

FAITH NEWSLETTER

Dec. 2010 / Jan. 2011



Dear Friends in Christ,

Every year Christmas gets more and more secular. Every year the chorus of "Happy Holidays" and "Season's Greetings" threatens to drown out the still, small voice of "Merry Christmas." And every year there is a growing backlash from Christians to "keep Christ in Christmas."

And that's a good thing. Christmas is about Christ, the birth of Jesus, the promised Messiah. It's not Christmas without Christ. But that's only half of the story.

Not only should we keep the "Christ" in "Christmas", we also need to keep the "Mass" in "Christmas."

Christmas is not only about remembering the birth of Jesus Christ as an historical event that happened over 2000 years ago. Christmas is about celebrating the presence of Christ among us today, which is most physical, most real in the Mass, the Lord's Supper. (Note: Lutherans have often used the term "Mass" to refer to the Divine Service; it is not just a Roman Catholic term.)

The same body and blood that Mary carried in her womb and that lay in the manger is on the altar and put into our mouths in the Mass. Jesus doesn't just come to Bethlehem, He comes to our church, to our altars, even into our very selves.

One Lutheran pastor, Berthold von Schenk puts it this way:

"It is Christmas. Have you found the way to Bethlehem? It is important to make straight the pathway of the Lord into your hearts. That duty is now done. Now take your pilgrim-staff and your gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. You will not have to stop off at Jerusalem to inquire the way. The Altar is your Star. There you will find Bethlehem. Bethlehem means 'house of bread.' Indeed, 'bread of life.' You will come, then, as the shepherds came. You will kneel as they did in adoration. And if your vision of faith is clear enough, you will see at the Altar not merely bread and wine, but the Christ-Child, the Word made flesh."

Christmas is not just about something that happened a long time ago in a land far, far away. Christmas is about a Savior who is born for you, and who comes to you in His body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

A Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem doesn't do you any good. But a Jesus given to you in the Lord's Supper brings you life and salvation. The good news of Christmas is not that Jesus came to Bethlehem, but that He comes to you, here and now.

So come to the altar this Christmas to adore your Savior, and receive Him in the Lord's Supper, and then celebrate this gift with your family and friends.

It's not Christmas without the Christ, and it's not Christmas without the Mass.

Merry Christmass,

Pastor Mark Birkholz

In and Around Faith Church

Ladies Aid

We send a BIG Thank You to all who helped to make our Bazaar a success. We appreciate all who made chili, homemade goodies, crafts and also those who donated to the white elephant and raffles. We also thank all who attended this event.

Our Christmas Party will be Thursday, December 2nd at 6:30 PM in the Parish Hall. Chicken will be provided but please bring a pot luck dish. We will also have a grab bag so bring a wrapped \$5.00 gift. All ladies of the congregation are invited. Please call Anna O'Neal if you plan to attend.

There will be no meeting in January. See you at the February 1st meeting at 7:00 PM.

May you and your family have a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with good health and happiness.

Chairman Kathleen Nowak

Kids in Need

What a wonderful time of the year!

As we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' birth and the joys of the season, we also remember the needs of the children that aren't as fortunate.

From December 5th through December 19th we will be collecting mittens, gloves and hats for children in need.

If you can help, please see the display in the Narthex for your donation.

Family Night

Our next family night will be on Friday, December 3rd at 6:00 PM in the church basement. We will be baking and decorating cookies for the shut-ins and for the Food Pantry.

The children will also have a brief rehearsal for their Christmas Service. Everyone in the congregation is invited to come (regardless of your baking skills).

Faith Altar Guild

We are privileged to take care of God's altar for Faith Church. As you may know we have a fund-raiser once a year with our felt Christmas tree in the Narthex. We ask you to support this fund-raiser so we can continue to purchase communion supplies, banners and altar linens.

We also want to thank God for leading Nancy Johnson to our group. She served for many years and even though she retired from the guild, she continued to be in charge of ordering our supplies until she went to be with the Lord.

We have another special lady who has retired from the guild, but continues to serve The Lord. Erma Johnson who served the guild for many years, continues to order the flowers every week for the altar and also for all special occasions. Thank you Erma.

We welcome Amberleigh Birkholz, Danielle Jimenez and Marilyn Diehl who have joined us. We also invite you to join the Guild. New members are always needed.

I thank my God every time I remember you.

Phillipians 1:3

In service to Christ. Faith Altar Guild
Diane Osmanski, Director

Children's Service

The children of our "Evenings with Jesus" Program will be helping with the regular Sunday morning service on December 19th. They will be singing songs and presenting a brief reenactment of the nativity story. The service will also include congregational hymns, prayers and a Christmas message. Refreshments will be served following the service.

Parsonage Open House

All members and friends of Faith Lutheran Church are invited to the parsonage (9658 S. Melvina Ave.) for an open house on Sunday, December 12th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Light refreshments will be served.

Schedule of Dec. 2010 / Jan. 2011 Events

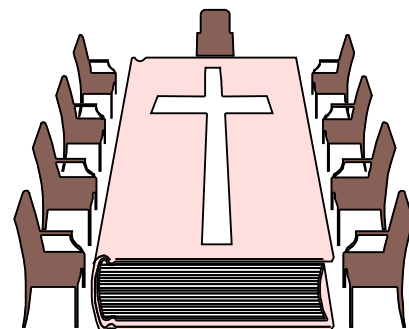
<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>December Event</u>
1	7:00 PM	Advent Service
4	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
5	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
8	7:00 PM	Advent Service
12	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
15	7:00 PM	Advent Service
18	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
19	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
24	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Worship Communion
25	9:00 AM	Christmas Day Worship Communion
26	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>January Event</u>
2	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
9	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
15	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
16	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
23	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class
30	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship / Communion Adult Bible Class

Weekly Meetings

Afternoon	
Worship	2 nd Tues. - 1:00 PM
Ladies Aid	1 st Thurs. - 7:00 PM
Evening	
with Jesus	3 rd Thurs. - 6:00 PM
Bible Study	Fri. - 10:30 AM
Family Night	1 st Fri. - 6:00 PM
AA Groups	M & F - 6:00 PM Sat - 8:00 AM
Girl Scouts	Tu - 3:30 PM F - 6:30 PM
ALANON	Tu - 7:30 PM
Adventure	1 st Sun. - 7:00 PM

**A Happy,
Healthy
New Year
To All !**



Dec. / Jan. Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

Dec. Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Dec. 5 Gene Osmanski
Glen Werth
Nick Trojanowski
Mark Trojanowski

Dec. 12 Alden Ketchum
Ed Neaves
A.J. Bray
Ray Bennett

Dec. 19 Frank Oslakovic
Bill Weems
Howard Johnson
Richard Clark

Dec. 26 Gene Osmanski
Glen Werth
Mary Slepiski
Gail Henson

Advent & Christmas Eve 7:00 PM

Dec. 1 Richard Clark
Howard Johnson
Glen Werth

Dec. 8 Alden Ketchum
Frank Oslakovic
Mark Trojanowski

Dec. 15 Gene Osmanski
Gail Henson
Mary Slepiski

Dec. 24 Bill Weems
Alden Ketchum
Mark Trojanowski
Nick Trojanowski

Dec. 25 Christmas 9:00 AM
Ed Neaves
Richard Clark
Howard Johnson
Glen Werth

Jan. Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Jan. 2 Ed Neaves
Alden Ketchum
Nick Trojanowski
Mark Trojanowski

Jan. 9 Bill Weems
Frank Oslakovic
Ray Bennett
Howard Johnson

Jan. 16 Richard Clark
Glen Werth
Nick Trojanowski
A.J. Bray

Jan. 23 Gene Osmanski
Alden Ketchum
Howard Johnson
Mark Trojanowski

Jan. 30 Ed Neaves
Bill Weems
Mary Slepiski
Gail Henson

Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

Dec. 5 Mark Trojanowski

Dec. 12 Ray Bennett

Dec. 19 Jim Kramer

Dec. 26 Gene Osmanski

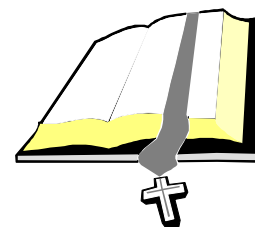
Jan. 2 Ed Neaves

Jan. 9 Bill Weems

Jan. 16 Nick Trojanowski

Jan. 23 Debbie Hochgesang

Jan. 30 Ray Bennett



Special Services

Advent Services

Midweek Advent services will be held on the first three Wednesdays of December. We will be using the service of Evening Prayer, which focuses on Jesus Christ as the light who comes into our dark world. The readings will also reflect the themes of light and darkness, and our closing hymn each week will be "The Night Will Soon Be Ending" (# 337). Following the service, refreshments will be served in the church basement.

Nursing Home Services

Pastor Birkholz will be leading the services at Emeritus of Burr Ridge (Betty Baker's residence) on December 1, 15 and 29. Services begin at 10:30AM. Pastor Birkholz is not scheduled to preach at Tinley Court in December. The January schedules for these services have not yet been set.

Epiphany Service

On Thursday, January 6, we will be hosting a joint Epiphany Service for the churches in circuits 19 and 20, a total of fourteen congregations. Pastor Birkholz will celebrate the Lord's Supper, and guest pastors will preach and assist with the service. There will also be a mass choir composed of members of these congregations. The service itself will be at 7:00 PM; it will be preceded by a potluck dinner at 6:00 PM and a choir rehearsal at 6:30 PM. We will need help setting up for the potluck and cleaning up afterwards. If you are available to help, please contact Pastor Birkholz, or watch for a sign-up sheet in the coming weeks.

Special Happenings

Christmas Caroling

We will be spreading Christmas cheer and the good news of Jesus' birth by Christmas caroling in two area nursing homes. On Saturday, December 18th we will be visiting Alma Rissky at Concord Extended Care Center (94th and Ridgeland) and Bud Diehl at Bridgeview Healthcare Center (82nd and Harlem). We'll meet at church at 1:45 PM and carpool from here.

Confession and Absolution

Advent is a penitential season, when we reflect upon our sinfulness and our need for a Savior. Private confession and absolution will be offered in the church sanctuary on Wednesday, December 22nd from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM and on Thursday, December 23 from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM as a way to prepare for our Christmas celebration. No appointments are necessary. Any confessions will remain strictly confidential.

House Blessings

St. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4, "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer." Our homes are holy places, blessed by the Word of God and prayer. In the Lutheran Service Book Agenda, we read, "It is appropriate that homes of Christians be blessed by the Word of God and prayer... Homes may be blessed annually. Usually this is done during the season of Epiphany due to the connection of the visitation of the Magi to the home of the infant Christ (Matt 2:1-11; John 1:14)..." The season of Epiphany will begin on January 6, and continue until Ash Wednesday (March 9). If you would like to have Pastor Birkholz bless your home, please contact the church office.

New Members

On Sunday, November 14, we received three new members at Faith. Thanks be to God!

Frank and Judy Greenwood of Worth joined our congregation by adult confirmation. They came to us as guests of Ed Neaves, and enjoyed the warm, friendly atmosphere at Faith. Frank and Judy are retired, and will be staying in Florida for the winter. We look forward to their joining us again in April.

Laura Zilinsky of Chicago Ridge transferred her membership to Faith from Trinity, Burr Ridge. Laura works at the UIC library downtown. She was looking for a congregation closer to her home, and decided to become a member at Faith.

New Member Potluck

On January 30, following our congregational voters' meeting, we will have a potluck luncheon to welcome the members of our congregation who have joined in the past year through confirmation, transfer or affirmation of faith:

Frank & Judy Greenwood
Derrick Jimenez
Jim Kramer
Helen Kutschke
Bob & Eleonore Lang
Max Radosevich
Franny Rheinwald
Laura Zilinsky

We will also recognize anniversaries of communicant membership at Faith in the coming year for:

5 years: Ray Bennett, Tom Mackey, Walter Renn, Brittney Rheinwald
10 years: James Lassandrello, Jeff Robbins, Mark Trojanowski, Brian Weems
15 years: Danielle Jimenez, Laura Katula, Tom Lassandrello, April Osmanski, Kari Robbins
20 years: Marie Katula
25 years: Steve Johnson, Bill Weems, Bob Young
35 years: Lucille Henson, Evelyn Luer
50 years: Gene & Barb Tebo
60 years: Grace Scott
65 years: Hertha Fahlberg

If you know of any errors or omissions in this list, please contact the church office.