



ST JOHN AMELITH PARISH NEWS

December 2023

From The Pastor

*"I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations." Psalm 89:1*

Beyond the waves of radio tunes, glimmering songs by popstars, and shopping songs made for the holiday cheer is another sound. Caroling is a unique part of the Christmas season linked to the Church. The tradition of this coming together to sing goes back into the 13th century. Certainly inspired out of the Renaissance times, it was during the Reformation when singing entered in the mainstream. Luther put sacred music back into the mouths of common people to sing. Of course, making music is something that even the Psalmist above desired - singing to the Lord is to be for all generations.

The Devil greatly hates the music of God's people. Next to a true confession of the Gospel is the glorious sound that comes with the voice. Most associate such an occurrence taking place at public worship between the pastor and people in the liturgy or in congregation singing hymns. This is good and proper in view of God's Word and Sacrament in our midst to praise how the Lord is at hand. However, the sound of song does not stop within the walls of the church. It is to be taken into the family and into the streets.



Common songs today like Joy to the World, Silent Night, and other tunes go into the lives of people with the Gospel sung before their lives. Yet, there has been a decline in Christmas caroling over the years. Maybe it is because no one has time to make music. Maybe it is because pushing a button to listen is easier than singing. Maybe it is because people want to keep the church's song distinct from their life of chosen sounds. Whatever the reasons, the carols coming from the TV or radio will never make up the difference of having the presence of God's people singing to the Lord.

God's Word intimately ties the beauty of music sung to the saving faith, to believe and proclaim. Silencing the truth only silences the voice of song to others of Christ. For instance, "Carols suffered a decline in popularity after the Reformation in the countries where Protestant churches gained prominence...but survived in rural communities until the revival of interest in carols in the 19th century."¹ Fascinating piece of history that reminds us of how Jesus hides Himself in the small sounds of life sung. As He was born in a manger, so the angels too wonderfully sang their carol to a few lonely shepherds.

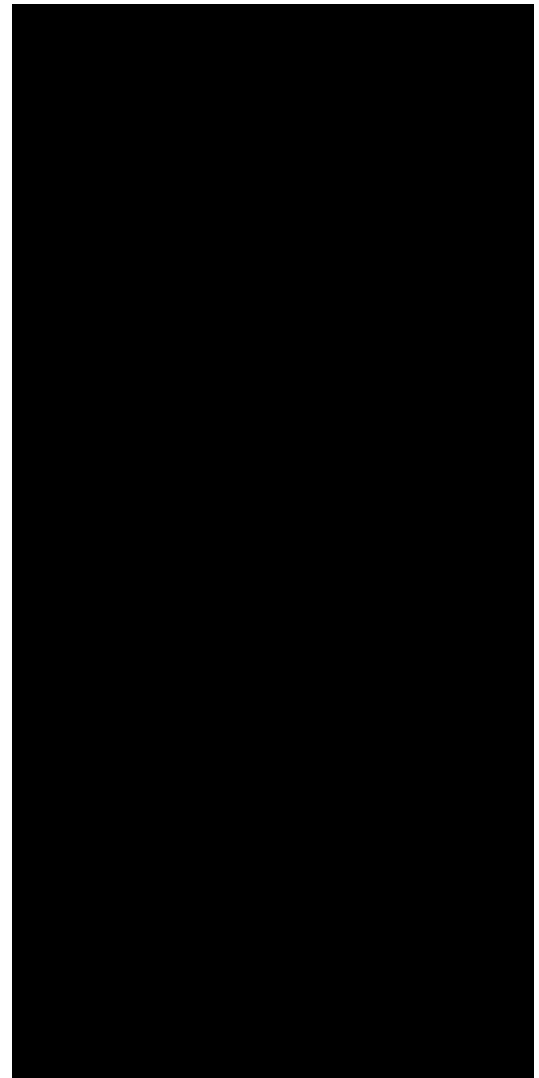
What good will our caroling do as we gather on December 10th to sing at St. John? It reminds us we are not alone as the baptized, but belong together. Singing is a sacrifice to bring the gift of song to others to be a Gospel presence. Finally, sung carols carry the victory of Christ to be light in this dark world. Martin Luther says it the best, "...The devil, the author of depressing care and distressing disturbances, almost flees from the sound of music as he does from the word of theology."² Carolers unite for the Spirit of God in song is to share our Savior and Lord for all.

The comfort of Christ be sung to all generations!

Pastor Gauthier

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_carol

² Plass, What Luther Says, CPH 1994 983:3104.



Cardinal Connection

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

On December 21, the school children will once again lead the congregation in a meditation and worship opportunity centered around the first gift of Christmas, Jesus Christ, our Savior. I can't be absolutely sure that children have done such a thing for each of the over 170 years that St. John Amelith Lutheran School has been in existence. I am certain, however, that for the vast majority of those years, the children of our school ministry have prepared their songs, lines and hearts for the annual school Christmas program.

This year's program dives deep into the beloved Christmas hymn, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" written by Charles Wesley in 1739. As the school children prepare, they are doing so much more than simply committing to memory notes and lines. They are learning about God's plan of salvation through His Son for them! They're not just learning the facts of the Christmas story; they are internalizing the Gospel message that Jesus came to this earth for them!

Even if you don't have any direct ties to any of the children in the school, please consider worshipping with them on December 21 at 6:30. All of us can sign together with the angels that God and sinners have been reconciled.

Mrs. Pat Hambaum

Townhall Meeting

December 10, 2023

The meeting will take place immediately following the church service and your attendance is very important!

Topics of discussion:

- Financial situation of the church
- Our future ministry direction
- Church Pictorial Directory

Please, Please Plan to attend!

Two different Advent Devotionals are available for members to use through the month of December. They can be found on the table in the church narthex. Please take one or both! This is a wonderful opportunity to be in God's Word daily, as we prepare for Christ's coming!

The Women's Wednesday morning Bible study will have the last meeting for this year on Wednesday, December 6, at 9:00 a.m. We will resume our study on Wednesday, January 10, 9:00-10:30, in the church basement. We will begin a new study at that time of the Book of Nehemiah, with the book "Perseverance" by Donna Pyle. The cost of the book is \$15. Please reserve the book by Tuesday, January 2. Contact Mary Warnke (989-798-5617 or warnke.mary@yahoo.com) for any questions.

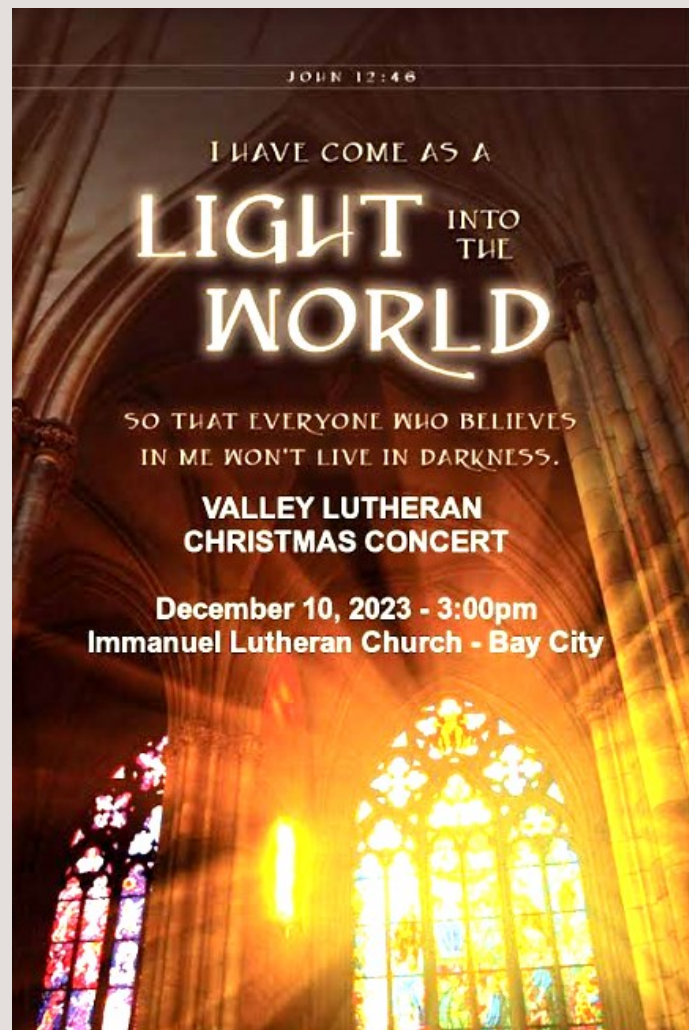
Christmas caroling! The Senior High Youth Group is inviting the congregation to go caroling on Sunday, December 10th from 4 to 7. Please RSVP on the sign-up sheet in the church narthex or to Deb Hutter at 989 316-8322. We'll meet at the school at 3:45. Afterwards a light dinner will be provided by the youth in the school gym. We are asking those participating to bring a plate of Christmas cookies.

VLHS *Ministry Update*

Key Club is taking donations for our annual Shoebox Saginaw Holiday Project. We purchase items for underprivileged men in our community. Suggested general ideas: warm pair of socks, hat, gloves, scarf, small notebook and pen, calendar, non perishable candy, kleenex, wallet, one size slipper sox, and personal items such as shampoo, brush, comb, toothbrush & paste, deodorant, nail file, cough drops and the list goes on and on...We will have a collection box in the entry-way or you can drop it off in room 106! Bring in items through Tuesday, Dec. 5th! Thank you for your help in blessing the men of our community that are in need!

Starting in January, Valley Lutheran will have its own competitive robotics team! FIRST robotics competitions combine the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology.

Winter Sports are under way. The first home basketball game will take place on Friday, December 8 when our Chargers will take on the Cardinals of Michigan Lutheran Seminary.



St John Amelith Worship Opportunities

Every Sunday

Worship 9:30 a.m.

Bible Study 11:00 a.m.

Midweek Advent Services 7:00 p.m.

December 6

December 13

December 20

Day School Christmas Program 6:30 p.m.

December 21

Christmas Eve Worship 7:00 p.m.

December 24

Christmas Day Worship 9:30 a.m.

December 25

New Year's Eve Worship 7:00 p.m.

December 31

Rooted in God's Word, Growing in Christ's Love, Branching Out to Serve, Bearing Fruits of Faith

Contact Us

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