

Merry Christmas!

It was 9 pm on Christmas night, the first of our married life. The manager of the apartment building in St Louis was taking down the Christmas decorations. “What are you doing?” I asked him. “Christmas is over,” was his response. “The decorations have been up since before Thanksgiving. That’s more than long enough.”

That seems to be the mindset of many big box stores and home centers, although the dates keep creeping earlier every year. Christmas displays have been up since October, often juxtaposing inflatable ghosts, turkeys, nativity scenes and reindeer. Stores began celebrating the *12 Days of Christmas* on December 12th or 13th as a countdown to the big day. Online retailers counted down the final day to order for “Guaranteed Delivery by Christmas Eve.” Although those guarantees aren’t really guaranteed anymore. And then, just as quickly as the displays appeared, the clearance sales began. Christmas gear only has value until the 23rd, and it costs far too much to store the surplus until the next year.

The world has it all wrong. The Season of Christmas doesn’t begin in October or November, and the First Day of Christmas isn’t in mid-December. It’s not a countdown to Christmas at all; it’s a commencement of a 12-day celebration that begins on December 25th and ends on January 5th, just in time for *The Epiphany of Our Lord* on January 6th.

So let me say it again, all the more cheerful: **Merry Christmas! Christ has come for us!** During the Season of Advent - those four weeks before Christmas - the Church looks forward to the coming of our Savior. Jesus came as the Baby of Bethlehem. He comes to us in Word and Sacraments to grant us faith and forgiveness. And “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,” as we confess in the Creeds. Advent is that time when we wait expectantly for Jesus to come and save us.

The Season of Epiphany follows Christmas and lasts until Ash Wednesday. This is a time for the Church to look for the revelation of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. During the Season of Epiphany, we hear of the Magi who followed the star to worship Jesus. We hear about Jesus’ Baptism, where the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father speaks from heaven: “*You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased,*” revealing Jesus as the son of God. And hear of Jesus’ first miracle at the Wedding Feast at Cana, when Jesus turned water into wine, showing that Jesus has power even over creation.

But until January 6th, say it loud and say it with gusto: **Merry Christmas!** Merry it is because the Lord has come. He has pierced through the darkness and brokenness of this world with His eternal light. He has come to be our Savior.

And if you want, you can leave your Christmas decorations up as long as you’d like.

May the Peace of Christ lighten your life!

Pastor Jonathan Schultz

FEBRUARY LAMPLIGHTER DEADLINE

Please have your articles and tidbits into the church office by:

Monday, January 22nd!!



WEE DISCIPLES

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart..."

Proverbs 3:5

Joy to the world, the Lord has come!

Happy New Year!



Thank you to everyone who attended the Wee Disciples Christmas Chapel! It was nice to have so many people in attendance! There were 140 people in the audience, plus all the Wee Disciples children and staff members! Many of the people also stayed after the chapel service to enjoy refreshments and fellowship time. Thank you to the staff for all their hard work in helping to make it such a successful event! Also, a big thank you to all the volunteers who came to help with the many special activities that Wee Disciples did throughout the month of December.

On January 6 we will celebrate Epiphany at Wee Disciples. Epiphany is the last day of Christmas—the day we celebrate the Wise Men finally finding Jesus and presenting Him with gifts.

A new year is a good time to reflect on our blessings. What a blessing it is to have all our classes at full enrollment. We do continue to have a waiting list for some of the classes. We are also blessed to have the wonderful staff that we have working here every day. We have a couple new staff members—take a look at the bulletin board near the check-in computer in the downstairs hallway to see pictures of all of our staff members. We are blessed to have so many volunteers from the congregation and from the families who help and support us throughout the year. We are blessed to have Pastor Schultz and Pastor Reinke who do chapel time with the Wee Disciples children every week. Chapel time is a highlight of the week for the children! There are many more blessings (too many to list)—we have much to be thankful for!

The next *Burgers for Benefits* at Fuddruckers' will be on Tuesday, January 16th, from 5:00 to 9:00pm. Thank you for your continued support!

The Board of Early Childhood Education will meet on Thursday, January 4, 2024, at 6:30pm.

LWML News

All ladies of the congregation, including our new members and confirmed young women, are invited and encouraged to attend all LWML happenings here at Trinity.

Please contact Sylvia Adams or Amy Schultz for more information.

Hear ye, hear ye! Mark your calendars....

January 3rd @ 11:30am ~ LWML Board meeting

January 13th @ 9:30am ~ LWML Group Gathering in the Stahlecker Room

January 31st @ 11:30am ~ LWML Board meeting

February 10th @ 10:00am ~ Lenten Brunch

April 26-28, 2024 ~ Polson, MT ~ MT District Convention



Our Advent Brunch was well attended last month. We had a good time celebrating a “*Sweet Christmas*” by using candy bars as talking points that matched with various Bible verses regarding Jesus’ birth and accompanying Christmas hymns. Thanks again to Alice for her creative decorations, and Judy, Sherri and Val Martin from Peace for helping lead the program, and to everyone who helped out!

Thanks to everyone who donated items to Grace Haven – they greatly appreciated them!

The Montana District Convention is coming up **April 26-28th** in Polson. *What a fun time to gather with your fellow Lutheran Ladies to hear how our Mites are used, reports from missionaries in the Harvest Field, worship together, and have great times of fellowship, Bible Study and more!* Please ask Sylvia or Amy for more information.

Our next Group Gathering will be **Saturday, January 13th at 9:30 am** in the Stahlecker Room. There will be devotions, planning, and fellowship time. The LWML Board will meet before that on **Wednesday, January 3rd**.

Wednesday Morning Ladies Bible study ~ The Wednesday Morning Ladies’ Bible study meets every Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:00am in the Stahlecker Room. Join us for a morning of fellowship time together as we study God’s Word.

Men’s Bible Study continues to meet on **Thursday mornings at 8:30am** for an hour of fellowship and study of God’s Word. All the men of the congregation are invited and encouraged to attend.

A blessed New Year to all! Here comes 2024, ready or not. Did you make some resolutions that are achievable? Loose five pounds. Eat healthier with some vegetables and fruit each day. Exercise for at least 10 minutes each day. Did you think about adding some spiritual enrichment to your new goals? Suggestions from our church library might include: a devotion book, a Christian novel, a non-fiction book, a children's Bible story if you have children or grandchildren. There are so many choices and resources sitting on the shelves available for check out. Take the challenge to read at least one of our Trinity or Peace Library books before Ash Wednesday, which is February 14th this year. Tell Pastor or the church secretary what you're reading.

The Friday Ladies Bible study ~ Friday Ladies Bible study is in recess during January.

Assisted Living Ministry ~ Those who help with our Assisted Living Ministry with hymn singing and a devotion will be bringing song books for the singing at these locations. (Yes, a hymnal or Christian songbook would qualify in the above challenge.) They will be at *The Lodge*, 1801 9th St. S., on **Friday, January 5th from 10:00-10:45am**. On **Friday, January 26th at 11:30am** the undaunted by deep winter weather no host lunch bunch will gather around the table at *Dante's Creative Cuisine*, 1325 8th Ave. N. Afterward many will go to *Highgate Senior Living*, 3000 11th Ave. S., for hymns of praise to celebrate the New Year. Show you are Montana tough, and that cold weather doesn't scare you from spreading God's Word in song.

Pastor Reinke will be holding worship services at the following locations. On **Wednesday, January 10th** he will be at *The Lodge* at **2:30pm**. He will be at *Highgate Senior Living* at **1:30pm on Monday, January 15th**. Bring your warm smile on these frosty days to spread the joy of being part of God's community to these residents.

Did you know that Trinity has scholarships available for families of Trinity who have, or would like to have, their children attending Wee Disciples Preschool and Day Care? You do not need to have a financial need, but you do need to be a member of Trinity Lutheran Church. The application is available on our website (www.trinity-mt.org) or in the church office.





Called Home to Glory

November 25, 2023

Robert Norman Nommensen, Sr.



Our shut-ins

Millie Birkholz (The Lodge), **Ellen Carpenter** (Eagle's Manor), **Anita Erickson** (at home), **Ed Hickel** (at home), **Arleen Nelson** (Bee Hive Homes-Pine Tree), **Myrtle Pence** (at Benefis Extended Care), **Juanita Winter** (Bee Hive Homes-Clover)

Bob Blomstrom (Beehive Homes in Helena), **Darlene Murray** (at son's home in Kansas), **Vi-Nell** (with family in Spokane, WA), **Flo Winter** (at daughter's home in North Dakota)

Our members and their caregivers who continue to battle health issues

Chuck & Judy Lively, Chuck & Elsie Lorenz, Jerry & Colleen Mans
Henry & Alice Schuman, Wally & Diane Thompson

We pray for our members in hospice care

Sherrie Blomstrom
Arlene Royland (Evelyn McNaught's sister in Spokane, WA)

We pray for our expectant mothers and their families:

Kelli & Zach Lynch

We pray for those serving in law enforcement and the military

Sam Birkett, Cascade County Sheriff's Deputy; **Joshua Graham**, (Blomstrom's grandson-in-law) Helena Police Department

Evan Brenner, USAF; **Nathan Brenner**, USAF; **Scott Broberg**, USAF; **Daniel Crème'**, USAF; **James Crumley**, USAF; **Matthew Erickson**, USAF (Anita Erickson's grandson); **Clifton Grilley**, USN (Headington's son); **Krista Kotz**, USAF; **Dustin Krueger**, USAF (LaVelle VanVoast's son); **Kelli Lynch**, USAF; **Isaac Monroe**, USAF; **Martin Shabaan**, USAF; **Chaplain Jonathan Schultz**, USAF; **Kalainee Teaney**, USAF; **Julie Timms** (Waetzig's granddaughter)

Our Seminary Student

Aaron Ferguson, 6600 N. Clinton St. Box 245, Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Birthdate: January 16th

Home Church: Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Hyannis, NE

Special Ministry Interests: Rural Ministry, Parish/Congregational



Rev. Dr. David & Jennifer Preus ~ Eurasia (Romania)

Rev. Dr. Gerald & Heidi Paul ~ Cayman Islands

Rev. Eric & Johanna Stinnett ~ Ethiopia

John & Jenn Wolf ~ Kenya

Giving Online: You can partner with the LCMS by making an online gift restricted in use to the support of these missionaries at **lcms.org**

Giving by Check: You can also make a donation to their ministries by check. *Mail your check, made payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and designated in the memo line with the missionaries last name*, to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861, **QUESTIONS?** Call 888-930-4438 or send an email to **mission.giving@lcms.org**.

COMPARISON OF GIVING REPORT ~ 2023

For the period November 26, 2023 through December 25, 2023

November 26 th	\$3,998
December 3 rd	\$5,878
December 10 th	\$3,400
December 17 th	\$3,752
December 24 th	\$3,776
December 24 th & 25 th (<i>Christmas Eve & Christmas Day</i>)	\$3,132
Vanco	\$3,300

Actual giving for report period: \$27,236

Roof Repair Fund –through 12/25/2023 \$49,174

If you have any questions, please call me at (406) 868-2260 ~ *James Lautenschlager, Assistant Treasurer*



Vanco's Give+ Online

Vanco's Give+ Mobile

The next generation of giving

Please visit our website www.trinity-mt.org, go to the "Fellowship" tab and sign up for online giving. You can also download the Vanco mobile app to your smart phone for even more convenience.

A Reminder to Use Your New Offering Envelopes ~ New boxes of offering envelopes for **2024 (BLUE in color)** were issued Wednesday, December 20, 2023.

The last time to use the 2023 yellow envelopes was December 31, 2023! **Please destroy any remaining 2023 yellow offering envelopes. Begin using the BLUE offering envelopes SUNDAY, January 7, 2024.**

Offering Counters are needed to assist the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer count and record the offerings following each Sunday service. No experience is needed. Please call the church office (452-2121) or sign up on the bulletin board outside the church office if you are willing to assist.

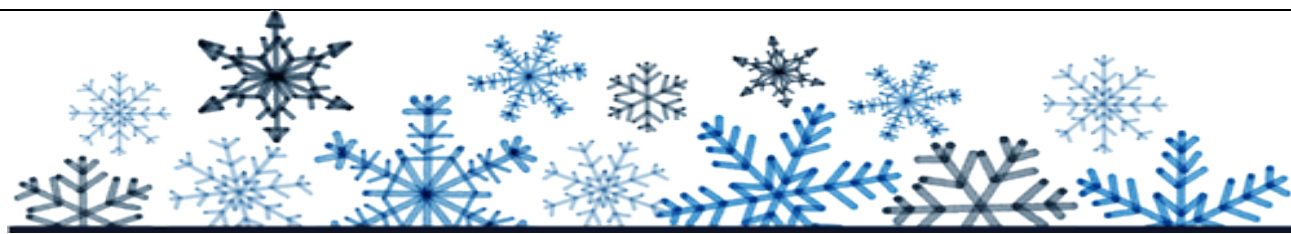
Snow Removal ~ *Are you willing to come to church early on a Sunday morning to shovel snow before services?* If so, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office. Given the recent weather patterns, you may not need to ever shovel, but your willingness to come **JUST IN CASE** is appreciated.

A Message from FISH ~ On behalf of FISH, thank you to the members of Trinity Lutheran for your kind and generous support. Your love and concern make this worthwhile organization possible. You have been generous to FISH in the following ways: contributing to the Town Pump challenge; supporting FISH with financial gifts; helping and attending the Loaves & Fishes dinner; food donations and praying for our continued success.

FISH was very blessed this year with the Town Pump challenge raising \$28,193.39. As you can see the support from the community and the 12 FISH partners was outstanding.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of FISH, thank you again for all your support in the FISH program during 2023. May God bless you in 2024.

Worship Assistants



Serving this Month

Counters ~ Alan & Denise Wegner

Altar Guild ~ Denise Wegner / Barb Going / Sandy Baranko

Ushers ~ Alan Wegner / Elders

Wednesday, January 10, 2024	Bob Nommensen
Wednesday, January 17, 2024	Bob Nommensen
Wednesday, January 24, 2024	Bob Nommensen
Wednesday, January 31, 2024	Bob Nommensen

January 7, 2024 ~ The Baptism of Our Lord (white)

Duty Elders	Martin Bauer / Len Koelbel
Audio/Video	Cheryl Bauer
Organist	Joy Suek

January 14, 2024 ~ Second Sunday after the Epiphany (green)

Duty Elders	Roy Arves / Shawn Shaw
Audio/Video	Barry Eastley
Organist	Jeannine Eastley



January 21, 2024 ~ Third Sunday after the Epiphany (green)

Duty Elders	Len Koelbel / Bill Sybrant
Audio/Video	Barry Eastley
Organist	Jeannine Eastley

January 28, 2024 ~ Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany (green)

Duty Elders	Roy Arves / Shawn Shaw
Audio/Video	Josh Schultz
Organist	Joy Suek



If unable to serve on your designated Sunday, please contact the church office (406-452-2121) as soon as possible to allow time to find a substitute.

Birthdays and Wedding, Baptismal and Confirmation Anniversaries

January 1st

Harper Lautenschlager

January 4th

Alex Shabaan

January 5th

Sheldon Burkstrand

Bill Sybrant

January 9th

Marlyn Gersack

January 10th

Anita Erickson (80+)

January 12th

Kathleen Redenbaugh

Clarissa Shaffer

January 13th

Gerda Broberg, Joseph Nommensen

January 15th

Sandra Baranko



January 17th

Bob Nommensen

January 19th

Lucy Hall

January 20th

Martin Bauer

Anita Chapman,

Chuck Lively (80+)

Hayden Houle

Blaize Wegner, Seth Wheeler

Sam Chapman, James Neumann

Lauralyn Fairbanks

January 21st

January 26th

January 29th

January 30th

Joe Bickel

January 1st

James ♥ Ashlee Graves (16)

January 2nd

Gary ♥ Mary Somerfeld (42)

January 21st

Robert ♥ Bobbie Voegel (18)

January 24th

Mason ♥ Courtney Walker (21)

January 25th

Mel ♥ Ruby Willey (51)



January 1st

Mike Grams, Debbie Lee

Randi Meehan, Joy Suek, Sherri VanVleet

January 3rd

Penny Hill, Courtney Schroeder

January 4th

Shayna Kellogg

January 5th

Dennis Philipp

January 7th

Juanita Winter

January 8th

Sean Ginnaty

January 10th

Emily Stene

January 13th

Harper Lautenschlager

Axton & Parker Mansch, Serenity Miesmer

January 14th

Ed VanVleet

January 15th

Baylie Isakson, BlaykLinn Isakson

January 17th

Jon Chapman

January 18th

George Pence

January 19th

Samarah Hill

January 22nd

Gerda Broberg

January 24th

Kolter Legg

January 25th

Ada Burkstrand

January 26th

Aaron Neumann, Pam Nommensen

January 30th

Alex Shabaan



January 1st

Wendy Doll, Mike Grams, Arlene Royland

Alice Schuman, Henry Schuman, Joy Suek

January 9th

Roy Arves

January 14th

Chris Legg

January 15th

Baylie Isakson, JC Isakson

George Pence, Jamie Wheeler, Seth Wheeler

January 18th

January 27th

January 28th

Tonya Wandke

Sean Ginnaty