

Cross CURRENTS

Issue 12.9
December 2017

A monthly publication to keep you informed about the ministry of Living Water and the opportunities for you to grow your relationships with the Lord and each other.

Christmas Traditions

“The Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation” —Luke 1:49,50 (NIV).

My wife and I have some important decisions to make this month. What kind of Christmas traditions are we going to start in our own home? This will be our second Christmas as a married couple, but the first one spent in our very own house. Now that we have roots in southeastern Wisconsin, what sort of traditions are we going to establish? We will have to decide how to decorate inside and outside. We will have to decide how and when to open gifts. (Last year we were on a mission trip in the Caribbean during Christmas!) We will have to decide how best to visit extended family. Traditions are important to establish and to celebrate.

What Christmas traditions do you have in your household and family? Do they revolve around decorating, food, gifts, people, or location? People love to identify with the traditions they celebrate around Christmas, and the longer those traditions have been around, the deeper the connection. If generations have been sharing the same traditions, it's almost impossible to think about having the holiday



without participating in those time-honored traditions.

For you and me as Christians, the most important tradition we have at Christmastime is the tradition of God showing us mercy through his newborn Son, Jesus Christ. While Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she sang about God, “His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.” God’s mercy means that God does not treat you as you deserve. Our sins deserve punishment, but instead we get mercy in the form of a newborn Savior. Because we know that Jesus was born to us as our Savior from sin, we “fear” God. That’s not a “scared of” fear. That’s a sense of awe, wonder, and reverence for how mindful, mighty, and merciful God is to humble sinners like you and me.

God has a tradition of mercy. Mary said, “His mercy extends... from generation to generation.” Each day we find in God a mercy which freely and fully forgives our sins. Each year we find mercy “wrapped in cloths and placed in a manger.” Each generation finds mercy in a never changing Savior who grew up in order to die in the place of all generations. Unlike earthly traditions, it truly is impossible to think about having Christmas without this tradition of mercy.

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As a congregation, it is our tradition to celebrate this mercy which was shown to Mary and is still shown to us. Living Water's tradition is to have midweek Advent services to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming. (*Advent* itself means "coming.") It's our tradition to hear from the lips of our Sunday School children the mercy and good news of Christmas. We have the tradition of gathering together on Christmas Eve night and Christmas Day to hear how God has "done great things" for us. It's almost impossible to think about having Christmas without participating in these traditional worship opportunities, but not because "it's just what we do." It's that way because we want to receive the mercy God extends to us through Jesus and because we want to glorify the Lord out of reverent fear.

I'm looking forward to establishing new traditions with my wife in our home this year and looking forward to being part of Living Water's worship tradition for the first time. Take a look at the worship opportunities this month and join us! God wants you to be part of his tradition of mercy. In fact, he wants all people of every generation to be part of that. So let's gather together as a spiritual family and make it a tradition to bring our friends as well.

May God's mercy and blessings be with you this Christmas season through our newborn Savior! Worshipping and serving God with you,

Pastor Aaron Voss

Upcoming Special Worship Opportunities

Midweek Advent Services

December 6, 13, 20, 6:30 pm

Fellowship Meal at 5:30 pm

Sunday School Christmas Service

Sunday, December 17, 9:00 am



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 24, 6:30 pm

Christmas Day

Monday, December 25, 9:00 am

Voter's Meeting



A Voter's Meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 10** at 10:30 am. We will be voting on the 2018 budget and choosing new leaders for the Church Council.

We Are Blessed Once Again

At our November Voters' Meeting, we learned that we have surplus money available in our 2017 budget.

Voters voted to use some of the money to pay off our church mortgage. This allows us to not only free up some additional money for 2018 projects, but also give money back to our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. With a number of new missions starting, our prepayment money can be used to help open a new church. Thanks once again to our Lord for guiding us through tough times. Thanks also to our members for their generous donations.



Picnic Shelter and Prayer Garden

The proposed Picnic Shelter and Prayer Garden was discussed at our Voters' Meeting. Members said that they liked the idea and urged us to move forward with the project. They encouraged us to make it larger and turn it so that it was perpendicular to the driveway.

We will be assembling a team to study different designs and sizes. We will be sharing ideas and costs in a future meeting.

Since this is a non-budgeted item at this time, members can give towards the shelter/garden by using the undesignated offering envelopes in their personal church envelope boxes. Simply mark Picnic Shelter and Prayer Garden on the envelope.

Worship Schedule Changes

Holy Communion will be not be celebrated on Sunday, December 17, as the Sunday School children will be presenting the good news of Christmas in Word and song. Holy Communion will be celebrated during the 9:00 am worship service on Sunday, December 24.

There will be NO Monday evening worship on Mondays, December 25 or January 1.

Christmas Parade

Join us on **Saturday, December 2** as we participate in the Waterford Christmas Parade. We will meet at church at 9:00 am to assemble the float and assemble goody bags. Volunteers to walk in the parade will meet by 5:00 pm at the staging area. Please contact Mike Viehweg with any questions.

Caring Ministry

The Elders Team and a few other members have been attempting to reach out to our brothers and sisters who we have not seen regularly. As redeemed children of God, our members who are not attending regularly need our love more than ever. This ministry activity is being done out of love and concern for our brothers and sisters. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

If you happen to know someone who has not been to church recently, pick up the phone and reach out to them in love. Start a conversation; it can be about anything. They may be struggling through a difficult time, they may be overwhelmed with all of the things that need to get done or they may be dreading spending the upcoming holidays without a loved one who is dearly missed. Regardless of the specific situation, we can all reach out in love and be a friend to those who need one.



A small group of us met for lunch at Pine Street Café in Burlington before going to the Malt House Theater to see "Greater Tuna" by the Burlington Haylofters. It was a nice way to spend a cold, rainy Sunday afternoon.

Senior Moments will be hosting the **Advent Supper** on Wednesday, December 22, at 5:30 p.m. It will be potluck, so we know there will be lots of wonderful food. There will be a sign-up sheet closer to the date of the dinner.

On Sunday, December 31, at noon, we will have our annual **Potluck Packer Party**. The Packers will be playing the Detroit Lions. This event is open to the entire congregation (including Lions' fans). Let's all come cheer for our favorite team. **GO PACKERS!**

There are still a few Senior Moments t-shirts available. They are on the table in the narthex. Help yourself if you'd like one.

Senior Moments is a service organization to provide social opportunities for the congregation. All members, 50 and older, are encouraged to join us for fun and fellowship.



Advent by Candlelight is right around the corner. Ladies, join us for an evening of delicious desserts, beautiful Christmas decorations, and meditative worship. Table hostesses and individuals to bring desserts are still needed. Please sign up in the narthex or email Janeen Roska at jsroska@gmail.com.

Christmas for Kids will be held on Saturday, Christmas for Kids will be held on Saturday, December 9 from 10:00 am -2:00 pm. This is an opportunity to share the good news of the Christmas story with children of both members and visitors. Many volunteers and donations are needed to make this event happen. Please sign up in the narthex. Donations of small items (\$5 or less) are also needed for the children to pick as gifts to give their family members. Contact Sherry Dahl with any questions.



WinGS is sponsoring an **Adopt a Family** clothing and toy drive. This is in connection with the ministry of Tomorrow's Choice in Waukesha. Please watch the bulletin board in the narthex and upcoming bulletins for more information.

Jesus Cares

Mark your calendars! On Monday, December 18, before the evening worship service, we will have our third annual hymn sing with the Jesus Cares students. Please consider attending and praising our Savior. We will begin singing around 6:45 pm.

We will be collecting non-perishable food items for one of the group homes that we serve, James Cares. We will be collecting the items through Sunday, December 17. James Cares is a privately-run home where four of our students reside. Thank you for sharing your blessings.



Thank You, God, for Your Plan - TEEN DEVOTION

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

Psalm 139:17-18a

We wake up every morning with so many thoughts, some bad and some good. Sometimes we just can't shut off our mind. Our minds wander during the day at school. We think of the tests coming up or the quizzes we're getting back. We think of the clothes that we're wearing and if that certain person will notice us. We think of the friends we have and the stupid decisions that we've made. We think of what we'll eat today and what practice will be like. So many thoughts.

Emotions flood our heart and mind too. We wonder what people really think of us. We wonder who we can really trust. We wonder about the decisions we make, second-guessing many of them. Sometimes we even wonder what we're really worth, or if we really make a difference in this world. Our minds are filled with thoughts, some bad and some good.

God too has thoughts, a vast sum of thoughts that are intent on giving us everything good. In this month of November we turn our thoughts to Thanksgiving and all the reasons that God has given us to say, "Thank you, God!"

There many reasons to thank God. Where do we start? After all, he made us. He gave us all our talents, our gifts and abilities. And he gave them to each one of us, each one individually, each one specifically and specially. This is all a gift from our Creator, from our Father, our God.

And it's not just that. God didn't just make us. He came for us. He lived for us. He died for us. And in Jesus' dying for us, God declares that we are of inestimable value to him. In Jesus' rising for us, God says that we are completely perfect in God's eyes.

These are God's thoughts, and we're just getting started. That's why God's thoughts are so precious to us. They go on and on and on. They bring endless comfort, joy, and hope to our souls. That's why it's a good thing to turn our thoughts to God's thoughts now. And not just in November, but always. In him, we find love, forgiveness, and guidance for this challenging life. His thoughts are not our thoughts, and we praise him for that!

A challenge for week one: Jot down in your notes app or in a journal your Top 10 reasons to say, "Thank you, God."

Prayer: Thank you, God, for your many and precious thoughts that center on your love for me and for all your creation! Amen.

Teen Devotions are brought to you by WELS Commission on Youth and Family Ministry.

Prayer LIST



- In the busy time of December which is so filled with Christmas activities, remember the sick, the poor, the homeless, those in prison, those all alone, those in nursing homes, those serving their country who will not be home for Christmas, and many others. Pray for opportunities to reach out to them and help them for this is why Jesus came.
- As we enter the busy Christmas season, pray that we may all remain Christ centered. That we may use this season as an opportunity to tell others about Christ. That we may all take time to be still and know the peace and love that Jesus came to bring. May all our actions be to keep Christ in Christmas.
- Continue to pray for renewed health for all who are suffering physical, emotional and mental health issues, and for their care givers.

- Pray for all families who have lost loved ones this past year. Pray that the Lord will strengthen them and surround them with His love as they go through this Christmas season so keenly feeling their loss.
- Offer a prayer of thanks for all who volunteer their time and talents to beautify Living Water; both the building and the services.

Jeremiah 29:12-13 "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Living Water STATISTICS AND NUMBERS

Year to Date Membership Changes	
Transfers In	4
Profession of Faith	0
Adult Confirmation	0
Transfers Out	-12
Released	-3
Baptism	1
Confirmation	0
Death	0
Net Gain/Loss	-10

Membership Statistics	
264	Baptized
233	Communicants
278	Total
108	Family Units
116	Average Attendance

Worship Attendance			
	Sun.	Mon.	Total
10/29	100	7	107
11/5	120	7	127
11/12	92	15	107
11/19	92	23	115
11/22	66		

Offerings					
	General	Special	Building	Education	Total
Total Given	\$206,363	\$517	\$4,950	\$1,366	\$213,196

Membership Changes	
Mike & Eloissa Heigl, Adelaide	Transfer Out
Rob & Joleen Sawall, Brenden, Alanna, Madison, Brooklyn & Makaela	Transfer Out

December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9:00 am Parade Float Assembly 5:00 pm Parade Meeting Time
3 8:20 am Prayer Group 9:00 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Bible Study 10:30 am Sunday School 11:30 am Christmas Decorating 6:00 pm Advent by Candlelight	4 5:15 pm Catechism Class 7:00 pm Worship with Communion	5 8:00 am Men's Breakfast	6 5:30 pm Fellowship Meal 6:30 pm Advent Worship 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	7 6:30 pm Handbell Rehearsal	8	9 10:00 am Christmas for Kids
10 8:20 am Prayer Group 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Voters Meeting 10:30 am Sunday School 11:15 am WinGS Meeting	11 5:15 pm Catechism Class 7:00 pm Worship 8:00 pm Elders Meeting	12	13 5:30 pm Fellowship Meal 6:30 pm Advent Worship 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm Church Council	14 6:30 pm Handbell Rehearsal	15	16
17 8:20 am Prayer Group 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Bible Study	18 5:15 pm Catechism Class 6:00 Jesus Cares 6:45 Hymn Sing 7:00 pm Worship	19	20 5:30 pm Fellowship Meal 6:30 pm Advent Worship 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	21 6:30 pm Handbell Rehearsal	22	23
24 8:20 am Prayer Group 9:00 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 9:00 am Christmas Worship NO Evening Worship	26	27	28	29	30
31 8:20 am Prayer Group 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Bible Study	/ NO Evening Worship					



6525 Milwaukee Avenue

Wind Lake, WI 53185

www.LivingWaterLutheran.com

Worship Information

Sunday Worship Service - 9:00 AM

Sunday Education Time - 10:30 AM

Monday Worship Service - 7:00 PM

Contact Us

Pastor: Aaron Voss

Church Office: 262.895.3700

Pastor's Cell Phone: 517.575.5546

E-mail: pastor@livingwaterlutheran.com

Office: church@livingwaterlutheran.com

Website: www.LivingWaterLutheran.com

2017 Church Council

Here is a list of people to contact if you have any questions or suggestions regarding anything happening in our ministry. Also, if you send a single e-mail to council@livingwaterlutheran.com, it will reach all members of our Church Council.

John Wiederhold - President

Jim Mertz - Treasurer

Craig Scherbarth - Financial Sec.

Bill Bartholomew - Head Elder

Mike Viehwig - Outreach

Jim Mastrocola - Trustee

Brian Haag - Education

Church Pictorial Directory



We would like to produce an up-to-date Church Pictorial Directory in 2018. In order to accomplish this task, we could use a team of people of four or five to work on this project. The team would start its work in January.

Please contact John Wiederhold or Pastor Voss if you are willing to help.