

First Impressions

Connecting People to Jesus

Volume 18 Issue 1

January 2012

God's Lead

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. When Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. ² They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." – Matthew 2:1-2

Artists often picture the Magi (wise men) as worshipping the infant Jesus alongside the shepherds in the stable at Bethlehem. Indeed, it makes a lovely picture, but dare I say – it contradicts the facts that Matthew has recorded for us. We don't know the names of these men (tradition calls them Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior), how many there actually were, where they came from, or precisely when they came.

We do know that they arrived a number of months after Jesus' birth (Oh No!), for Jesus had already been circumcised and presented in the temple (see Luke 2:21-39), and Mary and Joseph were now in a house in Bethlehem, not a stable. Secular records tell us that Herod the king died in 4 B.C. This would indicate that Jesus may have been born in 5 or 6 B.C. according to our calendar.

The Magi were a class of priest, astronomers, and astrologers. They were influential advisors of the king, very likely in Babylon. Some of them were known to be involved in various occult practices. During the 70 years of the Jews captivity in Babylon (586-516 B.C.), Daniel was made the presiding officer over the castle of the magi. From him they surely learned about the Messiah for whom the Jews were waiting. They also had opportunities to learn what Israel's prophets had foretold about the Messiah. They took these promises seriously and believed in Israel's God; otherwise they would hardly have undertaken the long and dangerous journey to find and worship Jesus.

The star that guided them was a special creation of God. It did not look like the other stars, and it did not act like other stars. Efforts to explain it in conjunction of the planets Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars, or as a comet, are not satisfactory.

The Magi saw this special star in the East. They saw it again when they traveled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and it guided them to the very house where Mary and Joseph were staying with the Christ Child.

How did the Magi know that this special star signified that the Messiah had been born? All that can be said is that God revealed this to them. In Balaam's prophecy that "a star will come out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17) the star is the Messiah himself, not a heavenly body announcing his birth.

So, how about those wonderful Magi? Even though we don't really know much of them at all, we do know this – they were men of faith and they were divinely guided. They followed God's lead. How about you? Although God may not choose to appear to you in a dream, He is always there for you and reveals Himself to you in His Word. He will guide your steps. All we have to do is remove ourselves and leave the egos behind. This is a grand piece of scripture for us as the New Year begins, for it gives us a glimpse of the way of faith. It may sometimes be the long, hard way around, but the way of faith, the way of our Savior, is always for His glory not ours. There will always be a price to pay or sacrifice to make but the end result will always reveal God's glory. Go with God.

Pastor Tom

TIM ALLEN - 3RD
TERRY LEPP - 5TH
WILSON WHITTINGTON - 6TH
JEREMY REGULUS - 7TH
BRIAN HAYES - 14TH
KRISTAL WASHINGTON - 16TH
MATHEW GRUND - 17TH

This
Month's
Birthdays



TEAGAN SHIFLETT - 19TH
DONNA SPEEGLE - 21ST
MARGARET BOWENS - 22ND
STAN WEIR - 22ND
CURTIS HARRIS - 23RD
CHARLES CRAIG - 27TH
LASHANDA CURRY - 27TH
AMIE CAHILL - 31ST



Pastors' Bible Study Classes

Beginning January 4, Pastor Porter will be teaching the Gospel of St. Matthew on Wednesday nights at 6:00 p.m. Pastor Lackey will be teaching the book of Romans on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. beginning January 15. The Tuesday women's bible class will resume January 3 at noon. Please join us for these classes. This is a great way to begin the New Year.

Congratulations to no one for not answering the best and easiest trivia question - Jesus Christ, our Savior. Let us try to do better this month! The prize this month is Gratitude.



A big humungous thank you to Judy Drews, the Board of Education, the children, and all those who participated in the Children's Program. And

for that we say, "Well done, good and faithful servants"!

Please note the following e-mail address change for Josephine Stallworth:

JTStall110@gmail.com



HOLY LAND TOUR

Pastor Porter and Janice are hosting a 10 Day Biblical Tour of Israel, November 5-14, 2012 and invite you to join them. We will follow the footsteps of Jesus in the Holy Land. We will be visiting the most revered places of His ministry. In addition, you will have an opportunity to reaffirm your baptism in the Jordan River, renew your wedding vows in Cana, float in the Dead Sea and ride on the Sea of Galilee in a replica of the boat that Jesus rode.

If you are interested, please see Pastor Porter or Janice for a brochure. We are extending this invitation to our members first. We will be hosting a meeting at our home on Saturday, January 7, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. for those considering joining us. At that time, additional information will be provided and we will answer any questions or concerns you may have.



Pastor Porter and Janice will be on vacation, January 14 - 28. Please pray that they have safe travel and a restful time away and return to us refreshed and renewed.

WORSHIP WORKERS



January



January



FIRST LUTHERAN

Children's Church –

- January 1 - Judy Drews
- January 8 - Kate Cahill
- January 15 - Carol Lackey
- January 22 - Pat Ryan
- January 29 - Kate Cahill

Readers:

- January 1 - Janice Porter
- January 8 - June Weir
- January 15 - Anthony McGraw
- January 22 - Pat Thompson
- January 29 - Robert Regulus

Altar Guild: June Weir

Candles: June Weir

Communion Assistant: Jim Campbell

Ushers: Robert Regulus, Henry Mosley, Charlie Hayes, Wilson Whittington

Worship Assistant: Toby Cahill

Nursery: Meg Callahan

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES

Romans - Taught by Pastor Porter & Pastor Lackey.

Adult Bible Study - Lutheranism 101 study taught by Graham & Victoria Sisson.

Beth Moore Series - taught by Donna Speegle

Children's & Youth Sunday School Classes:

Pre-school - 3 - 6 years old. Taught by Lisa Whittington

Elementary - 6 - 11 years old. Taught by Wilson Whittington

Teenagers - 12 - 18 years old Gwen Regulus & Judy

Homebound/Assisted Care:

Charlene Seibert, Corrine Donahoo, Lucille Cooper, Hildegard Wesson, Dean Mizzell, Edward Royal, Dolores Goehler, Leona Boehme, Edna Grund, Charlotte Newell, Becky Jenkins, Evelyn Krueger, Norma Jefferson.



Recovering: Delores Goehler.

Illness: Dean Mizzell, Edward Royal, Alice Callsen, Norma Jefferson, Corrine Donahoo, Judy Drew's brother-in-law, Steve Norby, Vivian Dorrrough, Dcs. Peg Anderson, and Maila Mathru.

Intercession: For the people of Norway, Japan, Libya, Haiti, and the tornado and flood victims.

Missionaries: Bible Faith Lutheran Seminary (India).

Members who have lost their jobs.



Those Serving in the Military: Mike Golchert deployed in November.

Altar Flowers for January



2012 sign up sheet has been posted on the wall next to the Church office.

JANUARY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM Church Council Meeting</p>	<p>4 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM M.S.S Teachers' Meeting 6:00 PM Gospel of St. Matthew Bible Study</p>	<p>5 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>6 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>7 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation</p>
<p>8 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>11 6:00 PM Gospel of St. Matthew Bible Study</p>	<p>12 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>13 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>14 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation</p>
<p>15 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>16 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation</p>	<p>17 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>18  Newsletter Deadline Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 6:00 PM Gospel of St. Matthew Bible Study</p>	<p>19 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>20 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>21 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation</p>
<p>22 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Deacon Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>23 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation</p>	<p>24 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>25 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM M.S.S Teachers' Meeting 6:00 PM Gospel of St. Matthew Bible Study</p>	<p>26 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>27 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>28 Pastor Porter and Janice on vacation</p>
<p>29  8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Voters Meeting & Pruduck 7:00 PM - 10:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>1 6:00 PM Gospel of St. Matthew Bible Study</p>	<p>2 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>3 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>4</p>

Readings: 1/1 = Num. 6:22-27; Ps. 8; Gal. 3:23-29; Luke 2:21. 1/8 = Gen. 1:1-5; Ps. 29; Rom. 6:1-11; Mark 1:4-11. 1/15 = 1Sam. 3:1-10; Ps. 139: 1-10;

1 Cor. 6:12-20; John 1:43-51. 1/22 = Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Ps. 62; 1 Cor. 7: 29-31; Mark 1:14-20. 1/29 = Deut. 18:15-20; Ps. 111; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28.

Stewardship Emphasis

How did you do with your resolutions for the year 2011? About the same as for other years? Can you even remember what those resolutions were? Why do we struggle so much with resolutions? Is it because they are not realistic? Is it because we try to do it completely on our own without any outside help (even from God)? Failure is one of the biggest disappointments in life. Is it possible to start over successfully?

As we enter into this New Year we have another opportunity to start over. In what year did Pope Leo X excommunicate Martin Luther for challenging abuses within the Church? Having the privilege of starting over is one of the things in life that gives us hope and courage as we look to the future. As we take down our 2011 calendars and replace them with 2012 calendars we really can start over.

In Romans 12:12 (NIV) the Holy Spirit gives us some great ingredients for a really good New Year's resolution. The encouragement is to ***"be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer."*** Life would be so sweet if everyone could adopt and live out those three pieces as a New Year's resolution.

"Be joyful in hope" should be pretty easy for Christians because our hope is in Christ and ***"that hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us."*** (Romans 5:5 NIV)

"Be patient in affliction" can be considerably more difficult because we do not like affliction. Who of us likes to be mistreated by people who are rude, inconsiderate and downright nasty? Where can we get the strength to be patient in affliction? It takes a giant transformation to behave so nicely when afflicted? Our comfort is that the power to do that does not come from within us, but from outside of us. When we were baptized ***"we were buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*** (Romans 6:4 NIV) No one in the history of mankind had to deal with as much affliction as Jesus, our Savior! And He did it out of love for us so that we do not have to fear eternal affliction!

"Faithful in prayer" keeps us in touch with God--Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus spent entire nights in prayer with His Father in heaven so that He would have the strength to carry out His mission of dying for sinners so that they might have the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Prayer is an excellent way to stay in touch with God and His love and power.

How does this threefold resolution make a difference in our lives and the lives of those around us? It does because the Holy Spirit is at work within us to make us more and more the children of God. As children of God we seek to do the same things that give Him such delight. John 3:16 tells us that God delights in **loving** and **giving**. God has entrusted us with all of life and life's resources and desires that we manage them wisely according to His purposes. **Loving** and **giving** are at the heart of Christian stewardship.

May God bless us all as His stewards in this New Year of 2012!

(taken from LCMS website)

VOTERS MEETING

Winner Winner Chicken Dinner



As we begin a new year, we look forward to not only our first voters meeting, but the Fifth- Sunday- of- the- Month- Potluck. Join us on Sunday, January 29, 2012, immediately following the 10:15 Worship Service for some delicious food (bring a dish to share) and stimulating conversation (that would be the voters meeting portion).





First Lutheran Church

8:00 AM Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Sunday School for Children & Adults
10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship and Communion Service

Newsletter Deadline: 3rd Wednesday of the month
Bulletin Announcement Deadline: Tuesdays

First Lutheran Church

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January 2012

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