

The Shepherd's Voice

From The Pastor



Christmas has captivated the world and remains a day of mystery. How can God, who made all things and holds them in the palm of His hand, come as a baby in Mary's womb? As much as we desire to explain Christmas, we come simply to confess its truth, to tell its story, and to trust in its promise, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. All the world stands in need of Him whom the Father has sent, whose birth we celebrate. But how will they know of Christ and of the dawn of the day of redemption unless we who know Him confess Him before the world? So, we come to remember and rejoice but also to respond anew with the courage to speak and live the light of Christ today and every day until He comes again!

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Whether your family exchanges Christmas gifts on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day (or at all), Christians gather to celebrate, receive, and unwrap the perfect Gift, that is, Jesus Christ Himself. The wrapping paper in our homes temporarily covers a gift and is soon thrown away, but Jesus comes to us on Christmas day by His Means of Grace to give to us infinite things we can't find anywhere else — the love of His life, the forgiveness of sins, and the salvation of our souls. We rejoice in the gift of the Child wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in the manger, knowing the great gifts the Lord comes to bring for us and for the whole world through the Savior given and born for us.

Pastor Simpson

FRITZIE'S CORNER

Merry Christmas

Christ, the Savior is born! Those shepherds were terrified when the angel appeared to them with the news. I wonder what all went through their minds when they realized they were selected to go see this miracle and to spread the word—bewildered, surprised, humbled, delighted—add your own words to describe their thoughts. Mine is honored—an angel bringing the news to lowly shepherds.

We know the story, we know Jesus' life and death for us sinners. Do we spread the word every chance we get?

**Praise Him, Praise Him!
Celebrate His birth.
Praise His life,
Here on earth.**

**Praise Him, Praise Him!
His death on the cross.
The miraculous resurrection
Without it, our loss!**



**Praise Him, Praise Him!
On His heavenly throne,
Praise the Christ Jesus—
We are His own!**

**Praise Him, Praise Him!
Put Jesus first—
On your celebration
Of His birth.**



Fritzie Rice

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great physician of both body and soul, healed a man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1–6). Dropsy is a paradoxical ailment, with an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body is over inflated with fluid, a craving that, when indulged, served not to ease but to feed the disease.

And so, if a man drinks a great deal but is never filled, he sees a doctor to inquire about what ails him, what is wrong with his body, and how to remedy it. For that is not thirst but a disease (Seneca, *Consolation to His Mother Helvia*, 11.3).

But if the owner of five couches goes looking for 10, or the owner of 10 tables buys up as many again, and even though he has plenty of land and money, he remains unsatisfied and desires yet more, losing sleep and always in discontent, does he not also require a physician to diagnose the cause of this distress?

For this is not want or lack, it's a disease (Aristippus, quoted in Plutarch, *Love of Wealth*, 524b). As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, "we may rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man: For the more the one is swollen with excess of water, the more he thirsts; so also the other: The more he abounds in riches ... the more eagerly he desires them" (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 4:135). Both require physicians. Both require diagnosis and medicine applied from the outside to the inward being. For these are not desires to be fulfilled but diseases to be cured.

This is why our Lord instructs us to not to be consumed by money. "No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We think, "If I just had this much then I would be happy."

But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, happiness evades us. The desire for more is never satisfied. It demands our constant energy, either in procuring more or protecting what we already have. When this happens, God, in His mercy, shows us that the money that He has given is no longer serving us, but we it. We have another master.

To overcome this, we need a physician's diagnosis and a physician's remedy. And our Lord Jesus Christ, our great physician of both body and soul, applies His Word to us as He did to the man healed of dropsy. He shows us how we have put our fear, love, and trust in our money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things.

In essence, He says, "Stop chasing after these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. You cannot have two masters. Repent!" And in seeing our great error, we are sorry that we have not fully feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. And, in the mercy and grace that He earned for us on the cross, He takes away this sin, restores us to health, and bids us to live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has given? Do we simply go back to our old ways? "By no means!" St. Paul says (Rom. 3:31; 6:2). We do not just go back to the old ways, the ways that lead us to death. No, we live a new life, a life filled with the grace, mercy and love of God toward us. And God's great mercy, grace, and love toward is so abundant that it overflows and pours out onto those around us.

So we no longer hoard money and possessions. We no longer scrape and crawl our way to amass more. We give to those around us, as God in Christ has given to us. We press our money and possessions into service for those who need it: our family, our society and our church. For money is God's gift to us to serve us and others. Not the other way around. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.

Family Life

A Series of Messages for Advent and Christmas



Family life. It can be the best of times and — let's be honest — it can be the worst of times. Consider these family facts:

- You don't need remote control for your TV. If you have children, the chances of controlling anything are already remote.
- More ominous than the sound of an approaching riot is the sound of children suddenly quiet.
- A survey of marriage counselors has uncovered this bit of data: no marriage can survive white carpeting.

Everyone needs godly wisdom when it comes to family relationships. That's why, as we begin a new church year, we plan to learn from the families connected with our Lord's birth. This includes Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, along with Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John. These families faced infertility, frustration, loss, misunderstandings, death, and so much more. Preaching plans are as follows:

Advent 1 (November 28) – **Two Families** (Luke 1:5–25)

Advent 2 (December 5) – **Our Way** (Luke 1:57–66)

Advent 3 (December 12) – **A List!** (Matthew 1:1–17)

Advent 4 (December 19) – **Open the Door** (Matthew 1:18–20)

Christmas Eve – **Whoever Takes the Son Gets It All**
(Matthew 1:21–25)

You are encouraged to be a part of these Sunday worship services. Your family is worth time and investment in God's word!





Pecans—Pecans—Pecans

Just For You!!!

Just in time to satisfy your taste buds for baking, for snacking, or just to give away as a gift.

You have been waiting patiently for our Pecan Sales.

The LWML Ruth Guild is offering these fresh pecans to you. We will be offering these for sale at church as well as taking orders online. Beginning November 15, 2021 they will be for sale. We will be sending via email an order form for those that want to order online.

The net proceeds will go to our convention travel fund to help women from Good Shepherd who plan to attend the national Lutheran Women's Missionary League Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Thanks for all your support! We hope you will enjoy the Pecans.

Share this info with your friends and neighbors as well.

Marvelous Pecans

to help travel to
Milwaukee, WI

2023



Convention



Fresh pecans supplied by Valley View Pecan Co., Shawnee, OK
Contact Marguerite Christman—405-570-5506 or Peggy Tarr—405-613-5779

AN ELDER MOMENT



In the TV Show, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, I think Linus had all the best lines. He was also the only character that didn't seem to be affected by all the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season. His was the voice of reason and keeping everyone focused on the true meaning of Christmas. From quoting scripture in the school play to seeing the beauty in what we would call a scrawny little Christmas tree. *Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift.*

Let's all stay focused not on the gifts, but on THE Gift. Share His love with all we come across and be sure to wish everyone a Merry CHRISTmas!

Rejoice Evermore,

Larry Hart



December



**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY**

Mark and Kathy Webie	12/10
Ron and Cindy Simpson	12/31



BIRTHDAYS



BAPTISMAL ANNIVER-

Melody Carter	12/1
Linda Williamson	12/1
David Alsip	12/7
Taneya Dossey	12/8
Shondreya Toomey	12/8
Jackson Parker	12/10
Joy Parker	12/10
Daniel Dossey	12/13
Zoey Dossey	12/13
Diana Grundmann	12/13
Paula Anderson	12/15
Royce Junghanns	12/15
Gayle Brown	12/18
Connie Grant	12/18
Anna Schmidt	12/19
Pat Northrup	12/20
Katie Parker	12/20

Larry Hart	12/2
Jazmine Striegel	12/2
Hazel Barghols	12/5
Marilyn Carroll	12/5
Betty Anderson	12/9
Norma Place	12/11
Bev Moran	12/13
Brian Morton	12/13
Donna Lottman	12/14
Chuck Murphy	12/19
Maria Junghanns	12/20
Debbie Arnhart	12/21
Louise Beasley	12/23
Geri Nast	12/23
DJ Dunn, III	12/26
Marilyn Hall	12/26
Laura Crain	12/29
Toni Wamhoff	12/30