

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

2020
DECEMBER



Pastor's Christmas Message

A decade ago our family was blessed to vacation during late November at Disney World, in conjunction with the annual LCMS Fall Leadership Conference, because at the time I was vice-chair of the Synod's Board for Communication Services.

The highlight of our Disney experience was the amazing Christmas lighting display at their studios. The "city street" backlot was decked with millions of lights, flashing in sync with Christmas carols. With the help of Disney special effects magic it even "snowed" on cue—in Florida!

It was the most beautiful display I've ever seen, but there was something important missing: Almost no references to the event that started it all some 2,000 years ago, the birth of Christ.

It's easy for us also to get so wrapped up in the *doing* of Christmas that we forget the *meaning* of Christmas. We've got the glitz, but no God; the lights, but no Lord; the celebration, but no Christ.

Jesus Himself expresses the true significance of His birth into our world this way: *"For God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned."* (John 3:16-18)

He is the very Son of God, come down to earth and made man. By His life, death and resurrection from the dead, He made up for your sin and reconciled you to God, so that your sins are not counted against you. As the Apostle Paul says: *"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. . . For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things . . . by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."* (Colossians 1:19-20, 2:9)

That's what it's really all about: the lights, the trees, the decorations, the gifts, the Christmas carols and nativity scenes. We are celebrating the Good News: You are at peace with God, on account of His Son, born into our world as the Babe of Bethlehem.

I wish you and your loved ones a blessed and happy Christmas, as you celebrate your Savior's birth!

Pastor Kevin Vogts



After everything we've gone through this year, as the popular song says, *"We need a little Christmas, right this very minute . . . we need a little Christmas now!"*

In that spirit, the Sunday School decided to proceed with their usual Children's Christmas Program at 7:00pm on Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24. This is a beloved old German tradition, and has no doubt been the unbroken custom observed at Trinity every Christmas Eve for over 150 years.

However, to allow for greater social distancing this year, an additional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held on December 24, at 5:00pm. This extra service will not include the Children's Program, which will only be at the 7:00pm service.

The 5:00pm service will instead follow an old *English* tradition for Christmas Eve, "A Festival of Readings and Carols," featuring favorite carols interspersed with Scripture readings. Pastor Vogts will open the 5:00pm service with the solo "O Holy Night."

Both the 5:00pm and 7:00pm services will include "Silent Night" sung by candlelight. However, there will not be a sermon at the 7:00pm service. Pastor Vogts' message for the 5:00pm service will be "The Two Sides of Christmas" based on Luke 2:15-20.

The purpose of having two Christmas Eve services this year is to reduce attendance at both to allow for some measure of social distancing. To help balance attendance between the two services, if you do not have children or grandchildren in the Children's Program this year, please consider attending the 5:00pm service instead.

Both of these Christmas Eve services will also be livestreamed on our congregation's Facebook page. And the basement will be available with a video feed for overflow, especially for the 7:00pm Children's Program, which normally has our largest attendance of the year.

Despite the difficult circumstances this year, whether online or in person, join in celebrating the real reason for the season!



Our Christmas Day service on Friday, December 25 at 10:00am is a great option for celebrating Christmas with generous social distancing, since typically there are only a few dozen in attendance.

The special order of service will feature readings and carols focusing on the different characters in the Christmas story—Mary, Joseph, Angels, Shepherds, Wise Men—as the candles are gradually lit on the Advent wreath. Pastor Vogts' message for Christmas Day will be "The Living Nativity" based on Luke 2:1-20.

If you cannot attend in person this service will also be livestreamed on our congregation's Facebook page.

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December, 2020*



Regular Service Time Resumed

Help spread the word that we have returned to our regular schedule of Sunday School and Bible Class at 9:00am and worship at 10:00am. Unless there is some unexpected development, we will continue with this schedule throughout the winter and spring.

Whether we will again have worship at 9:00am next summer, as some have suggested, will be considered closer to that time.

Sunday School & Bible Class Resumed



A bit of welcome normality has returned to Trinity with the resumption of Sunday School & Adult Bible Class.

Sunday School classes meet on Sundays at 9:00am, with the children asked to please wear masks during class time.

Also at 9:00am is Adult Bible Class. Instead of meeting in the Heritage Room, to allow for social distancing the Adult Bible Class is being held in the basement. The topic is *When I Suffer Pains and Losses*. Named after a touching hymn by the famous Lutheran hymnwriter Paul Gerhardt—who experienced many extreme pains and losses in his own life—this study seeks God's answers from the Bible to the questions we have about the sufferings and struggles we experience in this world, such as the current virus outbreak and its many consequences.

You and your children will be blessed by joining in Sunday School and Adult Bible Class!



New Year's Day WORSHIP SERVICE

Doesn't it seem especially appropriate this year to welcome in the New Year at the Lord's house—and pray for the Lord's blessings in 2021!

We will celebrate the end of 2020, with all its difficulties and struggles, and the commencement of 2021 with a special service on New Year's Day, Friday, January 1, 2021 at 10:00am. This service also includes the installation of church officers and board members for 2020. Pastor Vogts' message for the New Year will be "For the Lord Your God Will Be with You" based on Joshua 1:6-9.



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 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

December 1 Kristie Gatlin
December 1 Brianna Chapman
December 5 Tyler Barnett
December 6 Susan Schmitt
December 6 Linda Oberheide
December 6 Jaxon Durham
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 Brooks Massey
 December 26 Brandon Prothe
 December 28 Shemene Peckman
 December 28 Royal Prothe
 December 29 Dan Minden
 December 29 Brian Meyer
 December 31 Randy Shannon
 Dec 2 Leland & Slina Prothe (65)
 Dec 3 Henry & JoAnn Vaughn (32)
 Dec 16 Mike & Trish Armstrong (25)
 Dec 17 .. Steve & Kristie McMullin (26)
 Dec 28 Rich & Mary Ann Green (45)
 Dec 29 Kevin & Terese Vogts (30)



*Bring Your Family and Holiday Guests to
 Celebrate the Real "Reason for the Season"*

Christmas Carol Communion Service
 Sunday, December 20, 10:00am

Two Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
 Thursday, December 24



5:00pm—Festival of Readings and Carols
 7:00pm—Children's Christmas Program

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

All Services Livestreamed on Facebook

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!



**POINSETTIA
 DONATIONS**

Donating poinsettias to beautify our sanctuary is a great way to remember loved ones at Christmas! There is a signup sheet on the counter in the Gathering Room to order plants from Price Chopper at a cost of \$7 each. Place your payment in the offering marked "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. Just drop them by the church sometime before Christmas Eve and leave them on the tables in the Gathering Room. Please still sign up on the sheet, indicating that you are providing your own plants, and for whom they are in memory or honor, so that information may be included in the newsletter.



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 who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

Even in the midst of the COVID crisis the LCMS is sending out new missionaries, and all of this month's missionaries have just been newly assigned!

December 6

John & Erica Tape
 Dominican Republic

December 13

Rev. Isaac Guevara
 Mexico

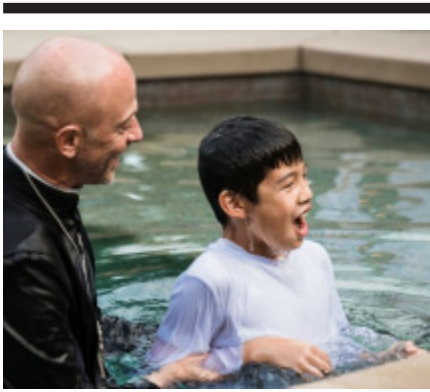
December 20

Justin & Jordan Logston
 Dominican Republic

December 27

Rev. Gerald & Heidi Paul
 Cayman Islands

*"Brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it is among you."
 (2 Thessalonians 3:1)*

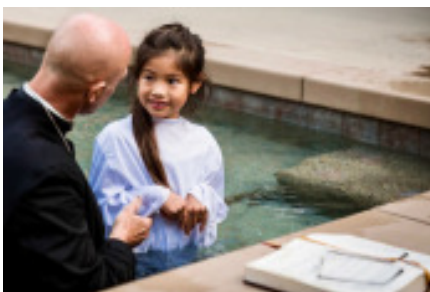


Baptisms in Latvia

Rev. John Bombaro is an LCMS missionary focused on training Lutheran pastors in Latvia, as well as new converts to the Christian faith, in conjunction with Riga Luther Academy. Recently, one of the students, a mother of three young children, professed faith in Christ as her Lord and Savior and said, "We want to be baptized."



In preparation for Holy Baptism, Bombaro gave them two months instruction in Luther's Small Catechism. Because COVID restrictions currently limit church gatherings, Bombaro went to their home to administer Holy Baptism in their backyard swimming pool.



The mother and her children have now begun instruction in preparation for their First Communion. To God be the glory!



Words and Sayings of the Season

2020 Advent-Christmas Sermon Series

November 29 (1st Sunday in Advent)

"Joy to the World"
Luke 21:27-28

December 13 (3rd Sunday in Advent)

"Immanuel, Incarnation, & Nativity"
Isaiah 7:14

December 6 (2nd Sunday in Advent)

"Merry Christmas— or Xmas?"
Luke 3:15

December 20 (4th Sunday in Advent)

"Carol, Alleluia, & Noel"
Luke 2:11

December 27 (1st Sunday After Christmas)

"Gloria in Excelsis Deo & Peace on Earth"
Luke 2:13-14



We will celebrate Communion in December on the first and third Sundays, December 6 and 20. The service on December 20 will be our annual "Christmas Carol Communion Service," using favorite carols for the various parts of the Liturgy.



Devotional booklets for the Advent season from Lutheran Hour Ministries are available in the large literature rack in the South Lobby, in both regular and large print. The daily devotions from the First Sunday in Advent, November 29, to Epiphany, January 6, follow the theme "God with Us" (Matthew 1:21-23).

You will be blessed using these devotions to help you celebrate the real "reason for the season"!