



December 2024 Newsletter

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church and School

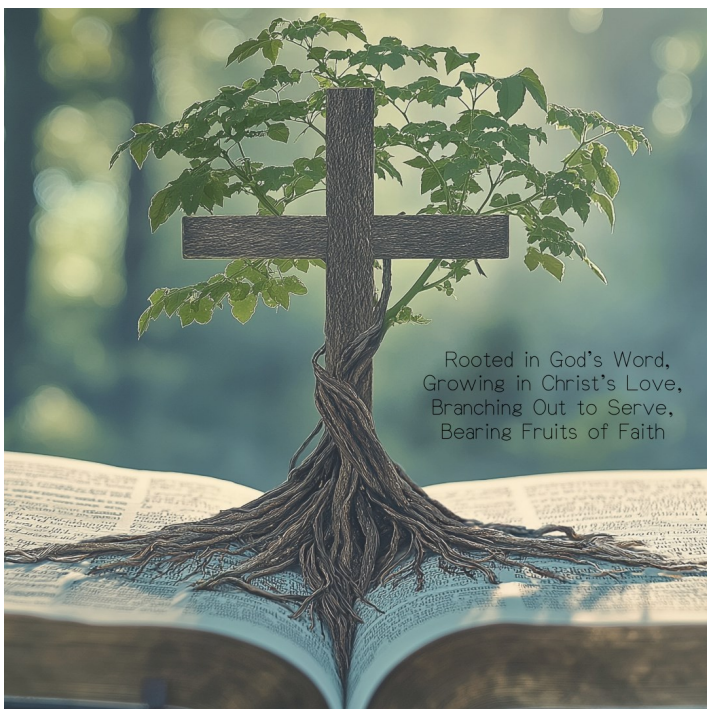
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Rooted in God's Word,
Growing in Christ's Love,
Branching Out to Serve,
Bearing Fruits of Faith



*Can you spot the
Luther Rose in
the newsletter?*

From The Pastor

“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence...” Isaiah 64:1

There are many things coming at us this time of the year. December invites plenty of busyness besides the onset of snow showers. There are cards to send, gifts to buy, parties to attend, and travels all around. We tend to jam in as much as possible during the holiday season. Maybe it the blame is on commercialism. Maybe it is because of school break. Maybe busyness has become our tradition. We invite many comings and goings, but celebrating Advent brings something else to our plans before Christmas. At the end of his book, Isaiah prayed that the Lord “would rend the heavens and come down...” God at that time seemed absent from His people and the adversity being faced was too much for anyone else to handle except God.

Speeding off to Christmas too quickly is evident now days, but despair over the busyness needs the better promises that Advents brings. More significant than counting down the next Space X rocket launch, the Advent Wreath helps us to count down till Christmas or God coming into our flesh. This applies both to how God’s Son was born of the Virgin, but also how Jesus Christ will come again in bodily glory. The Advent Wreath comes from Germany by a Lutheran pastor in 1893 doing mission work with children. Leave it to the care and teaching of children that such a practice would benefit adults! This kind of counting is not woes over budgets, busyness, or even age, but how the Lord came, comes, and will come again.

We will see this growing light in Advent by the Christmas Canticles from the Gospel according to Luke. These songs come from familiar figures at the time of Christ coming in the flesh or His incarnation. This rending of the heavens with God coming down was unlike anything in the past of what He did. Israel from the Old Testament knew God’s presence at Mt. Sinai and it caused all to tremble at His holiness. Yet, Advent delivers the answer to repent and believe the Father sent His Son into the darkness of an unholy world. His coming was sung over by a privileged few, but the rending made by Jesus Christ did come to shake the cross and leave an empty tomb. This rejoicing the Church sings as a witness to how the Lord is at hand. What He gives is forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation still present now in the Word and Sacraments.

The growing light on an Advent Wreath welcomes more than Christmas. St. Paul says, “For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11b). Each Christmas draws us to the greater closeness of Christ. Isaiah longed for God’s presence against the wickedness, but also in the same chapter. He knew what Israel needed confessing “But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand” (64:8). There is a better glory than the good old days, but God with us and the holiness of Jesus is to save sinners. By baptism we are all a work of His hands hearing the promise, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5b). Advents invites us to come. Christmas is to come. Jesus by His means of grace comes. The rending of the heavens has come with God for us.

Come Lord Jesus,

Pastor Jerry Gauthier



Dear Cardinal Families,

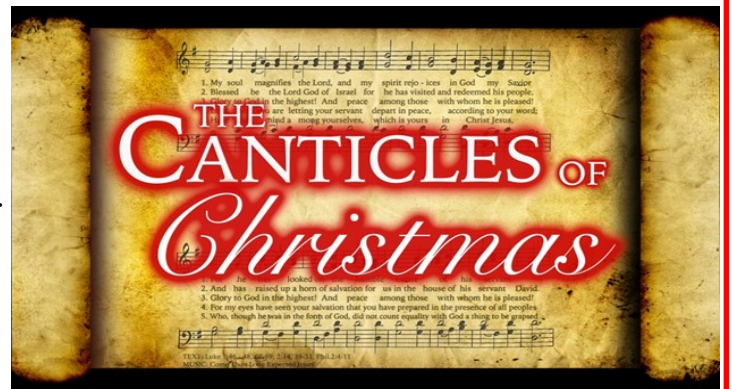
It is hard to believe that November has come to an end and December is upon us. As time passes and we leave this season of fall the weather changing and business of our lives come into play. It seems like each year there is no escaping the cluster of activities during the Christmas season. Something we can hold to as Lutherans is to be Thankful for what God has provided for us and enter into Advent the longing and waiting for the Coming of our Lord.

On November 25th the seventh and eighth grade ELA class read the poem The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost. We discussed the poems metaphor that sometimes we take one path in life and sometimes ponder if the road we took was the right route. But as the poet stated in the final stanza "I shall be telling this with a sigh. Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference." That in this journey in life looking back at what might have been might mean nothing to where we are walking now. Scripture states "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:11-13) On our journey through the Advent and Christmas seasons this school year if we add daily scripture and prayer no matter what path we go Jesus goes with us and there is no worries in looking back.

Sincerely,
Mr. Jonathan P. Korpi
Principal

St. Peter Christmas Bazaar: Saturday, Dec. 7th from 9 am to 2:30 pm. Featured are crafts, holiday baked goods, quilts, rock candy, fresh greens, white elephant sale, and more. Luncheon from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. WSGW will be there! 2440 N Raucholz Road, Hemlock

This year's Advent Midweek Services will follow a sermon series on those that sang of our Lord's coming! Join us as we sing with them in preparation for the greatness of the Lord "born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4b-5).



THE CASE FOR Christmas

Evidence for the Identity of Jesus



Have you ever wondered why Christmas is so misunderstood? Do you know how to defend against those that would attack more than Christmas but Christ as Lord? Join us following our Advent Midweek services for adult Bible Study. We will learn to confess the faith, reach out in love, and live in a post-church culture.

Communities That Confess: How the Church Confesses Christ in a Culture of Isolation

November 19, 2024

By Joel Biermann

Many of us have fond memories of small-town life: summer festivals, unlocked doors, school pageants, common friends, heartfelt patriotism and a uniform morality. In years gone by, even those living in urban areas typically enjoyed the ordinary delights of life shared in tight-knit neighborhoods. Today, however, experiences like these are increasingly relegated to memories and nostalgia. In the 21st century, for a host of reasons, such communities are becoming quite uncommon.

While the word “community” is often associated with official municipal structures designed to organize and enhance civil life, the word is better understood as an important and specific sociological concept. Communities are not merely the result of shared ZIP codes, school districts or legislative decisions. They are much more than administrative political units; they are more than a synonym for “village” or “town.” “Community” is the name we give to the complex network of interrelationships between individuals that bind them to one another in important ways as they live their lives together.

Before we can think about communities that confess, we need to be clear about what we mean by these terms. “Confession” has been fully defined elsewhere in this issue as the way that God’s people faithfully declare with their words and their lives the truth they have received from God. But to understand how to be part of communities that confess, we also need to understand what a “community” is, and how a healthy one forms and is held together.

Considered in a rich, sociological way, healthy and enduring communities always have three essential characteristics:

- 1. Every community has a creed** — a way of understanding the meaning and aim of life, and the things that are important to live life well.
- 2. A community has a shared catalog of important narratives or stories** that are told and retold and cherished with each telling, and that teach and reinforce the creed.
- 3. A community has shared common practices**, which help to bind its members together in their shared life. These practices take on many forms — intentional rites and rituals, organized games and festivals, and even the routine patterns of ordinary social interaction.

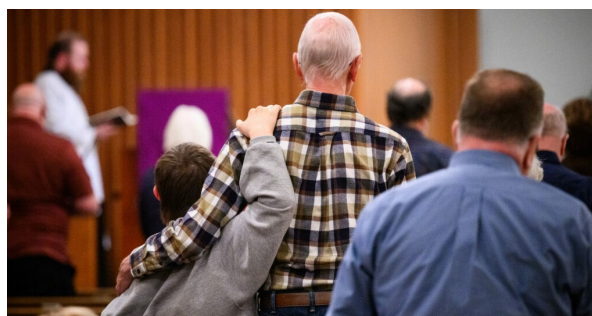
Christians can learn two important things from a careful consideration of these core aspects of healthy communi-

ties. First, it should be immediately apparent that churches, and especially the local congregation, meet all of these criteria. In fact, there are few human institutions that excel the church in any of these three areas. We Christians confess three common creeds. We have a wealth of shared narratives collected in the pages of the Bible and volumes more added through two millennia of history. And we have a host of shared practices like liturgical worship, congregational gatherings and rituals for milestone life events like birth, marriage and death. Our congregations exemplify the core aspects of a true community.

Secondly, it becomes clear that the divisiveness, vitriol and incivility that characterize our present culture are virtually inevitable given the widespread pluralism of the world around us. Our society at large is in the process of losing all of the elements that make for real community. Our political world cannot help but be contentious and strident when those who inhabit it are in such sharp disagreement about the essential meaning, purpose and moral directives of human life.

It will be difficult for someone who denies God’s existence, believes that the point of life is to be happy, and holds that the basic moral code is to live and let live to find any common ground with someone who believes that life’s purpose is faithfully to follow in the way of Christ while awaiting His return in glory and that the moral code for all people is explicitly expressed in the Ten Commandments. There are many complex reasons behind the fracturing of our present public life — but it is enough to realize that the very building blocks of community have been banished from our common life by staunch cultural and spiritual commitments to ideas and principles that not only reject God’s truth, but also undermine civic culture and politics.

This means that Christian congregations must play an ever-increasing role in the daily lives of people. Not only do churches deliver God’s grace through preaching and the Sacraments, making sinners right with God, but they simultaneously serve as one of the few remaining communities that can anchor, guide and enrich our lives in this world. Recognizing this, Christians should promote the communal aspect of our lives in Christ. We never follow Christ in isolation. We are part of a community with important responsibilities to one another (Col. 3:12–17; 1 Thess. 5:12–23).



Christians are right to emphasize the centrality of the church's work of Word and Sacrament by which it extends God's righteousness through Christ; but we should also be aware of the significant role the church plays in this present world as it serves as a robust community. Both aspects of the church's reality must be core to the witness that Christians offer to the world around them.

Witnessing is essentially a synonym for confessing. When we confess God's truth, we provide a faithful witness to all who hear us and see us. This witness is not limited to the times we open our mouths and talk about spiritual things or to the official doctrinal or moral statements we publish or post. Our witness is manifest in the way that we Christians live our lives. We worship with one another, celebrating God's good and eternal gifts. But even after the service's Benediction, we continue to live our lives together. We encourage and exhort one another by example and by words. We spur one another on in our mutual commitment to God's guidance for the way we operate in our marriages, raise our children, work in our vocations, use our finances for the good of those around us, season our words with encouragement, extend our resources for the benefit of those in need, and go through each day with a buoyant confidence in God's

provision and certain hope for the full redemption and restoration of His creation. When we Christians live together like this, and hold one another accountable to this way of life, we provide a bright witness to the world (John 13:34-35; Rom. 12). Together as the community of the church, we confess God's truth to the world — a world that desperately needs the witness of this confession and this community.

There should never be a competition or disjunction between the witness of our gracious Christian lives and the words about Jesus and His Gospel that come from our lips. Neither takes precedence over the other. Faithful confession is always action coupled with proclamation. Both are essential aspects of faithful Christian confession, and both will be routinely present in the lives of God's people. Congregations that take their work as a community seriously will be bright witnesses to the world around them — including to the broken and languishing communities in which they live, serve and proclaim.

This article originally appeared in the October 2024 issue of The Lutheran Witness.



Relief for Human Need Worldwide

Orphan Grain Train--Michigan has \$40,000 specifically earmarked for subsequent efforts as the long task of rebuilding continues.

Our door collection raised over \$500 to contribute to Orphan Grain Trains

hurricane relief efforts

Thank you!



28th Annual Living Nativity

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Frankentrost
8220 E. Holland Road, Saginaw, MI 48601

Friday, December 6, 2024: 7-9pm
Saturday, December 7, 2024: 6-8pm
Sunday, December 8, 2024: 6-8pm

For more information see the flyer on the bulletin board, visit www.frankentrost.org or find them on Facebook

It's Lutheran Witness Time This is the time of the year when the members of Amelith have the opportunity to order or renew subscriptions of *The Lutheran Witness (LW)*, the official periodical of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which is published 11 times a year for \$21.20. A savings of \$3.79 if ordered through the church. See Molly for more info or to renew/place an order before December 15.



Sunday December 15th

Let's have a cookie extravaganza! The whole congregation is asked to bring cookies to share for coffee fellowship hour. All kinds of cookies are welcome! Store bought, homemade, bakery, bake sale goods, etc; it doesn't matter because everyone has different tastes.

ALL cookies are good cookies! Let's see how many different kinds we can fit on the table. Coffee and hot chocolate provided.



Advent Soup Dinners

Each week we will have two kinds of soup, bakery breads and crackers provided. Please come and join in the fellowship!

December 4th

Stuffed Pepper Soup
Ham and Bean Soup

December 11th

Creamy Chicken and Wild Rice
Vegetable Beef

December 18

Seafood Chowder
Tomato

If you would like to bring a dish/dessert to share please sign up on the sheet in the narthex.

All paper products, bread, crackers, and soups are provided from the generous donation of thrivent cards.



Lutheran Hour Ministries is looking for feedback on their Sunday broadcast. Currently they broadcast on Sundays at 8:30am. Please respond to this short survey and give your responses to Molly via paper or email.

Change time to: _____ am _____ pm

Change day to: (circle your response) Monday
Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday or

Advent Devotions for the Family Table

This simple form can be easily expanded to include local congregation resources or other Advent devotionals. An Advent wreath may be lighted, adding the lighting of one candle for each week in Advent. If a rose candle is used, it is lit at the beginning of the third week.

Hymn: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Week 1

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Week 2

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. *Refrain*

Week 3

3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*
(LSB 357:1, 7, 3)

Prophecies of Christ from Holy Scripture

Family members may take turns reading the Scripture passage for each day.

First Week in Advent

Dec. 1 — “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a right-

eous Branch And this is the name by which He will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness’” (Jer. 23:5–6).

Dec. 2 — “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15).

Dec. 3 — “The scepter shall not depart from Judah” (Gen. 49:10).

Dec. 4 — “Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns!’” (1 Chron. 16:31).

Dec. 5 — “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel” (Num. 24:17).

Dec. 6 — “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers” (Deut. 18:18).

Dec. 7 — “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6).

Second Week in Advent

Dec. 8 — “And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Dec. 9 — Jesus said, “Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28).

Dec. 10 — “The LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you” (Isaiah 60:2).

Dec. 11 — “Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come” (Rev. 19:7).

Dec. 12 — “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your salvation comes’” (Isaiah 62:11).

Dec. 13 — “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down” (Isaiah 64:1).

Dec. 14 — “[Rejoice,] O heavens, and exult, O earth; . . . for the LORD has comforted His people and will have compassion on His afflict-

Third Week in Advent

Dec. 15 — “[His] coming forth is from of old, from ancient days” (Micah 5:2).

Dec. 16 — “The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing” (Zeph. 3:17).

The O Antiphons of Advent begin

(See LSB 357)

Dec. 17 — “I came forth from the mouth of the Most High and covered the earth” (Ecclesiasticus 24:3).

Dec. 18 — “The LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; He will save us” (Isaiah 33:22).

Dec. 19 — “In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:10).

Dec. 20 — “I will place on His shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open” (Isaiah 22:22).

Dec. 21 — “For you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings” (Mal. 4:2).

Dec. 22 — “I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts” (Hag. 2:7).

Dec. 23 — “The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

Dec. 24 — “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

Grace

All pray together:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bounti-

ful goodness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Or

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

And let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.

The Advent candles may be extinguished after these prayers or after the meal.

At the conclusion of the meal, the family may return thanks:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Or

O give thanks to the Lord for He is good. And His mercy endures forever.

More Advent resources for congregations and families can be found at lcms.org/advent.

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SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME



Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

Here a maid was found with child,
Yet remained a virgin mild.
In her womb this truth was shown:
God was there upon His throne.

Then stepped forth the Lord of all
From His pure and kingly hall;
God of God, yet fully man,
His heroic course began.

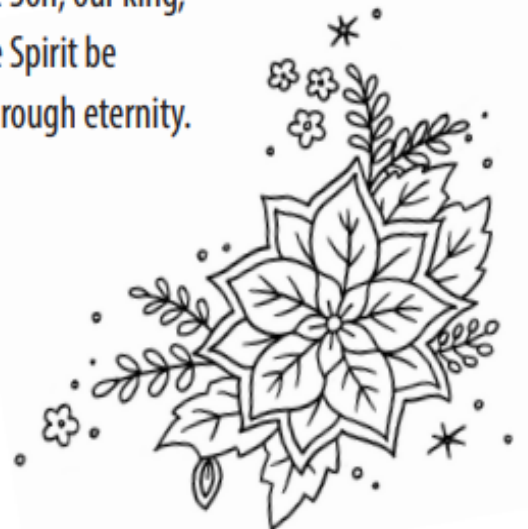
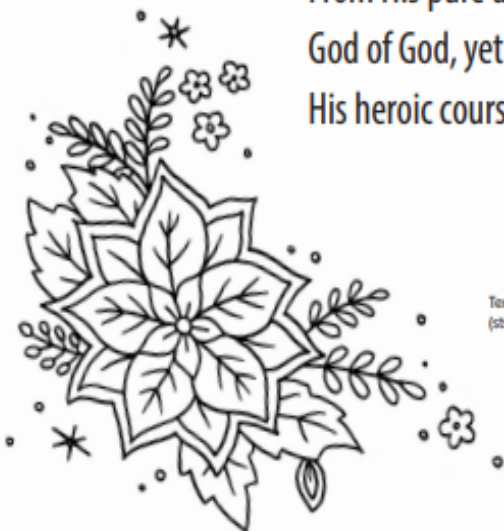
God the Father was His source,
Back to God He ran His course.
Into hell His road went down,
Back then to His throne and crown.

For You are the Father's Son
Who in flesh the vict'ry won.
By Your mighty pow'r make whole
All our ills of flesh and soul.

From the manger newborn light
Shines in glory through the night.
Darkness there no more resides;
In this light faith now abides.

Glory to the Father sing,
Glory to the Son, our king,
Glory to the Spirit be
Now and through eternity.

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The German tradition is alive and well here at Amelith. The Oktoberfest was a huge success not only financially but more importantly spiritually with the love of God's grace being on full display throughout the festival. It was a blessing to have visitors from all over, coming back to celebrate the blessings God has given us at Amelith (and they are many). The day was beautiful and the pavilion's grove was a perfect setting for us to celebrate.



Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone that made the festivities happen! All of the behind the scenes planning, meetings, decisions, shopping, setting-up, takedowns, cleanup and advertising sure made for an easy day. I would especially like to thank the Kloha family for all of their team's work putting together a fantastic authentic German meal and the excellent concession stand. Thank you to everyone that helped with the peeling of the potatoes, I hear you ladies had a great time. Thank you to everybody that donated to the bake sale, this event maybe my favorite seeing/tasting all the favorites from my childhood again. Thank you to anyone that donated a Thrivent card. All of the German dinner and concessions were covered by the donations of Thrivent cards. Thank you to anyone that made a donation of money. The bands, tent, bounce houses and port-a-potty's were all paid for with donations from members. Thank you to Artisans landscaping and Andy Krauss for donating the prize money and running the cornhole tournament.

Another big thank you to the family that had a \$10,000 fund match who would like to remain anonymous you know who you are. If anyone is interested in fund matching please reach out to me and we will keep it completely anonymous. Also donated anonymously was the can coolers they also added a special touch. Thank you

Pastor Gauthier had this idea that he had seen at one of his previous churches of a quilt auction and how successful they were. Well I started asking the ladies of the church that I knew to be in the quilting business. They all told me that it was not possible and it was too short of notice. Well God's plan was for us to have not only a quilt but the most beautiful quilt that I have ever seen made with the perfect fall colors almost like he had planned for it long before the idea had been spoken. Thank you Jeanie Meddaugh for sharing the talent God has given you with us. It was the cherry on the top.

We were able to donate \$1100 to Sleep in Heavenly Peace through 20% of food sales. A different charity will be selected next year as a beneficiary. If you have one in mind please let me know and we will present it to the committee.

Planning for next year has begun and the decision was made to expand it to a 2 day festival next year. The German meal will be one day and a chicken bbq will be the next. We will have Floyd's Family Tradition on Sunday and working on a very special lineup of bands and entertainment for Saturday. The goal for the coming year by Fund Development is \$40,000, this is money that will go to payback our internal debt. The next event will be the Valentine's Day chicken bbq. Look for upcoming meetings to be held planning this event. If you have any ideas of a fundraising opportunity please feel free to reach out to me.

In the words of my wife, see you in church.

Vinny Revord, Oktoberfest Chairman

December Prayer Calendar

Every day, let us include the person/position/event mentioned in our prayers. You can pray for them, the job they do, those who receive or in whatever way you are led.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Treasurer	2 December Altar Guild Servers	3 LWML	4 Advent Dinners	5 Cardinal Strong Volunteers	6 December Anniversaries	7 December Birthdays
8 Youth Group	9 Stewardship Committee	10 Finance Team	11 Women's Bible Study Group	12 Music Director	13 Preschool Director	14 SJA Students
15 Carolers	16 Board of Ed	17 Teachers	18 Preschool Aides	19 Office Volunteers	20 SJA Parents	21 Fund Development
22 Choir Members	23 Pastor	24 Elders	25 Merry Christmas	26 SJA Taskforces	27 Coffee Hour Volunteers	28 Trustee Members
29 Sunday School Teachers	30 Board of Ed	31 All those who served this year				