminiscent of the thorns which were used by the Roman soldiers to make a crown for Jesus. To mimic that crown, the holly branches are often woven together to form a circle. The circle is also a symbol of eternity which we will inherit because of what Jesus Christ did for us.

The Christmas wreath, therefore, is a symbol of our Savior Jesus, the reason for the season. He was pure and holy, yet he shed his blood to forgive us. As part of his suffering he wore a crown of thorns. So the next time you see a Christmas wreath or hang one on your door, remember what it symbolizes and say a prayer of thanks that Jesus would come to this earth as a baby and let himself be killed so that we could live. Someday in heaven, we'll be able to thank him face to face.

Merry CHRISTmas!



## I Need More Joy

After hastily opening the wrapped package and making the obligatory thank yous, it certainly didn't take long to turn away from the thoughtful gift as something ho hum.

Just then three-year-old Eleanor came along and stopping by the discarded item exclaimed, "Oh, my, what a beautiful gift! Is that yours? You must be so happy?" As she walked away I thought to myself, "Why don't I have the joy of that little girl?"

At times we have those feelings which cause us to cry out, "I need more joy in my life!" That is so often true at this time of year when for one reason or another we find ourselves lacking joy. There are indications everywhere that joy should fill our lives. Decorations are going up inside and outside. Christmas music surrounds us, and cards are arriving daily.

Some days the festive joy fills our hearts as we excitedly go about our holiday shopping and schedule planning. Yet deep down we know that this joy will not last. Planning becomes overwhelming, schedules start falling apart, and decorating gets tiresome. Above all, we know from experience, there will be no joy when we find we don't have enough money to purchase the perfect gift or when credit card payments come due. All of this leads us to shout out, "I need more joy! I need joy that will last!"

Here's some great news. Christmas brings us joy that does last—the true joy found in Jesus.

With a love that we cannot comprehend, our heavenly Father gave his only Son, born to be our Savior. With perfect obedience Jesus lived the life all of us are unable to live. Each and every evil thought, evil word, and evil deed we have done has been picked from us by our heavenly Father and placed on Jesus. On Calvary's cross, Jesus bowed his head in death declaring, **"It is finished."** These words of Jesus bring us true joy. They mean that all is done and Easter's announcement "He Is Risen!" guarantees that God our Father has accepted Jesus' life and death as payment in full for all our sins. True joy is the forgiveness of sins that is ours through faith in Jesus.

While we are in the midst of the season when it seems hard to keep joy in our lives, focus on the true Joy Giver. Ponder again the words of the angels to the shepherds, **"Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord."**

Come and worship the Babe born in Bethlehem and may God the Holy Spirit fill you with a joy that never ends.





## OWLS Convention Re-Cap

The Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) was thrilled to gather in New Ulm, Minn., on Oct. 19-22 for its annual convention. The theme was "We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord."

Daily worship, workshops, and keynote presentations focused on the theme of telling the next generation.

The OWLS used its offerings to support the WELS European Civilian chaplaincy, which serves military personnel and civilians in Europe. This year, the OWLS presented them with a check for \$53,300.

One of the goals of the OWLS is to increase awareness of its ministry within local congregations.

Long-time OWLS members welcomed a number of first-time attendees to the convention this year.

The 2022 OWLS convention will be held Oct. 11-13 at the Stoney Creek Hotel and Convention Center in Onalaska, Wis. The convention is open to all seniors in WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, regardless of OWLS membership. Learn more about the OWLS at [wels.net/owls](https://wels.net/owls).



Plan now to join us for the WELS Women's Ministry Conference at Luther Prep in Watertown on July 21-23, 2022. We will dig into Ephesians and learn about the richness of God's grace. Grace that moved Jesus Christ to the cross and won us by his blood. Find out how that truth shapes and impacts us as women in the church, home, and workplace.

For more information, visit [wels.net/event/2022-wels-womens-ministry-conference/](https://wels.net/event/2022-wels-womens-ministry-conference/)

## Christmas Concerts Around the Synod

For more information about any of these events, please visit the venue's website listed.

**Martin Luther College**, New Ulm MN  
Saturday, December 4 at 7:30 pm  
Sunday, December 5 at 4 pm  
<https://mlc-wels.edu/>

**Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary**, Mequon  
Sunday, December 12 at 3 pm and 7 pm  
<https://www.wisluthsem.org/>

**Luther Preparatory School**, Watertown  
Sunday, December 12 at 3 pm  
December 16 at 10 am  
<https://www.lps.wels.net/apps/events/>

**Michigan Lutheran Seminary**, Saginaw MI  
Friday, December 17 at 7 pm  
<https://www.mlsem.org/>

**Wisconsin Lutheran College**, Milwaukee  
Friday, December 3 - 7:30 pm  
Saturday, December 4 - 7:30 pm  
Sunday, December 5 - 2:30 pm  
<https://www.wlc.edu/>

**Wisconsin Lutheran HS**, Milwaukee  
Sunday, December 12 at 7 pm  
<https://www.wlhs.org/quicklinks/calendar>

**Northland Lutheran HS**, Kronenwetter  
Sunday, December 19  
<https://www.nlhs.org>



## URGENT NEED



We are in urgent need of people to learn how to run the sound/video equipment for church services, as well as people to learn how to use the Hymnsoft for when we don't have an organist.

Please talk to Kevin Bohn (920-765-2146) if you can assist in either of these ways.

## Greeting Cards



Christmas cards are now available for purchase, both single and boxed sets. For convenience of purchase, checks are welcome made out to

"Circle of Peace." Individual cards are \$0.50 and all proceeds support the Circle of Peace mission work. We also have a refreshed assortment of birthday, wedding/anniversary, thank you, new baby/baptism, get well/thinking of you and sympathy cards. Thank you for supporting Circle of Peace through your purchases!

## Pill Bottles Needed



The Circle of Peace is collecting empty pill bottles with covers (labels removed) for the Central Africa Medical Mission. Please place in the

box on the back table. Please see Sheryl Bohlmann with any questions.

## Remember Our Shut-Ins

If you would like a list of shut-ins to send Christmas cards to, please call the church office at 787-3856.

## Church Office Holiday Hours

The church office will be closed December 21- January 3.

You can call Christine at 920-765-2147 if you need anything during that time.



## A Christmas for Kids event

**Saturday, December 18**  
**11:30 am- 2:30 pm**

Kids, ages 4K and up, are invited to join us for this fun afternoon of games, crafts, a scavenger hunt, and learning about the Light of the World!

Bring a friend!

This event is free and lunch is included. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** We are looking for volunteers to help at this event. We need kitchen helpers and station leaders. Please see Christine in the church office for more information.



## New Hymnals

If you would like to purchase a hymnal for the sanctuary in honor of or in memory of someone, please see Christine in the office.





# The Advent Gift

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world; The light no darkness can overcome.  
Let your light scatter the darkness; Let it shine in our hearts and lives. Amen.

Imagine a pie perfectly baked: with a crisp, flaky crust; a warm, fruit-filled middle. Imagine a gift perfectly given: from someone who cares for us deeply, who knows exactly what we need. To bake a perfect pie takes years of experience. To give a perfect gift takes careful thought.

God's plan for our salvation did not begin during the course of time. God's plan for our salvation comes from eternity. Two days before His betrayal, Jesus spoke of His return:

***"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all His angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory... Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.' "*** (Matthew 25:31, 34)

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we see how God's perfect, eternal plan was brought to its fulfillment. Our changeless God has carried out His plan to bring us into the kingdom He has prepared for us.

When we go Christmas shopping, we sometimes look for gifts that are costly. We may give such gifts because of the love we have for someone. God's gift of our salvation also had to be purchased. The guilt of our sins was great. A price needed to be paid. Left to ourselves, we would be unable to pay that price. But God's gift of our salvation means that God Himself would pay the price for our sins' guilt. This work of Jesus is called redemption. The payment Jesus made was His life for ours. We are the ones redeemed, and now we are forgiven.

***In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*** (Ephesians 1:7)

There is a limit to the number of gifts we can give to others. Although our heart may want to give more, eventually we will run out of money. But there is no limit to the gifts that God can give. All of us needed the redemption that came by Christ Jesus, and he won it for all.

***There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*** (Romans 3:22-24)

The good news of forgiveness in Jesus is one gift that we can share freely with all people. No matter who it is, no matter what they have done, we can share this good news with anyone: **Jesus died for you.**

God prepared his Advent gift to us in a way that we would not look for something else that we thought was better. God prepared his Advent gift to us in such a way that we would see the goodness of the giver and the perfection of the gift. God's own Son – wrapped in flesh, placed into our world – is exactly the gift we needed.

***Christ Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross!*** (Phil 2:5-8)

Through the repentance that the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, we admit that we are unworthy of any of God's gifts. Through that same work of repentance, we look to Jesus as the one gift we need. The gift God prepared, He also presented. The gift God promised, He also fulfilled. And He did so at just the right time. Jesus was born at just the right time.

***"When the time had fully come, God sent his Son"*** (Galatians 4:4).

God announced the arrival of His gift by sending angels. The angel announced to Joseph:

***"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel" –which means, "God with us."*** (Matthew 1:20-23)

The angel Gabriel had already appeared to Mary.

***Gabriel said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."*** (Luke 1:30-35)

Through God's Word, we renew our faith this Advent and Christmas so that we find our Savior born in Bethlehem and, trusting in Him for full and free forgiveness, receive this precious gift to our eternal benefit.

*Paraphrased from the Advent by Candlelight program "The Advent Gift", written by Paula Nimmer, Grace, Oshkosh  
www.wels.net/women039s-ministry/advent-candlelight*



## December Birthdays

12/5 Pam Leifer  
Kenneth Doubek  
12/11 Bob Boelk  
Neal Roebke  
12/13 Karen Klamm  
Sandra Klamm  
12/18 Delores Bliske  
Mindy Hintz  
12/19 Jim Lichtenberg  
12/20 Heather Tews  
12/23 Tom Jones  
Everett Schulz  
Phyllis Schmidt  
12/24 Christine Anderson  
Dawn Wedell  
Karin Hetcher  
12/25 Jesus  
Christine Bohn  
12/26 Gene Wedde  
12/27 Russ Nero  
Mackenzie Sigourney  
12/28 Jim Mosier



## December Anniversaries

12/30 Rod & Judy Nelson (64)



If we missed your birthday or anniversary, that means the church does not have it. Please drop off dates at the church office, call 787.3856 or email [peacelutheranwautoma@gmail.com](mailto:peacelutheranwautoma@gmail.com).

## Contact Updates Needed

Did you get a new email address this year? Changed cell numbers or moved to a new home? Please let the church office know any information changes so that our records are up-to-date! You can email changes to [peacelutheranwautoma@gmail.com](mailto:peacelutheranwautoma@gmail.com), call at 787-3856, or drop off a copy of changes during regular office hours. **Thanks for helping us stay current!**

## Sunday School Corner

Sunday School meets every  
Sunday from 10:15-11:15 am.

We are busily preparing for the Children's Christmas Service. Mark your calendars for Sunday, December 19! We are practicing on Sundays in December, in addition to on Saturday, December 18 at 9-11:30 am. Just a reminder that we will NOT have Sunday School on December 19 or 26.

Sunday School is an extension of the family. We are here to assist families in their job of teaching and preparing young Christians for life. We consider it a privilege to serve the families of our congregation and urge each of you to take an active role in the Christian education of the children in your lives.

Please speak with me, any Sunday School teacher, or Pastor for more information about Sunday School, to volunteer, or to donate to the Sunday School program.

Karin Hetcher (920-240-6201)

*Sunday School Superintendent*

