

Covenant News



January 2022

Pastor's Spin



Siblings in Christ of Covenant,

Back in 2012, only a few months after I started in this whole ordained ministry thing, January 1 fell on a Sunday. It's not just meant to be about New Year's Day in the church. It's also the day when the church recognizes the naming of Jesus: "After eight days had passed [since his birth], it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the

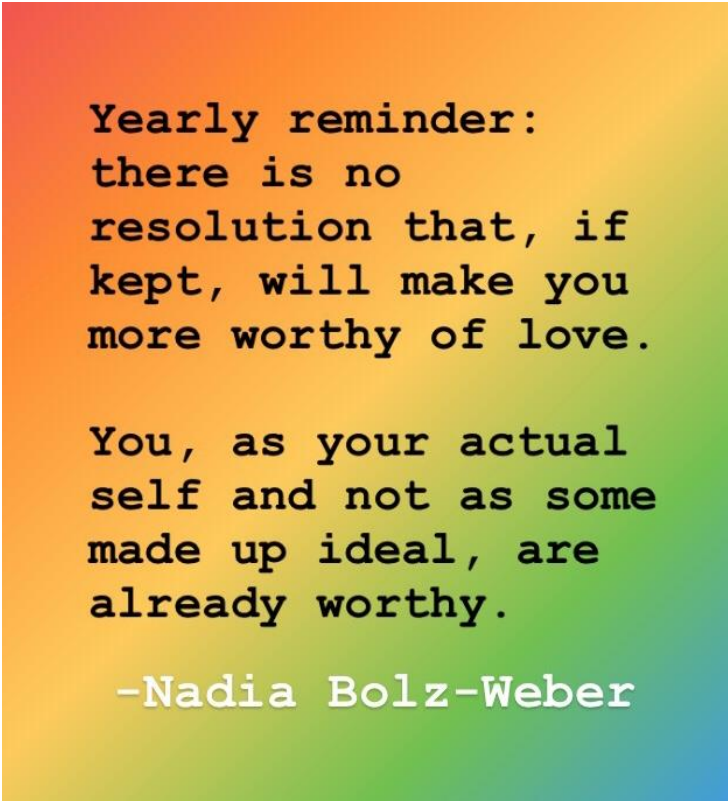
angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21 NRSV). I remember doing some research for the sermon that Name of Jesus day, and not of the overly scholarly sort to make my seminary professors so proud. Instead, I was looking through the baby websites to figure out what was the most popular name in the preceding 2011 year (how they exactly figure that out is another conversation altogether). I figured I had to make this preaching a little more...outside-the-box not knowing how much sleep was obtained by those in the pews from any crazy New Year's Eve festivities, of course.

Oddly enough, the name that came up was Aiden. Odd...or ironic or fitting because there was an Aiden as part of our community of faith. And all the more fitting because as much as Name of Jesus day was (and is) about remembering that that name is about salvation or the "Lord is salvation" (at least in the Hebrew...there, that will make my seminary professors proud, perhaps), I naturally had to figure out what Aiden meant, too: "fiery." O my, did that match our Aiden. A "fiery" personality trying to test boundaries, wanting attention, but just as importantly, a *fiery* level of caring for others, including complete strangers, and even a *fiery* desire to learn about so many things, including this guy named Jesus.

Ten years later, in this 2022 new year, I suppose we can still learn something about the name, the life, the Good News of Jesus, from a boy named, Aiden. That it's more than okay to have a fiery passion in trying to really dig into what's the acceptable "it's always been that way" understandings of God and the role of the church as well, as if there's so much fiery power to alter our day-to-day lives in the name of Jesus alone. And no matter how many new years of the calendar have come and gone in our lives, we are called to have a fiery passion to continue learning more about the entire Holy Trinity, not to mention the world God still loves, and other children of God, including people like Aiden, who have so much to offer in enriching us and our communities we call home.

Of course, not only on January 1 when it falls on a Sunday, and not even just every Sunday, but every day: it is about God's fiery passion for us, for the whole world. So much so that Jesus isn't simply a name of someone residing in some distant heaven, but is the name of the Divine coming to life in our humanity for all the various-named children of God, with all our continuous learning about meaning of life and understanding of God. The name of Jesus is not meant to be so almighty powerful and out-of-this-world scary as if to never think we can dare question him or have any struggles with religion or faith or "Lord is salvation" whatsoever. It is meant to be a name of love and grace and the unbreakable promise that absolutely nothing that happens in this 2022 year or anytime in your life can separate you from God's love in Jesus Christ, our Lord. This year and always, we give thanks to God for the name, the life, the most Incredible News of Jesus Christ!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad



**Yearly reminder:
there is no
resolution that, if
kept, will make you
more worthy of love.**

**You, as your actual
self and not as some
made up ideal, are
already worthy.**

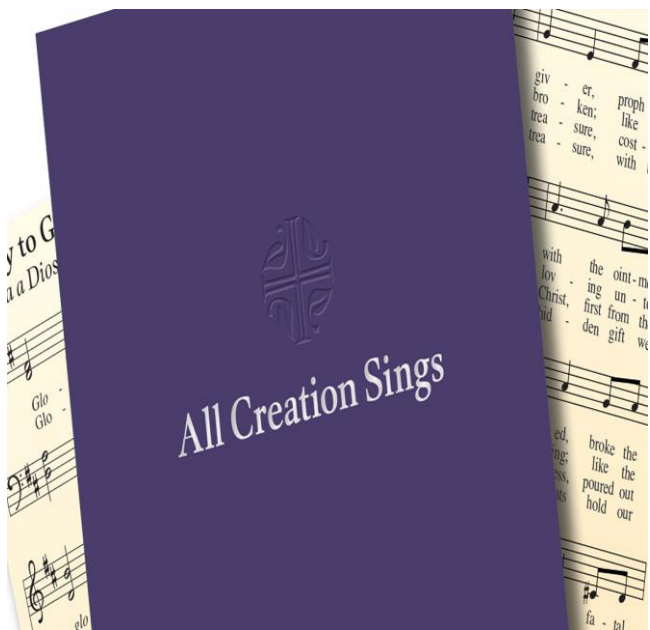
-Nadia Bolz-Weber

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1/5 Linda Wright
1/10 Maud Wright
1/11 Christopher Knerem
1/12 Joshua Reddig
1/14 Kelly (Constant) Bhatnagar
1/16 Rebecca Werner
1/17 Phyllis Nemeth
1/20 John Werner
1/22 Alivia Kyle
1/24 Bryan Treichel
1/25 Janet Wilkens
1/25 Karen Zack
1/28 Jean Smith
1/29 Jean Rusher

From all of us at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant:





Starting in January, on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, we will take a few minutes before worship starts to go through a song from the latest hymnal published by Augsburg Fortress (the official publishing house of the ELCA), *All Creation Sings* (ACS), a supplement to our current *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) hymnal that we sing from now. This way, we'll gradually learn some new wonderful works of art from incredibly gifted church musicians. In January, we'll learn "Jesus, the Light of the World" (ACS 914), which incorporates portions of

Charles Wesley's "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," with the moving refrain: "We'll walk in the light, beautiful light, come where the dew drops of mercy are bright. Shine all around us by day and night, Jesus, the Light of the World." So, come a few minutes early to sing along! For more information about the *All Creation Sings* hymnal, please visit: <https://www.augsburgfortress.org/promos/all-creation-sings/>

FREE community MEAL

Our next FREE community meal will be Thursday, January 27, from 4:30-6. Again, we continue this ministry in a drive-thru format from the back of the church. So, if you need a night off from cooking dinner or you know of someone else who needs it, help us spread the word. It is FREE for anyone and everyone!



dates to Remember

<i>Sunday, January 8</i>	<i>Epiphany of Our Lord (from January 6)</i>
<i>Sunday, February 27</i>	<i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i>
<i>Wednesday, March 2</i>	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>
<i>Sunday, March 6</i>	<i>First Sunday of Lent</i>
<i>Sunday, April 10</i>	<i>Palm Sunday</i>
<i>Thursday, April 14</i>	<i>Maundy Thursday</i>
<i>Friday, April 15</i>	<i>Good Friday</i>
<i>Sunday, April 17</i>	<i>Resurrection of Our Lord</i>
<i>Sunday, June 5</i>	<i>Pentecost Sunday</i>
<i>Sunday, June 12</i>	<i>Holy Trinity Sunday</i>
<i>Sunday, October 30</i>	<i>Reformation Sunday</i>
<i>Sunday, November 6</i>	<i>All Saints Sunday</i>
<i>Sunday, November 20</i>	<i>Day of Thanksgiving</i>
<i>Sunday, November 27</i>	<i>First Sunday of Advent</i>
<i>Saturday, December 24</i>	<i>Christmas Eve</i>
<i>Sunday, December 25</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>

Share the Light

Originally published in Living Lutheran in January 2021, and intended to be used as a resource with young children. In reality, this serves as a wonderful jumping-off point for conversations with children of God of all ages as we greet this new year with hope!

Focal verse

“Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” —Matthew 2:2

Reflection

December, with its shorter days, offered me a number of opportunities to get outside at night with my children and look up at the sky. One night, my kids lay on their backs in the grass, arms behind their heads, eyes searching the night sky for the International Space Station. As we found a light moving across the sky, our eyes followed the space station across the horizon until it was out of sight. Cheers erupted from the kids as they stood up and jumped into the air.

“Now let’s look for stars!” my son yelled. “Let’s make a wish!” my daughter responded, pointing toward the light above. I watched while both kids lifted their faces and repeated, “I wish, I wish ...” Though their wishes revolved around unicorns and dinosaurs, listening to them helped me frame the year ahead.

Unlike in years past, I thought little of what goals, habits or resolutions I would embark on, given the many challenges we faced in 2020. Rather, I entered the new year in a posture of gratitude and blessing. I looked back at 2020 and reflected on the people who had surrounded us during the year. I gave thanks for family and friends and the ways we had managed to connect. I gave thanks for the church communities that provided so much inspiration and creativity when worship had to adapt to the pandemic.

Now we enter the season of Epiphany, a great time to talk to our children about the light they hope to share in this world. I keep encouraging my children to make wishes and dream dreams. I invite them to name these wishes and dreams with me, and we offer them to God together as a prayer. When they offer their wishes, I ask them how they can bring light to someone else. When they share their dreams, I wonder aloud how they can help someone else to follow their own.

The sky is full of stars guiding us into this new year. Just as the magi followed a star to greet the baby Jesus, we too can model for our children how to follow the light and pour it back into the world for others to see.

Practices

Write a blessing or prayer for each member of your family. Invite your kids to share their dreams for the year, and write these down too. Display these writings in your home and give thanks for all the ways God brings light and love into the world through you and your family.

Prayers

We pray for the work of astronauts, rocket scientists and those learning about our universe.

We pray for children in foster care and families that open their homes.

We pray for elected officials and the work of our democracy.

We give thanks for skies, stars, clouds, the moon and other planets.

We give thanks for first responders.

We give thanks for freshly baked bread and sweet treats shared with friends.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.



Kimberly Knowle-Zeller is an ordained ELCA pastor, mother of two and spouse of an ELCA pastor. She lives with her family in Cole Camp, Mo. Her website is kimberlyknowlezeller.com.

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

January 2022

Server Schedule	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
							1 New Year's Day No Saturday Service 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	2 9:00 am Second Sunday of Christmas 10:00 Adult Bible Class in Parlor	3	4 1:30 Worship & Music Meeting 6:30 p.m. Women's AA meeting in Hall	5	6	7 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	8 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	9 9:00 am Epiphany of Our Lord 10:00 Adult Bible Class in Parlor	10 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	11 7:00 Council Meeting 6:30 p.m. Women's AA meeting in Hall	12	13	14 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	15 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary
AG: Claudia Sanderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susaneck	16 9:00 am Second Sunday after Epiphany 10:00 Adult Bible Class in Parlor	17	18 6:30 p.m. Women's AA meeting in Hall	19	20	21 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	22 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall
AG: Claudia Sanderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susaneck	23 9:00 am Third Sunday after Epiphany 10:00 Adult Bible Class in Parlor	24 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	25 6:30 p.m. Women's AA meeting in Hall	26	27 4:30-6:00 pm Community Meal Drive Thru in Parking lot	28 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	29 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	30 9:00-am Fourth Sunday after Epiphany 10:00 Adult Bible Class in Parlor	31					

Covenant News

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137

The annual Commemoration service for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrated at Covenant

