

First Impressions

“Connecting People to Jesus”

Volume 18 Issue 12

December 2011

For to Us a Child is Born

“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.” – Luke 2:4-7

No event in the history of the world has been so celebrated in word and song as the birth of Jesus Christ! Yet this story is told by Dr. Luke in a totally undramatic fashion. The significance of what happens here in Bethlehem’s manger was already revealed in chapter 1 of Luke with the angel’s announcement to Mary. The actual birth of the baby is told in the simplest words: “*she gave birth to her first born, a son.*” So the Son of God enters the world in utter humility and without fanfare.

It was a census ordered by Caesar Augustus, ruler of the Roman Empire from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14, which brought Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The purpose of this census is indicated by the translation in the King James Version: “*to be taxed.*” Everyone went to his own town to register on the tax rolls. Mary and Joseph made this journey of about 80 Miles from their home city in Galilee to the ancient city of Bethlehem, family home of the famous King David. Here this child, whose kingdom would be far greater than that of his ancestor, was born. It was to fulfill God’s Old Testament promise that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, not Nazareth. Critics of the Bible have found fault with Luke’s mention of Quirinius as being governor of Syria when this census was taken. Historical records list Quirinius as the governor of Syria about 10 years after the death of King Herod; a census was taken at that time (A.D.6/7). Since Jesus was born while Herod was king (who died about 4 B.C.), some claim that Luke makes a mistake here. But before coming to this conclusion, one must take into account several possibilities: (1) Luke calls this the “*first*” census while Quirinius was governor of Syria; Quirinius may have had an earlier tour of duty in Syria, a hint of which is found in an ancient document. (2) Some learned Greek scholars suggest that the word *first* might better be translated as “*prior*”; the translation would then be: “*this census was prior to Quirinius being governor of Syria.*” We moderns hardly have all the facts available to us from 2000 years ago; we dare not stand in judgment of Luke, who writes by inspiration of God’s Spirit and has “carefully investigated everything from the beginning” (see 1:3).

After the birth of Jesus, his mother wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger. The Old English word *swaddle* (found in the KJV) means to bind an infant in lengths of bandage. This was the normal way of clothing an infant; today we would “*diaper*” a child. Only at the end of the story do we find out that the inns were all full in Bethlehem. This necessitated their using a less suitable place for shelter. So it was among the animals that Jesus was born; he was bedded in a manger, a feeding trough for cattle. Is it any wonder that this scene has captured the imagination of artist and poets! But we must not be so fascinated by romanticized versions of this event that we miss its true significance: here is the Word of God made flesh for us and for our salvation. Glory be to God on high!

God’s Peace – ptl



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Michael Neimkin - 2nd
Carol Lackey - 3rd
Kimberley Washington - 13th
Toby Cahill - 14th
Anna Heidecker - 14th

Marcy Sharit - 17th
Sandra Heidecker - 24th
Charlene Siebert - 25th
Wray Allen - 25th
Carol Melton - 29th



Charles & Ernestine Craig
 12/14/60
 James & Carol Melton,

Congratulations to Michael Golchert and Nancy Clasby for correctly answering November's trivia question (Frankenmuth). Enjoy your month of Thanksgiving and read on to find this month's question. The prize is Salvation!

Children's Christmas Program - Sunday December 18, 2011 during the 10:15 worship service.

Practice schedule:

- Nov. 20 - organizational meeting right after church, brief - which children will participate, what they want to do (dress up, read etc.)
- Nov. 27 - after church, assignments, not longer than 1 hr, bring a sandwich, drink provided
- Dec. 4 & 11 - after church, practice about 1 hr., bring a sandwich, drink provided
- Dec. 18 Dress during Sunday School hour 9 - 10; performance during worship



Sunday School Thanksgiving Project - Sat. Dec. 3, information to be handed out in Sunday School.



O' COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

Pastors Porter and Lackey would like to invite you and your family to the Pastors' first Christmas Sing-a-Long. It will be a night of fun, food, music, and self entertainment. The Pastors' Sing-a-Long features songs of the Savior and songs of the season. It's a family night where parents, children, Pastors and members team up to celebrate Christmas together in a family setting as we sing our favorite carols and popular secular songs of the season. It's an opportunity for the membership to build a healthy and wholesome unity as we grow together as a Christian family. It's a night when all the birds in the forest are welcome to sing, both the Larks and the Crows. There will be readings by both adults and children. We will be accompanied by piano, string and percussion instruments.

The Sing-a-Long will be held Friday, December 16, 2011 at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

The Sing-a-Long has all the ingredients to become one of our favorite times together at this special time of the year. Every member is especially encouraged to attend. Mark your calendars now, and plan to spend this time with Christian friends and family. Please bring a yummy Christmas dessert, snack and/or hors d'oeuvres to share with all the revelers who gather to celebrate the season through songs of today and yesterday.

Pastors Porter and Lackey

Advent Story time in the Library! Join us between Sunday School and Worship at 9:55 in the Library December 4, 11, & 18. Check out our Christmas collection. Merry Christmas!



WORSHIP WORKERS



FIRST LUTHERAN

Children's Church –

- December 4 - Judy Drews
- December 11 - Kate Cahill
- December 18 - Carol Lackey
- December 25 - Pat Ryan

Readers:

- December 4 - Jim Campbell
- December 11 - Carol Lackey
- December 18 - Dcs. Anderson
- December 25 - Glen Thompson

Altar Guild: Carol Lackey & Kate Cahill

Candles: Carol Lackey

Communion Assistant: Wilson Whittington

Ushers: James Melton, Wayne Speegle, Mike Twiss, Jim Campbell

Worship Assistant: Charlie Hayes

Nursery: Meg Callahan

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES

Galatians - Taught by Pastor Porter & Pastor Lackey.

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

The Patriarchs - 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, Hildegard Wesson, Pat Ryan.

Illness: Dean Mizzell, Edward Royal, Alice Callsen, Ethan Melton, Norma Jefferson, Corrine Donahoo, Judy Drew's brother-in-law, Steve Norby, and Arnold Hardin, Vivian Dorrough, Dcs. Anderson.

Mourning: Estelle Hall

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 December



Poinsettias

DECEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>27 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Deacon Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>30  5:30 PM Advent Dinner 6:30 PM Advent Worship Services</p>	<p>1 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>2 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>5 6:30 PM Church Council Meeting</p>	<p>6 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>7 5:30 PM Advent Dinner 6:30 PM Advent Worship Services</p>	<p>8 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>9 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>14 5:30 PM Advent Dinner 6:30 PM Advent Worship Services</p>	<p>15 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>16  6:00 PM Pastor's Sing-a-long 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Divine Service and Children's Program 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>21 No Easter Deadline 5:30 PM Advent Dinner 6:30 PM Advent Worship Services</p>	<p>22 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>23 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>24  6:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship</p>
<p>25  8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Christmas Day Worship 11:30 AM Deacon Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>28 6:30 PM Gospel of John Bible Study</p>	<p>29 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>30 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>31</p>

Readings: 12/4 = Is. 40:1-11; Psalm 85; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8. 12/11 = Is. 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thess. 5:1 6-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.

12/18 = 2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-5; Rom. 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38. 12/25 = Is. 7:10-14; Psalm 110:1-4; 1 John 4:7-16; Matt. 1:1 8-25

The logo for "Stewardship Emphasis" is enclosed in a black oval with a white border. The text "Stewardship Emphasis" is written in a white, elegant, cursive-style font. Below the text, there is a decorative white flourish that resembles a stylized wave or a flourish.

Over 2,000 years ago the world received the greatest gift that has ever been given. The angel announced this gift to shepherds who were watching their flocks at night. The message of God's angel explained what a truly remarkable event this was. The angel said: ***"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."***

Suddenly a great company of heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying: ***"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests."*** (Luke 2:10-12; 14 NIV)

Those shepherds were never the same again. They went to Bethlehem to see for themselves this great happening. After seeing the Christ child with their own eyes they left in great joy and shared this good news with everyone they met.

On that first Christmas God fulfilled His promise to send a Savior who would rescue His people from their sins. What a blessing for the lowly shepherds to be the first people besides Mary and Joseph to hear about and see this great happening!

Years later the Apostle John by inspiration of the Holy Spirit acknowledged this miraculous gift with one of the most memorable verses in the Bible: ***"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but shall have eternal life."*** (John 3:16 NIV) This single verse expresses two things that God delights in doing and those two things are ***loving*** and ***giving***.

Children are richly blessed when they have good and godly parents who bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children are also blessed when they imitate the positive qualities of their Christian parents.

St. John in the third chapter of his first letter stated: ***"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are."*** (1 John 3:1 NIV)

What does this say to us as God's stewards of all [including time, money, abilities and much more] that He entrusts to our management? It says this: If we are to grow as children of God we will develop those godly characteristics of our Heavenly Father, namely ***loving*** and ***giving***.

Christmas is in the very best sense a gift that keeps on giving. May the Holy Spirit help us to receive this great gift with joy and thanksgiving and respond with growth in ***loving*** and ***giving*** as God's children! This desire could become an important part of our New Year's resolutions! Wouldn't that make our part of the world so much better?

Have a blessed Christmas and a joy-filled New Year!

(Taken from LCMS website)

Worship for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas
is as follows:



Wednesday 11-23-11 6:00 PM = Thanksgiving Eve Service

Wednesday 11-30-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
 6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily

Wednesday 12-07-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
 6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily

Wednesday 12-14-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
 6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily

Wednesday 12-21-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
 6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily

Friday 12-16-11 6:00 PM - Pastors' Sing-a-long in Fellowship Hall

Sunday 12-18-11 10:15 AM - Divine Service and Children's Program

Saturday 12-24-11 6:00 PM = Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday 12-25-11 10:15 AM = Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion

?We have been given Spiritual gifts, but what is the *greatest* gift God has given us?



Advent is almost here and so are the tasty pre-Advent Service congregational dinners. This year we're going to try something a little different. The boards will be in charge of coordinating the dinners each Wednesday at 5:30 but we're asking the whole congregation to participate through volunteering for set up, food, drinks, desserts and cleanup. Check out the bulletin board near the kitchen for sign up sheets. The following Boards have volunteered to coordinate the dinners:



Advent Meals

- 11/30 - Fellowship
- 12/07 - Evangelism and Stewardship
- 12/14 - Deacons
- 12/21 - Education

Berliner Kränze

By Molly53 on May 01, 2007

Ingredients

1. 4 egg yolks, hardboiled (yolks only)
2. 4 eggs, separated
3. 1 cup butter, no substitutions
4. 1 cup sugar
5. 1/8 teaspoon salt
6. 4 cups flour, sifted
7. 1/2 cup cream
8. 1 egg whites, slightly beaten
9. sugar
cinnamon

Directions

1. Rub cooked egg yolks through a sieve and beat well with uncooked egg yolks.
2. Cream butter, sugar and salt; add to egg yolks.
3. Add flour alternatively with cream.
4. Cover and chill.
5. Preheat oven to 425F and spray baking sheet lightly with cooking spray.
6. Shape with a cookie press or roll out into sheets about 1/8 inch thick and cut with a doughnut cutter.
7. Place on cookie sheet.
8. Brush top with egg white and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, taking care not to scorch.

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Terry Lepp - In loving memory of Sol & daughter, Leslie.

Terry Lepp - Happy 1st birthday to granddaughter, Anna Elizabeth

Charles & Ernestine Craig - Observation of 51st Wedding Anniversary.

Nicole Fortune - Observation of Grandmother's birthday.

Pat & Glen Thompson - In memory of Vernon & Marie Thompson.

Pat & Glen Thompson - In memory of Pete & Billie Gardner.

Pastor Porter and Janice.

Donna & Wayne Speegle.

Margaret Bowens - In memory of Rodie H. Wright.

Stan & June Weir - In memory of Bud & Lee Weir and Rueben & Dot Reeves.

Pastor Tom & Carol Lackey.

James & Carol Melton.

Anthony, Sheree, and Jay McGraw - In memory of Garnal & Eliza James, Rossie McGraw, and Joseph McGraw.

Chris & Rachel Garrett - In loving memory of Marjorie Mudd, Winelle





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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