

Covenant News



December 2022

Pastor's Spin



Siblings in Christ of Covenant,

Greetings! Amidst all the planning and celebrating this month, there is one observance that will be easily overlooked. On December 20, the church lifts up the beloved Katharina Von Bora. For a bit of background, from the The Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson (Tokyo Lutheran Church, Japan; and the Johannelund School of Theology, Sweden):

Katharina von Bora, the former nun who married Martin Luther and thereby became the most world-changing wife in history. But in her case, to be a wife was not simply to be attached to a famous husband. Wife was truly an office, like the office of preacher or teacher or judge: a public role with vast responsibilities demanding faultless acumen. It is hard to imagine that anyone with less resolve, grit, and personality could have pulled off the role as first lady of the Reformation

and personal companion to the energetic and irascible Martin Luther...

Katharina...managed the livestock, tended the gardens, and brewed locally praised beer. The couple were always trying new plants; Katharina even grew her own subtropical saffron, the most notoriously labor-intensive and therefore expensive spice of all time. She oversaw extensions and renovations of the old Augustinian cloister where they lived, which in turn allowed a great community to gather there for short- and long-term stays—in exchange for reasonable fees, of course. She took their profits to buy more gardens and even a farm in Zülsdorf, near her hometown, a retreat so beloved by them both that they considered retiring there to get away from tiresome Wittenberg society.

You are encouraged to further reading through the website link below about this often taken for granted child of God not just with the timing of this busy month, but her influence on Martin Luther, and God only knows the Reformation as a whole. And not only that, but maybe with remembering Katharina Von Bora on December 20, we also take time to remember the so many individuals who played host in our life and still do so for us today.

Unfortunately, this meant-to-be “most wonderful time of the year,” isn’t always the case for many children of God. It’s not just the prolonged darkness. It’s not just weather conditions that may force people to stay indoors far longer than they like. It’s the endless to-do lists. It’s the cultural obligations to buy all these gifts, and trying to find *perfect* ones, at that. It’s about trying to make sure our houses are in tip-top shape for visitors. It’s about cooking and baking. It’s about trying to play host not just with our living and dining rooms, but with our hearts, too, for other people’s not always “most wonderful time of the year” feelings. Amidst all the planning and celebrating, this time of year can be rather daunting and soul-tapping and flat-out exhausting with all this hosting.

So, not just on December 20, but throughout this time of year, let us give thanks for the hosts among us: the ones who open their homes and hearts to us without asking much of anything in return. Let’s give thanks for the Katharina Von Bora’s among us, who not only do the hosting, but do so much more for the betterment of their family and friends and communities that we will never fully realize. Also, let us be sure to give the Katharina Von Bora’s among us a break. Let’s make sure the hosts among us enjoy God’s peace and tranquility. Amidst all the planning and celebrating, let us not forget to continue to extend compassion and patience and a glimpse of God’s boundless love to family and friends and complete strangers, too. It may seem to be a cultural obligation, along with the *perfect* present purchasing, to put others in their place when we go out and about this time of year, but the ultimate host for humanity in Jesus Christ insists on a different way throughout our lives. Grace came to life even more so in Bethlehem long ago, and it came to life in Katharina Von Bora, too. May we all remember that that ultimate reforming grace has been birthed into our hearts already, and it will never be taken away. Thanks be to God, indeed!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

For the full article, please visit:

<https://www.sarahhinlickywilson.com/blog/2019/12/20/lutheran-saints-9-katharina-von-bora>

F R E E
community
M E A L

Our next FREE community meal will be Thursday, December 15, from 4-5pm, downstairs in our fellowship hall. If you need a break from cooking and baking, feel free to have a seat here, and we will serve you an entrée, side dishes, drinks, and dessert, too! If you know of others who could use this night off from being in the kitchen, please let them know. Again, it’s FREE to anyone and everyone who joins us.



We invite you to join us in praising God for being born among us in Jesus Christ on December 24, 7pm. Pre-service music from the Wolf Creek Brass will start around 6:30pm. In addition to the special music throughout, we will hear the treasured story of our dear Savior's birth, share Communion with one another, and conclude with "Silent Night" by candlelight. So, come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!



From all of us at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant, we wish you and yours a wonderful Christmas and a year of new life for 2023!

NO CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

We will not gather for worship together on Sunday, December 25, after celebrating Christ's birth the evening before. If you do wish to be part of a public worship on Christmas Day, we encourage you to join our siblings in Christ of the Lutheran Church of the Master (860 Northfield Rd, Bedford) at 11 am. Regardless, we hope you may find precious opportunities to give thanks to God that day with others in whatever meaningful ways.

Adopt-A-Turkey Southeast Clergy Hunger Center Christmas Food Drive



The Southeast Clergy Hunger Center continues to feed families and individuals in increasing numbers. Because the U.S. Department of Agriculture is giving less food to the Cleveland Foodbank, the Hunger Center's funds do not go as far. As a result, the Center is asking member congregations to consider an "Adopt-a-Turkey" drive to provide turkeys for the families at Christmas.

To that end, Covenant has established an "Adopt-a-Turkey" fund. On average, turkeys run from \$12 to \$14 dollars each. If you feel so moved, please make a contribution to the Southeast Clergy Hunger Center, either directly or through the Lutheran Church of the Covenant. Thank you in advance for your generosity!



12/8 Mary Kaye Bernardo
12/8 Gwen Susanek
12/14 Jane Gradert
12/15 Peggy Smith
12/18 Heather Lasher
12/20 Kara Constant
12/24 Olive Evanofski
12/26 Courtney Wright
12/28 Dick Ptak
12/29 Sheila Werner

Seeking and Sharing Love this Advent

Focal verse

“An angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins’” (Matthew 1:20-21).

Reflection

Most mornings I wake to the sound of my children running down the hallway and turning on our CD player. Vacation Bible school songs from the past summer fill our living room. Both kids dance and sing. In the darkness of the early mornings before school I hear them sing, “Jesus loves me, this I know.” These lyrics are seeping into their minds and bodies, reminding them of Jesus’ boundless love. They remind us of it, too. And this Advent is a great time to focus as a family on what it means to know and experience Jesus’ love.

At the start of Advent, I always feel hopeful that our Advent practices as a family will be meaningful. I envision Bible readings over dinner, counting down with an Advent calendar, lighting candles together and engaging in service throughout the month. Yet, even with the best intentions, our month becomes full—of extra activities, worship services, concerts and festivities. There's much vying for our attention this season.

Yet I wonder how we'd experience Advent if we shifted our focus from completing tasks to witnessing love at work—seeing the health care workers who care for others daily, teachers who bring ideas to life for their students, volunteers who sit with those who are lonely and grieving. How would this season change if we spent it on the lookout for love?

Additionally, what would it look like this Advent for your family to focus on sharing love with others? You might drop donations in collection jars, pay for someone's meal anonymously, write notes of encouragement on your Christmas cards or invite a neighbor to your holiday meal.

I can think of so many different practices I want to engage in this Advent with my children, but ultimately, in this season of waiting for Jesus' birth, what I want them to know is Jesus' love for them, for others and for the world. This Advent, challenge yourself to manifest and embrace Jesus' love coming down for us at Christmas.

Practices

- List random acts of kindness on slips of paper and put them in a jar. Every few days pull one out and do the act as a family.
- There are 24 chapters in Luke's Gospel. To remember the life of Jesus together, read the first chapter on Dec. 1 and another for each day leading up to Christmas.
- Purchase or make an Advent wreath and place it where you'll see it every day. Every week light a candle to count down until Jesus' birth.

Prayers

We pray for those who find little joy this season.

We pray for those longing to start a family.

We pray for church leaders, volunteers and musicians.

We give thanks for manger scenes, lights, trees and decorations.

We give thanks for retail and hospitality workers.

We give thanks for songs that tell of God's love.

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

Service opportunity

Make a list of people who could use a reminder that they are loved this Advent and Christmas. As a family, send notes of encouragement to some of the people on your list.

- *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 (originally published 12/2/21 on LivingLutheran.org).*

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

December 2022

Server Schedule	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich					1	2 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	3 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 5:00 Worship in Sanctuary
AG: Joan Garvin, Marie Zahn, Jen Garberich	4 Second Sunday of Advent 9:00 Eucharist 10:00 Adult Class in Parlor	5 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	6 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parish Hall	7	8	9 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	10 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susanek	11 Third Sunday of Advent 9:00 Eucharist 10:00 Adult Class in Parlor	12	13 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parish Hall	14	15 5:00-6:00 pm Community in Parish Hall	16 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	17 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 5:00 Worship in Sanctuary
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susanek	18 Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:00 Eucharist 10:00 Adult Class in Parlor	19 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	20 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parish Hall	21	22	23 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	24 Christmas Eve Nativity of Our Lord 7:00 pm
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	25 Christmas Day Office Closed Thru Jan 2 nd No service Christmas Day	26	27 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parish Hall	28	29	30 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	31 New Years Eve

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