



# *The* **W**atchman



*January*  
**2021**

***Christ Lutheran Church, Pascagoula, MS***



I have been thinking back to this time last year; it seems like ages ago, far more than twelve months, yet 2020 has been eventful enough to feel far longer than the usual 52 weeks. I will quote myself from the January 2020 newsletter: after a very weak pun on 20/20 vision, I wrote, “But being so extremely nearsighted, I think of how Paul says ‘We walk by faith, not by sight’ in 2 Corinthians 7:12. We’re all terribly limited when it comes to our view of the future. We may have grand plans and hopes for 2020, but it’s only hindsight that’s 20/20. By the same token, we may be apprehensive and pessimistic about what the year may hold, yet we still do not know how things will turn out. We enter the new year mindful of this fact, that we are called to make our way through life based not by sight and confident knowledge of the future, but by faith, trusting God who does know the future and has

made wonderful promises to us about it.”

Indeed, the hindsight we have on the year 2020 will undoubtedly show us things far different from what we thought going in. And I did not realize how true it was when I said “we do not know how things will turn out.” And yet, I hope the rest was equally true for all of us, that we have in fact weathered the time not by sight but by faith, trusting in God who holds the universe and all that is in it within His hands. Because His future and His promises have not been affected in the slightest by any of the things that have caused so much stress and anxiety and conflict. Elections and COVID and lockdowns, oh my! Yet I am convinced that none of these things, nor things present nor things to come, nor anything else in all Creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Perhaps 2020 will go down in our memories as “THAT year” unlike any other. Perhaps 2021 will prove itself better -- or maybe worse! There are no guarantees -- this year has helped me realize all the more that I do not know what is coming, and that I can only trust God and do the best I can each day. I think that’s a good thing and a good perspective for us all, in any year. In reflecting back on the previous year, I am truly thankful for the way some things have turned out: I can say without any hesitation or doubt that there is nowhere else I would rather have been during 2020 than at Christ Lutheran Church in Pascagoula, nor anybody I would rather have spent it with than this wonderful congregational family; and no matter what is in store for us in the coming year, I do not expect that to change.

**December (2020 Picture)  
Anniversary  
& Birthdays**

L-R: Donna Krebs, Derek &  
Eve Waffel and Davey  
Shepherd



**Elders & Lay Readers**

- 3 Shawn Robbins (Crystal R.)
- 10 Kevin Rademacher (John K.)
- 17 Bobby Trehern (Keven R.)
- 24 Jody Heusman (Eve W.)
- 31 Elders' choice (Jay T.)



**BIRTHDAYS**

- Alyssa Purdy 15
- Louis Bontly 16
- Mark Schulte 25



**Anniversaries**

- 22 Jay & Janet Torries
- 24 Gary & Cathy Groff



**Bible Treasure Hunt:** Solve the clue to discover the treasure, a Bible person, place, or thing. Answer on calendar.

How many days was Jonah in the belly of the big fish? Was it one, three, five or seven days.

# Mary Martha News

Will meet on Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. All ladies are welcome to attend.

## January Mites Sri Lanka Multipurpose Building Construction 2019-2021 Mission Grant 18 — \$50,000



Immanuel Lutheran Church congregation at worship on Sunday morning.

The Lutheran church has operated in Sri Lanka since the 1920's. Over the years, Lutherans in Sri Lanka have suffered numerous tests and trials. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has four very active congregations and seven preaching stations. There are three pastors for the 11 congregations. The need to train pastors is evident by the interest and enrollment in pre-seminary

classes. For many years the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka has needed a sanctuary for Immanuel Lutheran Church, a central administrative office, and facilities to offer the theological classes for future pastors which will provide a permanent Lutheran seminary. Plans for a building to house the sanctuary, administrative offices, and theological classrooms have been designed. This grant will assist in funding the construction of the Sri Lanka Multipurpose Building.

## A Thought about Stewardship

### The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.



Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

- Who are you?
- To whom do I give?
- And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the *Luther's Small Catechism* informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has

the local congregation in mind. For “the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

- Regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2);
- Proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
- Generously (2 Cor. 8:20);
- Of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and
- With a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

It’s that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

## January Scripture Readings

|                 |         |                          |                       |                        |              |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
|                 | Jan. 3  | 1 Kings 3:4–15           | Psalm 119:<br>97–104  | Eph. 1:3–14            | Luke 2:40–52 |
| <b>EPIPHANY</b> | Jan. 6  | Is. 60:1–6               | Psalm 72:1–11 (12–15) | Eph. 3:1–12            | Matt. 2:1–12 |
|                 | Jan. 10 | Gen. 1:1–5               | Psalm 29              | Rom. 6:1–11            | Mark 1:4–11  |
|                 | Jan. 17 | 1 Sam. 3:1–10<br>(11–20) | Psalm 139:1–10        | 1 Cor. 6:12–20         | John 1:43–51 |
|                 | Jan. 24 | Jonah 3:1–5, 10          | Psalm 62              | 1 Cor. 7:29–31 (32–35) | Mark 1:14–20 |
|                 | Jan. 31 | Deut. 18:15–20           | Psalm 111             | 1 Cor. 8:1–13          | Mark 1:21–28 |



# 2021

| Sunday   | Monday                      | Tuesday | Wednesday   | Thursday | Friday | Saturday  |
|--|-----------------------------|---------|---|----------|--------|---|
|  |                             |         |   |          | 1      | 2   |
|  |                             |         |   |          |        |   |
| 3  | 4                           | 5       | 6   | 7        | 8      | 9   |
| Adult Bible class 9:00<br>Holy Communion 10:00                 | Mary/Martha<br>Meeting 5:30 |         |   |          |        | Men of Christ<br>Breakfast 8:00                   |
| 10   | 11                          | 12      | 13  | 14       | 15     | 16  |
| Adult Bible class 9:00<br>Holy Communion 10:00                 |                             |         |   |          |        |   |
| 17   | 18                          | 19      | 20  | 21       | 22     | 23  |
| Adult Bible class 9:00<br>Holy Communion 10:00<br>Elders 11:00 | Council 6:00                |         |   |          |        |   |
| 24   | 25                          | 26      | 27  | 28       | 29     | 30  |
| Adult Bible class 9:00<br>Holy Communion 10:00                 |                             |         |  |          |        | Solution to Bible<br>Treasure Hunt:<br>Jonah 1:17 |
| 31   |                             |         |   |          |        |   |
| Adult Bible class 9:00<br>Holy Communion 10:00                 |                             |         |   |          |        |   |