

Trinity Lutheran Church

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December 2006

Pastor's Ponderings



Dear Christian friends.

In Matthew 2, we read about the Visit of the Magi. Following the star, inquiring at the king's palace, informed by the priest where to find the Child, they trudged with determination to Bethlehem, bringing with them the gifts they planned to present as they worshiped Him. *"When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the Child with His mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh"* (Matthew 2:10-11).

What did the Wise Men from the East know about this Baby or His family? Not much. Yet they came in faith, bringing gifts with them to honor Him. How far did they travel? How long was their trip? We can surmise, but what's important to

know is that, for them, the trip with all its drudgery was worth it. "They were overjoyed."

How long a trip are we prepared to make this Christmas to worship the Christ Child? Are we willing to put up with a little inconvenience and sacrifice in order that we might come before Him with our gifts, offering them in faith, as the Wise Men did?

What causes our joy this Christmas season? Is it seeing the eyes of little children light up when they open their presents? That's good. Is it finding exactly the right gift for someone special? That's good, too. But are we "overjoyed" when we see the Star? Contrary to the messages we hear in the commercials and even the seasonal songs, the only thing Christmas is about is the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Along with doing all the wonderful things that are good to do at this time of the year, including the visiting of sick and the shut-in, the baking of goodies for food banks, the sharing of financial resources with those in need, and all the shopping and caroling and everything else, let's find our joy in seeing the Star. That Star points us to Jesus and leads us to the Cross.

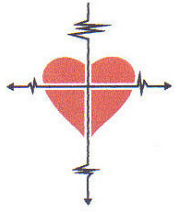
At the Cross, Jesus gives us His very best gifts—forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. And through His Word and Sacraments, Jesus continues giving. In Baptism, we are given the gift of His Holy Spirit and made to be children of God. In His holy Supper, Christ gives us His very body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our faith. In His Word, He continues to equip us for godly living.

Having been so blessed, let us "open our treasures" and worship Him with our best and most precious gifts as the Wise Men did. Let us take the time to stop from the "busyness" of this season and worship Him. Let us give of our very best time, talents, and treasures to continue the work of His kingdom in this world.

In Christ!

Pastor Moeller

Fit for Life



Why is the world so messed up? Why does God let bad things happen to good people? If we all use the same Bible why are there so many different denominations? Does God still speak to us today? Is His Word reliable? Is it relevant for today? If these are questions that you have asked, please plan to attend “Fit For Life in Christ,” an exciting course in Christian growth that presents the Word of God in new and meaningful ways. It is a course for those who are interested in membership in our church, or for anyone who wants to know what it really means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. We

are beginning a new class soon. If you are interested in participating, please speak with Pastor Moeller, about a time that would work well for you and/or your friends.

How to Become A Member Of Trinity Lutheran

We extend the Sacrament of Baptism to all who have not been baptized—infants, children, youth, and adults. We invite those adults who are looking for a church home to come to one of our New Member Orientation classes. A new class will begin soon. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Pastor Moeller as soon as possible.

Upon completion of this class you may join Trinity Lutheran Church in one of the following ways:

- The Rite of Confirmation for those who have never been confirmed in the Lutheran Church.
- A Letter of Transfer is gladly accepted if you wish to transfer your membership from another Lutheran congregation.
- Reaffirmation of faith is for those who have been confirmed in a Lutheran church but have not been active in their former church.

Simply Giving

The Stewardship Committee at Trinity Lutheran Church invites you to consider a new way of implementing your giving of tithes and offering. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has developed an automated giving program called *Simply Giving* to assist congregations and their members. Our church council and voters assembly have examined the program and found it a good option for members who regularly use automatic withdrawals from their bank accounts. Responses from those at Trinity who have been using this program have been very positive.

Both our members and the ministry of our church benefit with this program. For those who choose to participate, withdrawing the pledged or specified amount from your bank account is truly giving the Biblical “first fruits.” It also eliminates the minor frustrations of writing frequent checks or forgetting the checkbook. For the church, the advantages are related to a consistent, predictable income. The seasonal fluctuations in giving patterns are lessened. Thrivent Financial offers this service to benefit congregations. They pay all of the cost for this service.

You can implement this plan by asking for an enrollment form, completing it, and sending it and the appropriate bank information to the church office.

Worship: The Lutheran Difference

“I’m having trouble understanding you Lutherans.”

“Why’s that?”

“Well, you preach and pray like Baptists but your worship services are just like the Roman Catholics.”

“I’ve always thought our worship tradition was unique.”

“Well, why should tradition matter at all? Shouldn’t we just follow the Bible?”

Because of insecurities about explaining particular doctrines or practices, some Lutherans may avoid opportunities to share what they have learned from Christ and His Word. These studies will prepare Lutherans to share their faith and help non-Lutherans understand the Lutheran difference. Join us each Sunday at the Adult Bible study (10:45 a.m.) as we discuss this timely topic.

STEWARDSHIP DEVOTION

“Look for the Star”

Scripture Readings:

“A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel” (Numbers 4:17).

“Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him” (Matthew 2:2).

“I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star” (Revelation 22:6).



Thoughts:

A teenager was questioning his grandfather about what times were like during the War. The grandfather related many experiences he'd had as a soldier as well as the reactions of families and friends waiting at home for news of loved ones. He told his grandson that many people who had sons serving their country displayed stars in the windows of their homes. When a family lost a son in the War, they displayed a gold star. Two conflicting emotions existed side by side in those homes: one was joy and pride in a son who would give his life for his country; the other was great sadness over the loss of a son.

What are our emotions when we think of the Star of Bethlehem? The first is joy, for the prophecy has been fulfilled: Jesus is the Star Who has come out of Jacob. It was His star that the Magi followed for a great distance in order to find the one who was born king of the Jews. With joy-filled adoration they bowed at His feet, offering their gifts.

What were the emotions of God the Father as He looked down from heaven? Did He feel joy and pride in a Son willing to give His life for those He loves? Was that joy eclipsed by pain and sadness that such a sacrifice is necessary?

We can't think of the Star without also pondering the Cross. While the Star led the Wise Men to Jesus, it is the Cross that brings us to Jesus' feet. We follow the Star which leads to the Cross as we move from joy at the birth of our Savior to sadness that our sins have brought about His death. That sadness is banished, however, as Scripture reminds us that Jesus, for the joy set before Him, endured the Cross for our sakes, to free us from sin and death in order that we might be His forever. We rejoice in Him, Jesus, our bright Morning Star.

Discussion Thoughts:

1. What is my responses to Jesus' gift of Himself to me?
2. What is my responsibility as one who has received this great gift of salvation?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, Thank You for loving us so much that You would willingly give up Your Son to be ridiculed, beaten, and sacrificed to earn my redemption. Forgive us for taking lightly the account of Jesus' birth, life, and death and resurrection. Give us sincere remorse for our sins and true joy in the salvation that Jesus came to earth to attain for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Proverbs Bible Study

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.” So says the author of Proverbs in chapter 1, verse 7. He goes on to tell us that the wisdom of the Lord is more precious than any worldly wealth, and God wants to give it to all.

Where does one find such wisdom? Through faith strengthened by the Holy Spirit working through His Word, God provides wisdom. In fact, the book of Proverbs is a treasure chest filled with wisdom and practical advice on Christian living.

To help in this search for wisdom, we will examine the Book of Proverbs each Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. Everyone—young and old, experienced and beginners—are invited to join us.

LWML National Convention

The months are counting down until Lutheran Women in Mission gather to **ROCK!** and learn to **Rest On Christ the King** at the 2007 convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Dr. Mary Manz Simon, best-selling author and well-known speaker, is the Bible study leader, who will share with us her insight of God's Word.

The city boasts an ideal setting to experience our theme. In beautiful Falls Park, the river cascades over rare, spectacular pink quartzite rock, which is the second-hardest rock next to diamonds. As a fantastic piece of God's creation, the stone illustrates perfectly how solid our **ROCK** is.

Mark June 21–24 on your calendar now for the 32nd LWML Biennial Convention. Watch for more convention information and registration forms in the winter issue of the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*. Tour information will be sent separately to your LWML District President. You won't want to miss the Corn Palace and the Black Hills, which are great for family fun or a busload of convention goers. See www.lwml.org for more details.

Stewardship Thoughts

December is the month to celebrate Christmas. As Christians our thoughts return to Bethlehem and that first Christmas when *God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16 NIV). Yes, God loved the world, even though it is infected with sin, and He proved His love by sending His own Son to be the Savior of that fallen world. We call that love grace, which means undeserved love, because we are sinners who deserve only God's wrath and eternal punishment. But Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Sunday change everything for us as God's people.

Worldly people will celebrate Christmas in a sentimental and superficial way as they take some time off from work and gather with family and friends to eat, drink and exchange gifts. They may wish each other a "Merry Christmas" but not in the same way we Christians say it. We see Christmas as a first step in God's plan of salvation. As Christians we see the shadow of the cross passing over that manger in Bethlehem. We hear again the words the angel spoke to the frightened shepherds: "*Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord*" (Luke 2:10-11 NIV).

We Christians see Christmas as the down payment of God's fulfillment of His promise to save His people from their sins. We are reminded of the truth that when God wanted to show His love to the world, He did not send a letter or a messenger, but He sent His one and only Son. Such wondrous love! Such a marvelous gift!

Christian stewards are loved and loving and are given and giving. Because God first loved us we can love Him and love others. The Apostle John in his first letter wrote: "*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth*" (1 John 3:16-10 NIV).

We have been loved so much and given so much. Our response to God's love and gifts is seen in our loving and giving to others. All that we are and all that we have are gifts from God, the true Owner and Giver of all things. Christmas is a vivid reminder for us to show our love by giving, not only to our church, but also to others, and to do it with great joy because "***God's stewards do the right things for the right reasons and strive for excellence in all they do!***"



LWML Minutes

The Trinity LWML met on Wednesday, November 15, 2006 in the church fellowship hall with Donna Bowden as hostess. Members present were Ruth Arends, June Snyder, Connie Geide, Clarice Wixon, Walt Plagman, LaRaye Rehfeldt, Donna Bowden and Pastor Moeller.

Pastor opened with devotions and prayer. The Bible lesson was from John 2: 1-11.

Pres. LaRaye called the business meeting to order. Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's report was given and approved. Walt moved, seconded by Connie to move funds from kitchen fund into the general fund. mc

Old Business:

Purchasing more kitchen supplies was discussed. It was decided to table any plans until the January meeting. Members were encouraged to keep looking for dishes that match the present dishes.

New Business:

Connie moved, seconded by Clarice to order two Poinsettia plants for the Alter from the High School youth group. mc.

Plans for the LWML National Convention to be held in Sioux Falls, SD in June of 2007 were discussed. Donna moved seconded by Ruth the LWML will pay \$50.00 toward registration of each member attending the Convention, including Pastor. mc.

Donna moved, seconded by Clarice to send \$25.00 to Union Gospel Mission.mc.

Donna moved, seconded by Clarice to send a Christmas gift box to Brock Thompson in the Military. mc.

Connie moved, seconded by Walt to invite Marty Reichert to present his pictures of Africa to the congregation after services one Sunday before Christmas, this would include a potluck meal, with LWML members providing all the desserts. mc.

LWML will be serving Advent suppers on December 6 and 20. Donna moved, seconded by Clarice to serve a pasta dinner on the 6th. with bars for dessert.mc. Walt moved, seconded by Connie to serve a baked potato dinner on the 20th. with bars for dessert. mc.

Unfinished Business:

LaRaye and several members are still looking into the covering for the large serving window, more information will be presented in January.

Brenda Erikson will host the January meeting. The meeting will be on Thursday instead of Wednesday.

One of the projects for January will be the LWML members and the TLC board members working together organizing the kitchen.

Connie moved, seconded by Ruth to adjourn the meeting. mc.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

June Snyder, acting Secretary

Wanted

We are looking for a volunteer to coordinate our prayer chain. Internet access would be beneficial. If you are interested in helping out with this please contact Pastor Moeller.

Good News Magazine

If you are looking for an interesting and easy-to-read magazine which will help you understand key teachings of the Bible; if you want to learn more about God's good news and His strength for living each new day, for a complimentary copy or to subscribe write to:

GOOD NEWS
973 Chippewa Street
St. Louis, MO 63109-3061

Financial Peace University

The stewardship committee is sponsoring Financial Peace University, a life-changing 13-week program on personal finance. It is designed to empower people to manage their money better, eliminate debt and build wealth. All material is biblically based and taught via entertaining video by Dave Ramsey. Find out how to:

- Make a budget that you will understand and use.
- Get out of debt and stay that way.
- Gain control of your money.
- Communicate with your spouse about finances.
- Invest with confidence.
- Change your financial future.



New classes will begin in January. For more information speak to Penny Eggebraaten (351-0054).

TLC Parents' Night Out

Trinity Lutheran Church will be hosting Parents' Nights Out on Dec. 1st, 8th and 22nd from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. During these hours, parents can drop their children off with the new director of Trinity Learning Center, committee members and youth members while they spend a few hours of quality time together Christmas shopping or having a date.



The children will be playing games, creating crafts, reading, enjoying a snack and much more. This event is free of charge, but free will donations will be taken. Because space is limited, please call and leave your name, number, names and ages of your children. If you have any questions, please call Jessi Moeller at 526-3572 or 321-1642. Trinity Lutheran Church is located at 46448 263rd St. in rural Hartford, SD.

Lutheran Marriage Encounter

A Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend is planned in Sioux Falls, S.D, on March 2-4, 2007. It will be held in the beautiful new Good Samaritan Retreat Center. Couples are urged to consider this opportunity to nurture your marriage and appreciate its blessings. Learn simple, effective communication techniques. Practice privately; no group sharing! Four presenting couples will share and show you how they learned to bring more joy and understanding to their marriages.

The cost of this weekend is \$45 for registering (insuring your meals and rooms) and a free will offering at the end of the weekend. To learn more about this weekend, check out www.GodLovesMarriage.org and/or contact Pastor Bob and Aimee Moeller

Marriage can and should be an exciting and fulfilling journey! Can your GOOD marriage be BETTER or even GREAT?

Sunday School News

The Sunday School children will be singing at the first Advent service on November 29th. They will also be serving tacos for that evening from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The Christmas program is scheduled for Sunday, December 17th at 6:30 p.m. Please contact Susan Kelley (528-3812) if your child will not be there. Christmas program practices are as follows:

December 2nd – 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

December 9th – 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

December 16th – 10:00 a.m. to noon – a meal will be provided on this day.

The preschool children will not need to come until the 16th.

For anyone interested in purchasing a Christmas gift for their child's teacher, the Sunday School will have a "Wish Tree" set up and you can purchase a "wish" in the teacher's name in lieu of a gift.

Minutes of October 22, 2006 Voters Meeting

The Voter's Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church was held October 22, 2006. President John Barber called the meeting to order. Pastor Moeller opened with prayer.

Secretary's report was read, Pastor moved to accept; Jessi Moeller seconded the motion. MC

Treasurer's report was read, Dale Snyder moved to accept, Jessi Moeller seconded the motion. MC

Pastor's report:

Transfer of Don & Pat Reichert, Marty Reichert, Matthew Reichert, and Marshall Reichert to Memorial Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls.

Transfer of Mary Jo Graves to Memorial Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls.

Release of Carmen Barber to East Side Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls.

Transfer in of Candace Nelson, from Trinity Lutheran Church, Sioux Valley MN

Funerals:	Ron Matthies	7/29/2006
	Bonnie Edgecomb	7/29/2006
	Lorna Regnier	7/31/2006

Wedding:	Russel & Kimberly Brick	10/07/2006
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Pastoral activities:

Bible studies	55
Meetings	39
Shut-in visits	29
Hospital visits	8
Worship service	18
Counseling	11
Friendship visits	7

Elder's report:

Tim Totton spoke for the stewardship committee, which will be holding another Financial Peace University.

Bryan Kelley reported for the TLC committee. Issues discussed were director's responsibilities and the written contract.

Archie Wolfe spoke for the Christian Education Committee; issues discussed were fundraising for the Christmas program and painting the Sunday School rooms. A Sunday School open house was also mentioned.

Dale Snyder spoke on behalf of the Altar Guild, he reported on current communion supplies and a future meeting of the Altar Guild.

Joe Krizan reported that the evangelism committee had no new business.

Trustees:

The trustees report was given by Melvin Matthies. He reported that the parsonage garage door had been fixed and the lock on the church's front door had also been fixed. He also announced that no new projects would be under taken until some of the current debt was taken care of.

LWML:

Connie Geide reported for the LWML. New projects that the LWML will be working on include getting new curtains for the kitchen, and advent suppers.

Men's Club:

Men's club announced that their pie sales will be coming up shortly. They will be available to order November 5 and delivered on the November 19. They also sent \$100.00 to Jeff Kalb.

YES Group:

Bryan Kelley spoke for the YES group. They are planning upcoming fundraising events.

Old Business:

A report of the 125th Anniversary Committee funds, submitted by Ray Matthies, a copy is also attached of this.

New Business: For 2007 the Mission Commitment was brought up. The council's recommendation was a \$7,300 budget the same as 2005. Jessi Moeller moved to approve the \$7,300 budget and Ray Matthies seconded it. MC.

Pastor requested permission from the congregation, in the form of a motion, to put a "Vote Yes for referred law 6" in the church lawn. Dale Snyder seconded Pastor's motion. MC.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

Submitted by Aimee Moeller, acting secretary

Midweek Advent Services

Midweek Advent services begin November 29th. Each Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. we will prepare for the coming of our Lord with services based on Martin Luther's Christmas hymn, "From Heaven Above."

For your convenience, supper will be served from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. each evening. The menu will include:

- Nov. 29th ~ Tacos (soft & hard shell) served by the Sunday School
- Dec. 6th ~ Spaghetti, garlic bread served by the LWML
- Dec. 13th ~ Ham and mashed potatoes by TLC committee
- Dec. 20th ~ Baked potatoes with fixings by the LWML

Trinity Altar Guild

An altar guild is being formed that would take care of the altar paraments, banners, candles, plants, and many other services in preparation for the worship. If you are interested in helping or would like more information, please contact Aimee Moeller or Mary Krizan.

High School Bible Study

All High School students are invited to join teacher Joe Krizan each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for Bible study. We are studying "The Robe," a short story of the life of a Christian here on earth. Please plan to join us!

The DaVinci Code

There's some interest in beginning a study about "The DaVinci Code" in January. This bestselling novel, and then blockbuster movie, contains allegations against historic Christianity. Four sessions of study will address the following questions:

1. What Can History Really Tell Us?
2. Can We Trust the Four Gospels?
3. What's the Role of Women in Christianity?
4. Is Jesus Really the Son of God?

Enjoy riveting DVD interviews with noted experts and prepare for lively discussions.

Watch for more information in upcoming bulletins and the January newsletter. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Moeller or Laura Johnson so we may order study materials.