

Cross CURRENTS

Issue 13.12
December 2018

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.

A Light in the Darkness

“My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32 NIV)

Do you recognize those words? We often sing them, or a variation of them, right after Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper. Do you know who spoke them? Simeon sang that song right after he held the eight-day-old Jesus in his arms. For his entire life Simeon had been waiting to see the Messiah, God’s Anointed One, who would console Israel regarding the darkness of her sin and guilt. Simeon trusted this Messiah would come but as he waited, it still felt like there was some darkness in his life.

Simeon’s waiting game is not unlike what we go through every year in December. We anticipate a bright day coming in the month; we even trust and know it will happen. But the darkness still hovers around. And I’m not just talking about the dwindling hours of daylight in December. For many, December and the holiday season bring darkness or amplify it. Like a thick, wet blanket of snow, it muffles the sounds of joy

everyone else seems to be making. Like a long commute home from work when the sun has already set an hour prior, this time of year dims the radiance that all the festive lights tell us we should have.



Each person’s darkness may feel different and be associated with different things.

You may battle stress as deadlines flood over the dam of your schedule. Another feels sapped of energy because of chronic pain or sickness. Still another stays up all night, feeling guilty for all the ways he has let down his family in Christmases past. The feelings and struggles may differ on the surface, but they all have the same root: sin. Our sinful nature obsesses over schedules instead of spending time in the Word. Our bodies break down because sin has infected this world and is breaking down everything in it. Our guilt darkens our minds and hearts because we know there is no way we can ever make them completely right, especially before God.

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In these days darkened by a lack of daylight and made even worse by the sins we commit and the sinful effects we feel, dear Christian, be brightened by the light which Simeon saw. The eight-day-old baby he held was already a beacon of hope for all people, Jew and non-Jew, Israelite and Gentile. Jesus was – and is – salvation and spiritual light embodied!

The Father had prepared a plan to break the night of sin and death and the devil through this child born of Mary, and the plan was now in full swing. Jesus grew up and died to become the glory of the nation of Israel; the Savior has Jewish DNA in the blood he spilled from the cross. Jesus grew up and preached the gospel to reveal to the Gentiles the light of forgiveness; he would take away the sins of every people from every nation, without cost and with undeserved love.

May this glorious light of the gospel, seen by Simeon in the temple at Jerusalem and beheld by us at Living Water, brighten even your darkest days! It may not make you literally jump for joy as you continue with physical pain or personal depression. It may not make you do cartwheels as you walk back from the Lord's Supper. But it will strengthen your faith. The gospel of Jesus, the Son of God who became true human for us, has revealed a light that will never fade or go out. That makes us sing with Simeon. So, among all the Christmas carols and hymns you sing this December, add to them the Song of Simeon – a song meant not just for after communion or during Christmas but for every day of a Christian's life, especially when you and I need a light in the darkness the most.

In December we have extra chances to see that light in worship. I encourage you to join us during our midweek Advent services, or catch the recordings posted on our website. Take advantage of our Christmas Eve worship, and then turn around and get the gospel light the next morning on Christmas Day. But not only do we get to share in the light, we can share the light with others. Be on the lookout and for chances to invite friends, relatives, neighbors, or even acquaintances to see the same light of forgiveness and life eternal which God gives to us at Christmas.

In the name of the Christ-child, our light in the darkness of sin,

Pastor Aaron Voss

Open Forum & Voters Meeting

An Open Forum and Voters Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 9 following worship. Important items on the agenda include the 2019 budget and election of officers. We will be electing a congregational president, a financial secretary, and an education chairman. The men nominated for president are Mike Graffenius and Ryan Moldenhauer. Craig Scherbarth was nominated for financial secretary, and Brian Haag was nominated for education chairman. Come find out about the ministry that is happening here at Living Water.

Learn and Grow in Your Faith

Beginning in January 2019, you will have new opportunities to learn more about God, his love, his Word, and how we express our faith in him!

Sunday Morning Bible Class

Ever had questions on why we do some of things we do in worship? Sunday morning Bible class will begin a look at Christian worship in general and worship here at Living Water.

Foundations of Faith

Want to rediscover key Christian doctrine or refresh yourself about the core teachings of the Bible? Pastor is looking to lead a twelve week course entitled "Foundations of the Faith." Sessions are tentatively planned for Tuesdays from 6:15 to 7:30 pm., beginning on January 15. Keep an eye on bulletins, emails, and newsletters for more information, including about how to sign up.

Take the Sermon Home

Would you like to take the sermon home with you and talk about it with your family throughout the week? Each week through our church's website, study questions will be made available. These questions will help you dig deeper into the sermon text and possibly make connections to the other Scripture readings. "Answers" will be provided to help frame conversations you can have with your families at home. Stay tuned for more information.



We enjoyed seeing the Christmas Dancing Horse show along with the exotic bird show on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in November. The entire performance was set to Christmas music and it's just amazing that the horses can be trained to "dance" to the music. The riders and the costumes were amazing as well! The bird show was a lot of fun, too. We would highly recommend making the short trip to Delavan to see the dancing horses.

We will be hosting the first Advent supper on Wednesday, December 5. It will be a potluck, and that always means lots of good food! Sign up on the sheet in the narthex.

We are looking forward to our annual "Game Day" on Saturday, January 12, at 3:00 pm. We don't know the game yet, but we'll have fun whatever it turns out to be. Gary & Renee Steffens will be our hosts, so if you have any game suggestions, let them know. It will also be potluck snacks, etc., so start thinking about what you might like to bring.

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.



The next meeting is Sunday December 16. Topics of discussion will be Tomorrow's Choice Family Resource Center. Tomorrow's Choice is located in Waukesha and offers encouragement for those who are experiencing an unexpected pregnancy, struggling with feelings resulting from an abortion, concerned about abstinence, or needing baby necessities. We are one of 14

area WELS churches who help fund this important ministry. If you are interested in more information, visit tcfrc.com for more information.

We are again participating in the Adopt a Family program that buys gifts for a family who is a client at Tomorrow's Choice. The items needed are posted on the bulletin board. Please take a Christmas tree tag and then sign your name under the item you intend to purchase. Bring the present back to church by Sunday, December 9 and place in the container marked "Adopt a Family" with the tag attached. Thank you for your support of this great ministry and the families that it serves.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the food and supplies drive for James Cares. They are grateful for the love and compassion you expressed through your generous donations.

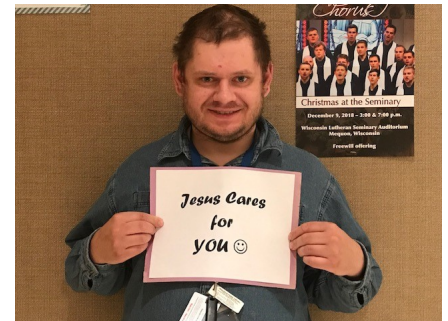
Invite Your Friends & Family

80% of unchurched adults would seriously consider accepting an invitation from a friend to attend a Christmas Eve service. Consider inviting a family member, a friend, or a neighbor to join you for worship on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day to hear the good news of the light of the world. Invitations for Christmas for Kids and the Christmas services are available in the narthex for you to share with those you know.

Jesus Cares

We have been blessed by new friends joining us at Jesus Cares each month! Meet Phillip Dunn:

- What do you like to do? Play with my webcam
- What is your favorite activity at Jesus Cares? Snack
- What have you learned at Jesus cares? Jesus loves me
- What has Jesus done for us? Love us



We are excited to celebrate the birth of Jesus by singing some favorite Christmas carols in the church before Monday's service on Monday, December 17th. Do you want to bring in some Christmas cheer and have a blast with some new friends? We would love for you to join us in the church around 6:45 pm!

The Advent Wreath FAMILY DEVOTION

THE HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath is a combination of two very common symbols: light and the fir tree. From the early centuries of Christianity it has been a common practice to represent Christ's presence with a burning candle. The fir tree also has a long history of religious use. The evergreen nature of fir trees symbolizes eternal life.

It seems that the Advent wreath originated a few hundred years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany. A wreath of evergreens, made in various sizes, was either suspended from the ceiling or placed on a table in believers' homes. The general symbolism of the Advent wreath lies in the growing light of the wreath, increasing each week as we approach the birthday of Jesus, the Light of the world. Eventually, Advent wreaths made their way into church decorations.

The colors of the candles are symbolic as well. Some choose to use purple candles in their Advent wreath. In Advent, we hear John the Baptist's call to repent. Purple is a color of repentance. It also symbolizes the royalty of Jesus Christ.

Other choose to use blue candles in their wreath. Blue is the color of the sky. It reminds us that in Advent we look forward, not just to Christ's first coming on Christmas, but to Christ's second coming on judgment day. The third candle of the wreath is generally a rose color, symbolizing the joy we have in Christ. Come Christmas, a fifth candle—white, representing Christ himself—is placed in the center of the wreath.

The Gift of Hope

Most people think that "hope" is an optimistic feeling that in the future things will work out for the best. *"I hope I don't catch a cold."* You might not get sick. But you also might get sick. Your hope does not have any bearing on that. But in the Bible, the believer's hope is always connected to a promise of God. God cannot break his promises. So when the believer says, *"I hope Jesus comes and takes me to heaven,"* his hope is more than an optimistic feeling. His hope is actually the same thing as faith.

The Gift of Peace

This time of year can be anything but peaceful. Our "to do" list is long. There are end of semester tests at school. There are presents to buy. Perhaps you need to make travel plans or prepare for visitors. It can be a hectic time of year. Use God's Word to remind you to slow down, take a deep breath, and focus on what is *really* important—Christ. Let him give you peace.

The Gift of Joy

Perhaps your Advent wreath has a different colored candle for this week. On week three of Advent, we light the Joy candle, which is often rose or pink colored, a joyful shade. Joy, as the Bible speaks of it, is not quite the same thing as happiness. Happiness is about the present. If things are currently well, you are happy. If currently, you are suffering, you are not happy. But the believer's joy is rooted in God's promises of the perfect, eternal future that awaits us, thanks to the work of Christ. Thus, joy has nothing to do with present circumstances. We can be joyful, even in hard times.

The Gift of Love

The gifts we give at Christmas are meant to be a token of love. You chose something you know that they will like because you love them. You sacrifice money to buy them a gift or time to make them a gift because you love them. Gifts are a sign of love. Could there be any bigger gift that God the Father could give us than the gift of his Son? Could there be any greater gift for Christ to offer than his life as a payment for our sins? We celebrate the gift of love that God has given to us. We respond by loving him back.



Prayer



Jesus was born to be the light that shatters the darkness of sin and that opens the way to the Father. Through faith in our Savior who came once to win salvation and will come again to bring us to heaven, we pray to our Triune God:

- For all our brothers and sisters in the faith who are battling chronic pain or disease, recovering from surgery or stroke, and awaiting medical test results, that they be reminded of the Sovereign Lord's power to heal as he wills and his promise of spiritual peace of Christ even in the midst of physical peace.
- For our members who battle feelings of loneliness or depression this time, that the Holy Spirit help them to Jesus as their Emanuel, their God who is with them always, no matter what guilt or questions or doubts pursue them.
- For our friends, relatives, and neighbors, who do not know or trust in Jesus as the one who saves us from our sins, that God might use us to show them the light of the gospel and the eternal glory prepared for all people, won by Jesus and given through faith in him.
- For our congregation, that through Word and sacrament this month we all might be strengthened in faith, brought closer through Christian fellowship, and made ready for Christ's birth and his return.

All this we ask according to God's will, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Living Water STATISTICS AND NUMBERS

Year to Date Membership Changes	
Transfers In	23
Profession of Faith	1
Adult Confirmation	0
Transfers Out	0
Released	0
Baptism	0
Confirmation	1
Death	1
Net Gain/Loss	23

Membership Statistics	
288	Baptized
250	Communicants
117	Family Units
115	Average Weekend Attendance

Worship Attendance			
	Sun.	Mon.	Total
10/28	98	28	126
11/4	114	16	130
11/11	101	23	124
11/18	86	22	108
11/21			69
11/25	78	19	97

Offerings				
	General	Special	Education	Total
Total Given	\$ 214,249	\$ 16,336	\$ 923	\$ 231,508

Budget		
Year-to-Date Budget	General Offerings Given	Difference
\$ 212,403	\$ 214,249	\$ 1,845

December 2018

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



6525 Milwaukee Avenue
Wind Lake, WI 53185

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

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Pastor's Cell Phone: 262.330.3399

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Office: church@livingwaterlutheran.com

Website: www.LivingWaterLutheran.com

2018 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.

Bob McGill—Secretary

Jeff Roska—Head Elder

Neil Hankwitz—Outreach

Gary Steffens—Trustee

Brian Haag—Education

Upcoming Worship Opportunities

Midweek Advent Worship

December 5, 12, 19

6:30 pm

Fellowship Meal begins at 5:30 pm

Christmas Eve Worship

Service of Lessons & Carols

Monday, December 24

6:30 pm

The Light of the World

Sunday School Christmas
Service

Sunday, December 23

Christmas Day Festival Worship

Tuesday, December 25

9:00 am