



## The Good News

### From the Pastor

*This October we begin another series. This time, we will explore the Lesser Festivals of the Church Year. These are Festivals which do not always fall on Sunday but that, during the appropriate times of the year, can be celebrated on Sunday. You already know some of the Lesser Festivals we celebrate: Reformation Sunday, All Saints' Sunday, Baptism of our Lord, Transfiguration are just some of the Lesser Festivals we celebrate every year. We will explore other Lesser Festivals in this series.*

*This month Pastor Jay Mitchell of Christ Ascension Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, PA is our guest writer.*

### The Three Martyrdoms

There are twelve days of the Christmas Season. If you didn't already know that, think of one of the most famous Christmas carols. For twelve days from December 25<sup>th</sup> until January 6<sup>th</sup> (The Feast of the Epiphany) we celebrate the Word Made Flesh, God come to dwell with us. But did you ever notice there are three little feasts tucked right into the beginning of this celebration? Again, one of them on December 26<sup>th</sup> is made famous from another Christmas carol (Good King Wenceslas) as being the Feast of St Stephen. But we also mark the Feast of St John the Evangelist and the Holy Innocents.

It may seem odd to split such a short season into so many different celebrations, but there's a reason (isn't there always?)! These three feasts mark what the early church saw as the three types of martyrdom we may be called to face:

**St Stephen** was a deacon in the earliest church, he served meals and saw to the needs of pilgrims in Jerusalem. He believed in Jesus, was part of The Way, and worked in the Church. He was persecuted by Saul and non-Jesus-believing Jews for his faith. He was taken out of the walls and stoned to death. We read his story in Acts 6-7. In his final moments, Stephen "prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'" Stephen is held up as the first martyr of the Church—before him no one in the Church had been killed for their faith. The Church celebrates his martyrdom as the Martyrdom of both Will and Deed. Because of his faith, Stephen was willing to die (will) and was stoned to death (deed).

**December 2018**

### THIS MONTH....

♦ **Christmas Pageant--**  
Sunday,  
December 16,  
during worship

♦ **Breaking Bread Together--Cookies,**  
Sunday,  
December 16,  
following worship

♦ **Christmas Eve Services-**  
-December 24,  
4:30pm Family Service,  
8pm Candlelight Service

♦ **Office Closed**  
--December  
24, 25, 26, 27

*continued on next page*

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**St John the Evangelist** was exiled to the island of Patmos where he is credited to writing the book of Revelation. His name is on the fourth (and non-synoptic) Gospel in the New Testament. It is believed his community was one of the last to separate from the Jewish tradition late in the first or early in the second century. Tradition tells us that John was the only one of the twelve original disciples/apostles (subtracting Judas and adding Paul) to not be killed for his beliefs. He died of old age, in exile, on the island of Patmos. The Church celebrates his martyrdom as the Martyrdom of Will but not of deed. Because of his faith, John was willing to die (will) but instead died of old age.

**The Holy Innocents** is the collective name given to the male children of Bethlehem under the age of 2 who were murdered by Herod in fear of Jesus as King. This story begins to sound very much like that of Moses—the king of Israel hears a prophecy of a new King from the magi who have come to pay him homage. In fear, Herod seeks out this new king in Bethlehem. Not knowing who it is, Herod instead orders all male children under the age of 2 to be killed. We read this story in Matthew, chapter 2. While it is unclear—and very unlikely—that any of these children or their families knew of Jesus or his role in our salvation. They were, however, still killed for Jesus' sake. The Church celebrates their martyrdom as the Martyrdom of Deed but not of will. While they were killed because of Jesus (deed), the Holy Innocents did not seek such death nor was it inspired by their belief.

While we may not be called to physical, mortal, martyrdom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—and indeed there is little fear in the United States of such martyrdom for faith—we nevertheless pause in our joy to remember, consider, and celebrate just what happens at Christmas. Because of God-come-among-us, the world is forever changed. Because of our faith in Jesus, we are called to give of our whole selves, our whole lives, to witness to just how glorious that news is. Because of our faith in God's wonder-working power even now, we are called to proclaim with the heavenly host that there is indeed "good news for all the people." Because of the story we tell, we are called to live our every day joining the song of the angels to the praise of God's glorious and the celebration God's peace and love and hope in our own day.

In our celebration let us remember, contemplate, and celebrate our call to be a part of God's loving life in the world...life we know and hold and have because of the one whose birth we celebrate this month, Jesus.

Happy Advent, Merry Christmas, and Much Joy be Yours!

Pastor Jay

## Message from the Treasurer

***"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."***

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

We have just celebrated Thanksgiving with friends and family. I remember as a child how everyone would sigh when Grandma would begin the prayer before we ate. We all knew what was coming. She would ask each of us to tell what we were thankful for on that special day. You didn't get the option to pass. You had to say something. As a Polish refugee, she knew the importance of appreciating even the smallest thing, for there was usually some sacrifice that came first.

What are you thankful for this year – no you can't pass. Think about the many things you have ... a place to sleep in comfort, enough food on your table, clothes to keep you warm (or cool), the beauty of nature all around you, and most importantly, your family. Where does all this come from? Who provides? Yes, we work to earn money to buy many of those things. But who gives us the skill and wisdom to do the job? My answer to those questions is "GOD". He provides.

Well, now its time to respond to the many gifts God provides. Each member received a pledge form in the mail. My plea is for you to fill it out and return it. Prayerfully consider pledging. I know its uncomfortable for some of us to pledge. However, that pledge is between you and God. No one is going to follow-up to see if you are living up to your pledge.

All that anyone sees is the total amount of the combined pledges returned. That is what the Finance Team uses to put together a realistic budget. As we face a new journey in the life of Christ Community Lutheran Church, a realistic budget that we can accomplish is even more important.

We had a challenge budget last year and had hoped to make it. So far, we haven't come close to making it. We are \$27,000 behind! We still are able to pay all our bills and commitments by pulling from our savings. So I challenge each of you to look into your heart and show your thanks to God by filling out a pledge form.

Cathy Sell, Treasurer



## Message from the Childcare Director

### Believe

The word believe is one of the most important words in any language. The word believe represents many other words, such as hope, love, future, forgiveness, faith, joy. Things that all of us want and need.

Thirteen years ago I purchased a small plate with a picture of the “Peanuts” gang welcoming in families to the center. The plate came with a stand that has the word “believe” stamped out on it. This has been sitting on the table down by the daycare since June 9, 2005.

I see this every day, and the word believe, reminds me not to worry if we are meeting our budget, not to worry if we or the church will stay open, not to worry that our roster with kids is full enough, and in general not to worry.

The word believe also reminds me to be more childlike, having a built in naiveness about everything:

- To believe in Santa Claus
- To believe in the Easter Bunny
- To believe in the Tooth Fairy

And yet, sometimes it's hard for us grownups to believe that God is always with us, especially when we go through rough patches.

God is always patiently waiting for us to talk to Him. Waiting for us to develop a relationship with Him.

To believe in God is the ultimate belief. Knowing that He is here with us on earth from the beginning until the end. Never giving up on us. Forgiving us for all our faults, and still giving us the promise that we will be with Him and our loved ones because of His greatest gift, Jesus, who lived and died for us. Now that's believing!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!

Miss Patti

P.S. If you are looking for a little Christmas cheer, our center will be having its 14th annual Christmas Program on December 21 at 10am. I **BELIEVE** it will be wonderful!

# Spiritual Life

Faith Formation, Bible Study, Worship

## Advent Family Fun Night

Many thanks to all who helped prepare the building for Advent and Christmas. Make sure to check out the beautifully painted windows and decorated sanctuary!



## Christmas Pageant

Our Sunday School's Christmas Pageant will be presented on December 16 during the worship service. Any children interested in participating are welcome to come to rehearsals following worship on December 2 and 9. If you cannot make rehearsals but would like to participate, contact Pastor Amanda ASAP.

## Christmas Eve Worship Services

Christmas Eve Worship Services are as follows:

4:30pm: Family Service

8:00pm: Candlelight Service



# Parish Life

Fellowship, Care Teams, Bread Ministry

## Breaking Bread Together

The December potluck will take place on Sunday, December 16 with a Christmas Cookie Theme. Mark your calendars and plan to attend!

## Book Group

All are invited to join the December meeting of the CCLC Book Group. If you don't have time to read a book...still come...you can discover some new titles for when you do have time to read! We will gather on December 15 at 10:00 a.m. at Church.

# Community Life

Outreach, Service, Evangelism

## Thanksgiving Food Drive

There were 285 cans/packages of non-perishable food contributed to our Thanksgiving Food Drive in November. This included 31 items from the Daycare families. This substantial amount of food gave us the ability to take 95 items to each of the food pantries in our sister congregations in Green Bay (Grace Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, and Calvary Lutheran). This was a great shared ministry opportunity with these churches as they make a substantial commitment to open their food pantry doors to needy people every week.



In our other shared ministry service at Thanksgiving, there were about ten members of Christ Community that attended the Thanksgiving eve worship at Atonement Lutheran. It was an inspiring service of hymns and thanksgiving Bible readings.

Thanks to everyone who made a commitment to these shared ministry opportunities with our neighboring Lutheran congregations.

Al Rasmussen

## Save the Date: Annual Meeting

The annual meeting and Chili Cookoff will be on January 27th. All annual reports will be due to the church office by January 3. Please submit them earlier if possible. Thank you!



# December 2018

<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
						1
2 8:30a: Rehearsal 9:15a: Worship & Coffee Hour	3	4 9:15a: Bible Study	5	6 5:30p: Childcare 6:30p: Finance	7 Bridge	8
9 8:30a: Rehearsal 9:15a: Worship & Coffee Hour	10 6:30p: Council	11 9:15a: Bible Study	12	13	14 Bridge	15 10a: Book Group
16 8:30a: Rehearsal 9:15a: Worship & Christmas Pageant 10:15a: BBT - Cookies	17 January newsletter articles due	18 9:15a: Bible Study	19	20	21 10a: Childcare Christmas program	22
23 8:30a: Rehearsal 9:15a: Worship & Coffee Hour	24 Christmas Eve OFFICE CLOSED 4:30p: Family Service 8p: Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29
30 8:30a: Rehearsal 9:15a: Worship & Coffee Hour	31 OFFICE CLOSED					

# The Good News

Christ Community Lutheran Church

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**Rev. Amanda Nesvold**

## *The Good News*

is a monthly newsletter sent to members and friends of Christ Community Lutheran Church.

**The deadline for the January issue of**

**The Good News is:**

**~~Monday, December 17, 2018~~**

Like us on  Christ Community Lutheran Church-ELCA