

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

2015



Christmas Is Why They Hate Us

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven."

Matthew 5:11-12

Following the recent Islamic terrorist attacks in Paris and California, the news was once again filled with politicians and pundits pondering and pontificating on the question, "Why do they hate us?" The answer is really quite simple, but many do not want to hear it, because it is not "politically correct."

They do not hate us because we are supposedly "stealing their oil"; they do not hate us because of our historic support for the modern nation of Israel; they do not hate us because they are in poverty. All those things may exacerbate for some their hatred, but none is the root cause.

The real reason they hate us is actually proclaimed by us weekly in our worship, summed up in the Second Article of the Nicene Creed: "I believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God . . . God of God, Light of Light,

very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. . . who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man."

It is true that Jesus is mentioned a few times in the Koran, and Islam claims to recognize Him as a prophet. But, the Jesus that the Koran presents is a false Jesus, a distorted, unrecognizable caricature of the real Jesus found in the Bible. For, the Koran strips Jesus of His own claims to be the divine Son of God and Savior of the world—even denying that He died on the cross (the traitor Judas supposedly took His place). After studying the Koran, Martin Luther concluded that a Muslim is, "a destroyer, enemy, and blasphemer of our Lord Jesus Christ, who instead of the Gospel and faith, sets up his shameful Mohammed and all kinds of lies."¹

As you commemorate Christmas this year, treasure more dearly the freedom you have in our nation to both believe and celebrate the Good News proclaimed by the angels the night of Jesus' birth.

A high-ranking Muslim iman recently declared that saying "Merry Christmas" is a worse sin than murder. "[Christmas] is the concept that God was born on the 25th of December . . . and you say 'Merry Christmas,' saying congratulations on your false religion . . . you are congratulating them on the most evil of sin. . . this is worse than fornication, and drinking alcohol, and killing someone, because you are approving of the biggest crime ever committed."²

That is why they hate us. Islam considers our Christian teaching that Jesus is the divine Son of God, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man," to be idolatry and gross blasphemy, "the most evil of sin." And believing in and spreading this Christian teaching is, "the biggest crime ever committed."

The punishment for blasphemy in the Koran is execution, so all the Christian nations of the world must be annihilated. While we may not consider nations such as France or cities such as Paris to be distinctively Christian, a message from the terror group responsible for the recent attacks there specifically stated that is why European nations and cities are targeted, describing them as, "the carrier of the banner of the Cross in Europe."³

And, the United States of America is often described by Muslims as the "great Satan." This isn't just rhetoric or symbolism—they mean it literally. For, despite the secularization we bemoan in our nation, among the major world powers the United States still has by far the highest percentage of population who are active Christians, measured by factors such as church membership and attendance. A recent survey found that 56% of Americans agree with the statement that Jesus is God, and 62% say that they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.⁴ For Muslims, that makes the United States the "great Satan," because they regard us as the foremost Christian nation in the world.

You may not have heard the likely motivation for the most recent Islamic terrorist attack in California. While it tragically took place at a facility serving the developmentally disabled, that was probably not the real target. For, the

attack was very deliberately directed at a specific event being held in a conference center there that day for county employees: their annual Christmas party.

In the aftermath of the shooting, San Bernardino Police Lt. Mike Madden commented, "It was pretty clear . . . that this wasn't just a rogue individual, that there was something more. . . I noticed upon entering that there's a Christmas tree in there. All of the tables were decorated for a Christmas party."⁵ One news commentator speculated that, inflamed by rhetoric such as the imam quoted above describing the celebration of Christmas as "the biggest crime ever committed," Islamic terrorists may be launching "a literal war on Christmas."⁶

Soon, we will joyfully sing in the words of our favorite Christmas carols a confession of faith that in many Muslim countries would get you beheaded or stoned to death:

*"Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth . . .
Christ, the Savior, is born!"*

*"Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King,
Let every heart prepare Him room."*

*"Highest, most holy, Light of Light
eternal, born of a Virgin, a mortal
He comes; Son of the Father now
in flesh appearing! O come, let
us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"*

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*"Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!"*

*"Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!"*

*"Away in a manger . . . the little
Lord Jesus asleep on the hay."*

That is the real "reason for the season"—and also the real reason why they hate us.

So, as you commemorate Christmas this year, treasure more dearly the freedom you have in our nation to both believe and celebrate the Good News proclaimed by the angels the night of Jesus' birth: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Pastor Kevin Vogts

¹Martin Luther, "On War Against the Turk," *Luther's Works*, vol. 46, p. 195.

²"Militant Islamic Leader Says 'Saying Merry Christmas' Is Worse Than Murder," www.conservativetribune.com/muslim-leader-merry-christmas.

³"ISIS Claims Paris Was Targeted for Carrying 'the Banner of the Cross in Europe,'" www.christianpost.com/news/isis-paris-terrorist-attack-cross-christianity-europe-150035.

⁴"What Do Americans Believe About Jesus? Five Popular Beliefs," www.barna.org/barna-update/culture/714-what-do-americans-believe-about-jesus-5-popular-beliefs.

⁵"First Responder Says He Saw 'Unspeakable Carnage' After San Bernardino Shooting Massacre," www.fox8.com/2015/12/03/authorities-to-provide-update-on-san-bernardino-shooting-massacre.

⁶"Fox Analyst on San Bernardino Shooting: 'Is It a Literal War on Christmas?'" www.mediaite.com/tv/fox-analyst-on-san-bernardino-shooting-is-it-a-literal-war-on-christmas.



Community Christmas Party & Talent Show December 6

Mark your calendars for the first activity scheduled by our new Fellowship Committee! On Sunday, December 6 at 3:00pm we will have a Community Christmas Party & Talent Show in our church basement Fellowship Hall.

Everyone—individuals, groups, families—is invited to show off your talent! The fun will also include singing Christmas carols, and as a special treat a sing-a-long of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah with Trinity's choir.

Following the show, everyone is asked to bring your favorite Christmas treat to share on our "eat dessert first" bar—no meal, just dessert! Come enjoy the holiday fun and fellowship!



Phyllis Joan Mueller
Entered Eternal Rest
November 4, 2015

*"Come unto Me, all you who
are weary and heavy laden,
and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28*



Missionaries of the Month

Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world supported by our congregation through our Synod.

December 6

Rev. Daniel & Kathy Conrad
Mexico

December 13

Michael & Beth Ritzman
Papua New Guinea

December 20

Rev. James & Peggy Krikava
Czech Republic

December 27

Caitlin Worden
Peru



Issues, Etc.

Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

Issues, Etc. Sponsorship

Our congregation has become a sponsor of *Issues, Etc.*, the radio ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, through a donation from the Trinity Lutheran Foundation.

Host and LCMS pastor Rev. Todd Wilken interviews expert guests—many from outside the LCMS—on a wide variety of subjects, giving a conservative Christian viewpoint on important issues of the day.



Christmas Services

Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate
the Real “Reason for the Season”

Christmas Eve Service, Thursday, December 24, 7:00pm

Featuring the 2015 Children’s Christmas Program
“Sing a Song of Christmas” with Your Favorite
Christmas Carols Including “Silent Night” by Candlelight

Christmas Day Service, Friday, December 25, 10:00am

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!

Listen live daily online from 3:00pm
5:00pm at www.issuesetc.org, or
download past programs under “On
Demand Archives” and listen on your
MP3 player at your convenience, or
simply search for the *Issues, Etc.* app in
the Iphone or Android app stores. You
will be blessed by *Issues, Etc.*!

“Poinsettias.” When signing up please
indicate how many plants you wish to
donate and for whom they are in memory
or honor.

You are also welcome to bring your
own poinsettias, which you purchase
elsewhere or receive as gifts. Just drop
them by the church sometime before
Christmas Eve and leave them on the
tables in the Overflow. Please still sign
up on the sheet in the Church Office,
indicating that you are providing your
own plants, and for whom they are in
memory or honor, so that this information
may be included in next month’s
newsletter.



Donating poinsettias to beautify our
sanctuary is a great way to remember
loved ones at Christmas!

Sign up on the counter in the Church
Office to order plants from Price
Chopper at a cost of \$7 each. Place
your payment in the offering marked

Trinity Bulletin On Web

The current week’s Sunday bulletin
is available electronically under the
“Bulletin” button on our church web site,
www.trinitylcms.org/bulletin. (In many
browsers you have to refresh the page
to get the current bulletin.)



Christmas Eve CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Bring your family and holiday guests to celebrate our Savior's birth with our Christmas Eve Children's Program and Candlelight Service on Thursday, December 24 at 7:00pm. The theme of this year's service is "Sing a Song of Christmas" and includes favorite Christmas carols including "Silent Night" sung by candlelight. Pastor Vogts' message will be "Your Part in the Christmas Pageant" based on Luke 2:1-20. "O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"



Come celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord on Friday, December 25 at 10:00am. Our special order of service will feature your favorite carols as we gradually light the candles of the Advent Wreath to represent the different characters in the Christmas story, Mary, Joseph, Angels, Shepherds, and Wise Men. Pastor Vogts' message will be "What Does Christmas Mean for You?" based on Luke 2:10-11.



Youth Christmas Party December 13

All youth (7th-12th grade) are invited to the Youth Christmas Party next Sunday, December 13, from 6:00pm-8:00pm. We will have fun, games, and pizza. Bring a gift (\$5 limit) to exchange. Parents, you are invited to join us for our closing devotion at 7:45. Please RSVP to Janette, text 785-550-7771, or email janettereinke@gmail.com.



We will observe New Year's Day and the Circumcision of Our Lord with a special service on Friday, January 1, 2016 at 10:00am. Pastor Vogts' message will be "What Kind of People Ought YOU to Be?" based on 2 Peter 3:11.



All youth are invited to join in each week our Youth Bible Study, led by our Youth Director, Janette Reinke, during the Sunday School hour from 9:00am-10:00am in the Youth Room (upstairs behind the Choir Loft).



Trinity on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

We're just starting a page for Trinity on Facebook at www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock. Church members are invited to post information about events, comments, photos, etc. Stop by and give us a look—and a "like"!

You can also follow the Trinity Lutheran Youth on Instagram and Twitter! See pictures from our youth events, announcement of upcoming activities, and other helpful information and inspiration for teens, their parents, and church members. Find us on Instagram at TrinityYouth_Paola and on Twitter @TrinityPaola.



Nursing Home Caroling Trip

Nursing Home Services December 20

You are invited to help Trinity provide our final brief worship services for 2015 at North Point and Medicalodge on Sunday, December 20. Trinity Lutheran Youth will be joining us to sing Christmas carols! The simple services are approximately 20 minutes long at each home. We begin at 1:30pm at North Point and then go to Medicalodge for the second service. Everyone is invited to come help share Christmas cheer!

Readings &
CAROLS

**Festival Of Readings
& Carols December 20**

Our morning worship on Sunday, December 20 will be a Festival of Readings and Carols. This special order of service includes a series of Scripture readings related to the Christmas story, each followed by a Christmas carol. The service will also include Holy Communion.



**Christmas in the
Old Testament
Advent Bible Study**

The old German Christmas hymn "Behold, a Branch is Growing" says, "Isaiah hath foretold it, in words of promise sure." Our Advent Bible Study in Adult Bible Class is a fascinating look at *The Prophets Have Foretold It: Christmas in the Old Testament*.

We are very familiar with the Christmas story from the *New Testament*. In this Bible study we will look at the many prophecies of Christ's birth that are also found in the *Old Testament*, including:

- ❖ He will be born of a woman—Genesis 3:15;
- ❖ He will be a descendant of Jacob—Numbers 24:17;
- ❖ He will be born in Bethlehem—Micah 5:2;
- ❖ He will be miraculously born of a Virgin—Isaiah 7:14;



**New Year's Day
WORSHIP SERVICE**

Bring Your Family and Holiday Guests to
"Start the New Year Out Right"!

Friday, January 1, 2016, 10:00am

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

*Lord, you have been our dwelling
place throughout all generations!*
(Psalm 90:1)

❖ He will be "Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"—Isaiah 9:6.

Join in Adult Bible Class beginning on Sundays at 9:00am in the Overflow for *The Prophets Have Foretold It: Christmas in the Old Testament*.



Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at blocktfc@midwest-connections.com.

December 1	Kristie Gatlin
December 1	Brianna Chapman
December 5	Jennifer Haley
December 5	Tyler Barnett
December 6	Susan Henry
December 6	Linda Oberheide
December 8	Anita Koopman
December 9	Marsha Windish
December 10	Betty Crome
December 10	Don Prothe
December 11	Pam Holtz
December 11	Nancy Honn
December 13	Justin Prothe
December 13	Dillon Reyelts
December 15	Chris Jones
December 15	Linda Prothe
December 16	Joyce Johns
December 16	Jake Prothe
December 19	Samantha Honn
December 21	Carole Brandt
December 21	Nancy Green
December 22	Jack Smith
December 25	Shawn Brandt
December 25	April Bruce
December 25	Darleen Medlin
December 25	Harold Peckman
December 26	Brandon Prothe

December 28 Shemene Peckman
 December 28 Royal Prothe
 December 29 Dan Minden
 Dec 2 Leland & Slina Prothe (60)
 Dec 3 Henry & JoAnn Vaughn (27)
 Dec 6 Darrell & Sandra Schultz (24)
 Dec 16 Mike & Trish Armstrong (20)
 Dec 17 .. Steve & Kristie McMullin (21)
 Dec 28 ... Richard & Mary Ann Green (40)



On Sunday, January 3 we will conclude the Advent-Christmas season with a "Christmas Carol Communion Service" with favorite carols used in place of the various parts of the Liturgy.



One Sunday in December remains open for Coffee Hour hosts. There is a sign-up sheet on the table with the snacks. Thank you to all providing snacks for Coffee Hour!

December 6
 Chancie & Cooper Minden

December 13
 Jan Minden

December 20
 Need Volunteers

December 27
 Vogts

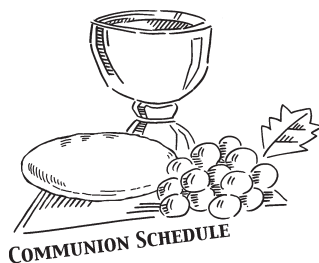


The theme for this year's Advent Sermon Series is "The Three Wise Women of Christmas: Mary, Elizabeth, Anna."

We hear a lot at Christmastime about the three wise *men*, but we can learn important faith lessons from these three wise *women*!

We began by looking at the *Virgin Mary* on the First Sunday in Advent, November 29, followed by *Elizabeth* on December 6, and *Anna* on December 13.

On December 20 our Christmas service of Holy Communion will again feature a traditional Festival of Readings and Carols, with a series of Scripture readings, and carols based upon them, related to our Savior's birth.



This winter we are again having extra services of Holy Communion, on both the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, in October, November, December, January, and February. This provides an extra opportunity to receive the Sacrament for those who may not be able to attend worship on the first Sunday of the month due to inclement weather.

National Synod Ends Agreement with Boy Scouts of America

After more than 60 years of a formal working relationship between The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Boy Scouts of America, the Synod reluctantly ended the agreement as of December 1, 2015.

The Synod was forced to take this action because the BSA has moved to accept openly homosexual persons into troop leadership positions. Biblical teaching, adhered to by the LCMS, is that homosexual proclivity and activity is a sin—not worse than any other sin, not an "unforgiveable" sin, but sin nonetheless. Regardless of the sin, it is improper for openly unrepentant sinners to have such leadership positions with a church-sponsored youth program.

The Synod worked extensively with the BSA to try to come to an agreement that would allow congregations sponsoring troops to restrict leadership positions on such doctrinal and moral grounds. However, after lengthy negotiations it was impossible to reach such an agreement. Sadly, to maintain a formal agreement with the BSA would have required the LCMS to forsake Biblical teaching regarding human sexuality.

Without such a national agreement the Synod's position on the BSA reverts to the decision of the 1953 Synod Convention, which "left to the individual congregation to decide," with each congregation having the responsibility to "establish its own policy as pastoral wisdom on the part of both the congregation and the ministry in its own particular situation dictates," and "Synod thus neither encourages nor discourages Scouting in any congregation."

So, even without a Synodwide agreement individual LCMS congregations may still sponsor BSA troops, and many will continue to do so. It will likely take some time for the full ramifications of the BSA's actions to be implemented. However, LCMS congregations continuing to sponsor BSA troops may ultimately be threatened with costly legal action, which is how activists forced the BSA itself to change their longstanding policy.