

Sign Post

**November –
December, 2023**

In This Issue...

- 1 – Pastor’s Article
- 2 – Pastor’s Article
Prayers
- 3 – Bible Study
- 4 – Bible Study answers
Birthdays
- 5 – November Calendar
- 6 – December Calendar
- 7 – Word Search

Sign Post is online at
www.iowaeastdeaf.org.
It is the newsletter for:

Word of God Lutheran
Church for the Deaf
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God gives us peace. God makes you His holy people. May God keep your whole person - spirit, soul and body, and keep you free from sin until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God names you His child. He will do the same-as He promised. 1 Thess. 5:23-24

Do you remember a time when you were looking forward to someone coming to visit? Maybe you were a child, looking forward to your grandparents coming to visit for Christmas. Maybe you were the grandparent and your son or daughter was coming to visit, bringing their new baby, your grandchild, for you to meet for the first time. You know what that feels like! You look out at the driveway, you look at the clock, you keep busy doing things while you wait and you wonder, “When will they get here?” Finally they arrive and you finally get to hold your new grandchild. So much joy!

That is Advent. “Advent” means to arrive, or to come. Advent is the time of the church year leading up to Christmas. It is the time we look forward to Jesus coming. We remember Jesus coming and being born as a little baby in Bethlehem. We also look forward to Jesus coming again at the end of the world. We are eager for Jesus to come again because it will mean full salvation for us and it will be a time of great joy!

During this time of the year, after Thanksgiving and before Christmas, some of our Bible readings in church focus on Jesus coming to be born in Bethlehem. This is from the Gospel reading for Sunday, Dec. 24 this year.

The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. God favors you. You will become pregnant and give-birth to a son, and you will name the boy Jesus.” Luke 1:30-31

Other readings are about Jesus coming a second time at the end of the world. This reading is from the Gospel lesson for Sunday, Dec. 3.

Jesus said: In those days, after that trouble, the sun will become dark and the moon will not shine. The stars will fall from the sky. The powers in the sky will shake. Then people will see the Son of Man (Jesus) coming in clouds, and He will have great power and glory. Then He will send the angels to gather His chosen people from all the earth. Mark 13:24-27

What does that mean for us? Do we need to get ready? How? What should we do?
Continued on p. 2

Advent (continued from p. 1)

We do need to be ready. All of the Old Testament taught God's people and prepared them to be ready for Jesus to come the first time. God sent John the Baptizer to preach and tell people to repent and to baptize them. That prepared them again for Jesus to come. God's word also tells us to be prepared. How? This is what Peter wrote to tell us how to be prepared.

All things we see will get destroyed. Now, how should we live? Your lives must be holy, given to God, while you wait and hope for the future Day of God. On that day the sky will melt in fire and all things will melt in heat. But God promised a new sky and a new earth. Righteousness will live there. Now, my friends, while you wait, always live innocent and without blame in front-of God, and live in peace. 2 Peter 3:11-14

We don't put our hope in this world, and we don't try to store up treasures in this world. Everything here will be destroyed in fire. Instead, we look forward to the new heavens and new earth which God will create. Now, in this world, we don't live in a sinful way, but we live as God's people.

How can that happen? Because of God and His grace. He saved us. He made us His people. This is His promise to us. Believe it, hold onto that promise, and live in that promise.

God gives us peace. God makes you His holy people. May God keep your whole person - spirit, soul and body, and keep you free from sin until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God names you His child. He will do the same-as He promised. 1 Thess. 5:23-24

Pastor Eckert

Prayers

Please remember these people in your prayers:

- ✦ Thank God that He sent Jesus to be our Savior, to be born to live with us. Because He lived, died and rose alive again, we can live with Him forever!
- ✦ Ask God to make all people attend to Him and His ways. Thanksgiving and Christmas are times that we should be thanking God and celebrating Jesus our Savior. But many people use those times to only think about earthly things. Pray that people will instead think about God, who He is and what He does for us.
- ✦ Pray for the church, especially Deaf congregations to remain open and active and announce God's word for all people to believe. God says He wants all people to be saved and know His truth.
- ✦ Ask God to bring peace to the places experiencing war and fighting, especially in Ukraine and Israel.
- ✦ Ask God to bless people with health: Mollie Schmitz, Doris Harris, Shirley Green, Susan Green, Barbara Zimmerman, Norma Jean Mangrich, Kent Kischer, Lisa Oelberg, Janet Weber, James Weber, Curtis Bethurum, Kathy Anderson, Gerald Mitchell, Arlene Ritze, Ricky Moore, Paula Slavin, Nancy Griffin, Jeanette Kern, and many family members and friends.
- ✦ Pray for people who are studying to serve God and His church: Vince Mroz, Dan Wallis, new student John Szupica, and Pastor Luvisha in Kenya (as pastors), Nola Gray, and Peggy Gott (as deaconesses).
- ✦ All shut-ins to keep strong faith in Christ Jesus.

Dive Into God's Word

Celebrating Christmas

Should Christians celebrate Christmas? Some people say yes, because we are celebrating Jesus coming to save us. Some people say no, we shouldn't celebrate Christmas because Christmas is full of non-Christian ideas and the Bible never tells us to celebrate it. Who is correct? We will see what the Bible says about Christmas. (Answers are on p. 4)

What happened at Christmas?

The most important thing is for us to know what happened at Christmas. Many people go to Luke 2 to see the story of Jesus' birth.

1. Luke 2:1-4. In what city was Jesus born?
2. Luke 2:4-5. Who traveled to Bethlehem?
3. Luke 2:6-7. Was Jesus born at home, or in a hospital, or where?
4. Luke 2:8-16. Who were the first visitors to see baby Jesus?

What happened before Jesus was born helps us understand more about Christmas and Jesus' birth.

5. Luke 1:26-27. Who came to Mary with a message?
6. Luke 1:28-33. What did the angel say about the baby that Mary will have?
7. Luke 1:35. The angel said this twice (vs. 32 and 35), Jesus will be whose Son?

An angel also appeared to Joseph in a dream before Jesus was born.

8. Matthew 1:20. How would Mary become pregnant?
9. Matthew 1:21. What will Jesus do? What is His most important work?

The Gospel of John goes back long before Jesus was born, back to the very beginning.

10. John 1:1-2. What did John say about the "Word?" Who is the Word?
11. John 1:3-4. How powerful and important is this Word of God?
12. John 1:9,14. What did this Word do?

Can we celebrate Jesus' birth?

13. Luke 2:17-20. Did the shepherds celebrate Jesus' birth? Who told them Jesus was born?
14. Matthew 2:1-12. Did the wise men celebrate Jesus' birth? Who led them to Jesus?

What about "pagan" things at Christmas?

Some people say that many parts of celebrating Christmas are from non-Christian origins, even worshiping false gods. Some traditions have clear connections to old non-Christian traditions – kissing under mistletoe, for example. Other traditions have nothing to do with Jesus' birth, such as Santa Claus. For some traditions, the background isn't very clear, for example, Christmas trees and giving gifts.

Conclusion

As Christians, we will thank God and celebrate Him and His work. The Bible is full of examples of doing that. God's Son came down from heaven and was born to be our Savior. All of God's people in the Old Testament looked forward to Him coming to save us. All of God's people now look back and rejoice that He came to save us. In your celebrations, remember why we celebrate. Anything that doesn't point to Jesus is a distraction. Things that remind us of our Savior, God's gift to us to give us eternal life, can be part of how we rejoice and thank God for what He gives us in Jesus.

Answers to Dive Into God's Word, p. 2-3.

What happened at Christmas?

1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea.
2. Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth (in the north, in Galilee) and they traveled south to Bethlehem. The Roman king ordered that everyone had to get counted as part of a census. To do that, he ordered everyone to go back to the place where his family was originally from. Joseph was from King David's family. David was from Bethlehem, so Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem.
3. Jesus was born in a stable, a barn. They didn't have hotels like we have today, but there were people who owned larger houses and guests could stay with them. Those houses were all full, so Mary and Joseph stayed in a stable. There were probably other people staying in the stable, too. That is where Jesus was born. Mary laid Jesus in a manger, a feeding trough for animals, because they had no bed or crib for Him.
4. The first visitors to see Jesus were the shepherds.
5. The angel Gabriel came to Mary with a message from God.
6. The angel said that Mary will become pregnant and birth to a Son. Mary should name Him Jesus. He will be a King like His father David and He will be a King forever over God's people.
7. The angel said Jesus will be the Son of the Most High, and also called Jesus the Son of God.
8. The Holy Spirit's power made Mary become pregnant. She was still a virgin.
9. The angel said Jesus will save His people from their sins.
10. John said the Word was with God and the Word Himself is God. This Word is the Son of God.
11. God the Father made all things through the Word (the Son of God, Jesus). The Word Himself is life and He gives His life to people.
12. This Word came into the world. He became flesh. The Word became fully human as the man Jesus and He lived among His people.
13. Yes, the shepherds celebrated Jesus' birth. God sent an angel to them to tell them about Jesus' birth. After they saw Jesus, they went back to the fields and continued rejoicing and praising God for Jesus.
14. God sent a star to lead wise men to Jesus. They worshiped Him and gave Him gifts to celebrate His birth.

November

- 1 Agnes Mundhank
- 4 David Legg
- 5 Kathy Anderson
Lisa Oelberg
- 6 Tracey Shepard
Gary Lewis
- 8 Lilly Anderson
- 12 Wanda McAllister
- 14 Chris Wrage
- 15 Doris Ciha
Nova Love



- 19 Vicki Morris
Pastor Tim Eckert
Mike Check
- 20 Melody Schulte
- 22 Josh Hoover
- 23 Shirley Hampton
- 25 Arlene Ritze
- 28 Paula Slavin
- 30 Rhonda Wegenether

December

- 1 Jennifer Legg
- 11 Sheri Pohlman
- 25 Jesus Christ



Congratulations to Eric and Kelani!

They had a REALLY big weekend recently! On Saturday, Oct. 21, they got married. On Sunday, Oct. 22, Kelani was baptized and then both of them were confirmed and became members of Word of God. Congratulations to both of them!

November 2023

			1 7:00 WL – Worship	2	3	4 10:00 QC – Worship
5 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	6	7	8	9	10	11 10:00 QC – Worship 1:00 DU – Bible Study
12 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	13	14	15 7:00 WL – Study	16	17	18 10:00 QC – Worship
19 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	20	21	22	23 Blessed Thanksgiving! 	24	25 10:00 QC – Worship
26 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	27	28	29	30		

BR – Burlington. Concordia Lutheran Church, 2901 Cliff Rd., Burlington. 4th Sunday worship at 3:00 p.m.
 CR – Cedar Rapids. Word of God Lutheran Church Deaf, 1515 - 29th St. NE, Cedar Rapids. Every Sunday, Bible Study at 10:00 a.m., Worship at 11:00 a.m.
 QC – Quad Cities. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1705 E. Locust St., Davenport. Every Saturday, Worship at 10:00 a.m.
 WL – Waterloo/Cedar Falls. Immanuel Lutheran Church, 4820 Oster Parkway, Cedar Falls. 1st Wednesday worship at 7:00 p.m., 3rd Wednesday study at 7:00 p.m.
 DU – Dubuque. Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 2145 John F. Kennedy Rd., Dubuque. 2nd Saturday Study at 1:00 p.m.

December 2023

					1	2 10:00 QC – Worship
3 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	4	5	6 7:00 WL – Study	7	8	9 10:00 QC – Worship 1:00 DU – Bible Study
10 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	11	12	13	14	15	16 10:00 QC – Worship
17 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	18	19	20 7:00 WL – Worship	21	22	23 10:00 QC – Worship
24/31 * See below for worship and Bible study times.	25 Jesus is born! 	26	27	28	29	30

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Thanksgiving

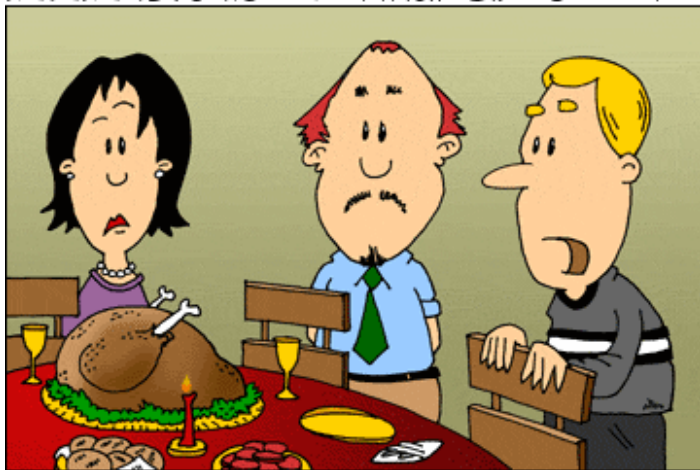
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The Psalms say much about God and His work. Many of Psalms cry out to God for salvation and then also thank Him and praise Him for how He saves His people. They also praise God for who He is and His greatness. For Thanksgiving, it is appropriate to read Psalms and thank God with the ancient Israelites who praised Him with these Psalms. The reading is from Psalm 89:1-4, 14-18. Find the underlined words.

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

I will sing forever about the evidence of Your mercy, O Lord. I will tell about Your faithfulness to every generation. I said, "Your mercy will last forever. Your faithfulness stands firm in the heavens." You said, "I have made a promise to my chosen one. I swore this oath to my servant David: 'I will make your dynasty continue forever. I built your throne to last throughout every generation.' " Righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne. Mercy and truth stand in front of you. Blessed are the people who know how to praise You. They walk in the light of Your presence, O Lord. They find joy in Your name all day long. They are joyful in Your righteousness because You are the glory of their strength. By Your favor You give us victory. Our shield belongs to the Lord. Our king belongs to the Holy One of Israel.

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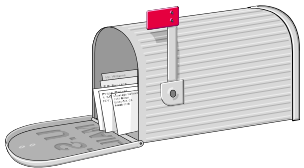


(See Psalm 100) 11-28-2002

HAS IT ALREADY BEEN A YEAR SINCE WE WERE THANKFUL?

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