

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

2021



PASTOR'S *Christmas Message*

The Unlikely Carols of Christmas

It's that wonderful time of year again, when not only churches but also radio and television, lobbies and offices, stores and shopping malls, are all filled with the beautiful music of Christmas. Of course, this includes healthy doses of popular favorites such as "Jingle Bells" and silly songs like "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

However, in today's secularized society, often hostile to the Christian faith and message, it is quite amazing and a marvelous blessing how we actually hear over and over again, in the familiar words of the old Christmas carols blaring over the airwaves and in public places, the real "reason for the season":

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

*Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.*

*Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you.*

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

*Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!*

They bear such wonderful witness, but some of our most treasured Christmas songs could actually be called "The *Unlikely* Carols of Christmas." For, either the words, or music, or both were not originally intended to celebrate our Savior's birth.

Isaac Watts, who wrote the words for "Joy to the World" (LSB 387), is considered, along with Charles Wesley, one of the greatest English hymn writers. Watts actually had the most hymns of any author in *The Lutheran Hymnal* of 1941, with 31 or nearly 5% of all the hymns — even Martin Luther had only 26! This was reduced to 13 hymns by Watts in our current *Lutheran Service Book*, but many of these are well-known favorites, such as "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (LSB 425) and "Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways" (LSB 707).

In today's secularized society it is quite amazing and a marvelous blessing how we actually hear, in the familiar words of the old Christmas carols blaring over the airwaves and in public places, the real "reason for the season."

Born in England in 1674, Watts was the son of a minister and an extremely intelligent child prodigy, fluent in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, and winning a poetry prize at age eight. He went on to become a famous poet and philosopher, receiving his doctorate degree and writing some 60 books on a variety of subjects. He studied so hard that that he eventually made himself mentally ill. It was said of him, "From the mouth of a madman poured forth the greatest praise of all time!"

Watts was displeased with the poor poetry of the hymnals in his day, to which his father replied, "Give us something better." So, that's exactly what he did! Deciding to write his own hymnal at age 20, Watts took two years off from college for this huge undertaking. For these two

years he wrote one new hymn a week, with his home congregation every Sunday singing his latest hymn. He published these hymns as *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, which is considered the first true English hymnal — earning him the title "Father of English Hymnody." He lived to be 74 and in his lifetime wrote over 750 hymns.

As far as the original author and composer were concerned, "Joy to the World" wasn't a Christmas song at all!

"Joy to the World" is Watts' paraphrase of Psalm 98 — but it most certainly was *not* written as a Christmas song! Because, under the Puritans from 1644-1660 an Act of Parliament banned the celebration of Christmas in England. Along with most other holy days, Christmas (literally "Christ Mass") was considered a "popish," "Romanish" holdover, from which Protestant England must be purified.

Although when Watts lived the Puritan era had passed and the celebration of Christmas was legal again in England, it was still "suspect" and not widely observed by English Protestants. It is hard to conceive that the author of "Joy to the World" probably never once in his life celebrated Christmas!

It is hard to conceive that the author of "Joy to the World" probably never once in his life celebrated Christmas!

But, if "Joy to the World" was not written as a Christmas carol, what kind of hymn was it? Actually, the theme of

both the original Psalm 98 and the hymn Watts based upon it is not Christ's *first* coming at Christmas, but His *second* coming and the final judgment at the last day. This decidedly non-Christmas theme is seen in the title Watts himself gave to this hymn when he published it in 1719: "The Messiah's Second Coming and Kingdom."

Mendelssohn actually wrote to his publisher about the tune now used for "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" instructing: "It will never work with sacred words."

George Frederick Handel, who composed the stirring music now used for "Joy to the World," would be equally mystified by the modern association of this hymn tune with Christmas. For, it is an arrangement of themes from his famous oratorio "Messiah," which although is now often performed during the Christmas season, was really intended by Handel for performance at Easter.

So, as far as the original author and composer were concerned, "Joy to the World" wasn't a Christmas song at all! They considered it rather a hymn about

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December, 2021*

"The Messiah's Second Coming and Kingdom," set to music for an Easter oratorio.

Another of "The *Unlikely* Carols of Christmas" is "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (LSB 380). The words were indeed written as a Christmas poem in 1739 by the other great English hymn writer Charles Wesley, and the tune is from an oratorio written over a century later in 1840 by German composer Felix Mendelssohn.

However, though he was a deeply devout Lutheran, Mendelssohn did not write this melody as a hymn tune — but part of an oratorio to commemorate the invention of the printing press! In fact, Mendelssohn actually penned a letter instructing his publisher about this tune: "If the right words are hit on, I am sure that this piece will be liked very much by singers and hearers. *But it will never work with sacred words.*"

As you hum along with the ever-present, familiar Christmas music take a real trip down memory lane — all the way back to the first Christmas and the real "reason for the season"!

It wasn't until 1856 that Wesley's words and Mendelssohn's tune were combined, to create the beloved Christmas carol that we know so well today. By that time both Wesley and Mendelssohn had passed into the great multitude singing praises around the heavenly throne (Revelation 7:9-12). So, it is really astounding to think that neither the author nor the composer of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" ever heard together those wonderful words sung to that music so familiar to us.

This year, as you hum along with the radio and ever-present Christmas "muzak" and listen to your Christmas CD's — or even vinyl albums, which are making a comeback! — take a real trip down memory lane. Remembering *all the way back* — to the very first Christmas and the real "reason for the season"!

*Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!" . . .
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!*

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Christmas Communion — Our annual "Christmas Carol Communion Service" with favorite Christmas carols being used for portions of the Liturgy will be on Sunday, December 19.

Two Christmas Eve Services — Because in the past the church could get very crowded on Christmas Eve and there is still a desire for some "social distancing" we will once again have two services on Christmas Eve this year, Friday, December 24, with an additional Candlelight Carol Service at 5:00pm that will not include the children's program, and the traditional Children's Christmas Program at 7:00pm. Both services will feature the same sermon and your favorite carols, including "Silent Night" sung by candlelight.

Christmas Day — Our Christmas Day service will be on Saturday, December 25 at 10:00am. This is a great opportunity to celebrate Christmas at church and enjoy the beautiful Christmas trees, poinsettias, and other decorations in our sanctuary, but with generous "social distancing." The service will feature gradual lighting of the Advent Wreath as we read the story of Advent and Christmas and sing carols related to the readings.

First Sunday after Christmas — This year we have Christmas services three days in a row! We will continue the celebration with the First Sunday after

Christmas on Sunday, December 26, using a special order of worship featuring Christmas carols being used for parts of the Liturgy.

No New Year's Day Service —For this year only we will not have a service on New Year's Day. Pastor and Terry Vogts will be departing for England on December 27 for their son Jacob's marriage to Fiona Howat in her hometown of Manchester, and not return until mid-January. A guest minister could not be found for New Year's Day so it was decided to cancel that service for this year only. Our guest minister for January 2 and 9 will be Rev. Roger Schepmann. He will conduct the installation of church officers and board members for 2022 at the service on Sunday, January 2.

Epiphany Celebration Transferred to January 2 — Epiphany, when we commemorate the visit of the Wise Men, is the "12th Day of Christmas" and actually falls on January 6, which this year is a Thursday. Therefore, we will transfer our observance of Epiphany to the previous Sunday, January 2.

*Oh, come, let us
adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!*



Sermons for December

Complete videos of all our services, as well as audio and printed text of the sermon only, are available on our church website at www.trinitylcms.org/sermons. Printed copies of that day's sermon and several of the most recent sermons are also available in the Gathering Room.



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

Christmas Carol Communion Service
Sunday, December 19, 10:00am

Two Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
Friday, December 24

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

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

All Services Livestreamed on Facebook
All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!

December 5

"Prepare the Way for the Lord!"
Isaiah 40:1-11

December 12

"The Sun of Righteousness"
Malachi 4:2

December 19

"The Mystery of the Incarnation"
Luke 1:26-38

December 24 (Christmas Eve)

"The Spirit of Christmas"
Luke 2:14

December 25 (Christmas Day)

"The Example of the Shepherds"
Luke 2:8-20

December 26

"Living as God's Chosen People"
Colossians 3:12-17



Bible Class on the Church Year

Have you ever wondered about the origin, meaning and significance of the "Church Year"? In *The Year of the Lord's Favor* we are exploring such questions as how this system of celebrations and readings was established, what the annual

cycle of these seasons means, why certain colors and symbols are used for the seasons and what they signify.

This class will help you to better understand and appreciate our worship, and its thematic organization around the Church Year. Join in Adult Bible Class on Sundays at 9:00am in the Heritage Room as we explore *The Year of the Lord's Favor*.



Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not be 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.

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

- Dec 28 Shemene Peckman
- Dec 28 Royal Prothe
- Dec 29 Dan Minden
- Dec 29 Brian Meyer
- Dec 31 Randy Shannon
- Dec 2 Leland & Slina Prothe (66)
- Dec 3 Henry & JoAnn Vaughn (33)
- Dec 16 Mike & Trish Armstrong (26)
- Dec 17 .. Steve & Kristie McMullin (27)
- Dec 28 ... Richard & Mary Ann Green (46)
- Dec 29 Kevin & Terese Vogts (31)



We will celebrate Communion in December on the first and third Sundays, December 5 and 19. The service on December 19 will be our annual "Christmas Carol Communion Service," using favorite carols for the various parts of the Liturgy.



Christmas Talent Show & Dessert Potluck December 12

Everyone is invited to our sixth Christmas Talent Show & Dessert Potluck on Sunday, December 12 at 6:00pm.

Everyone — individuals, groups, families — is invited to share your talent!

All types of performances are welcome and do not have to be Christmas related, and if Christmas related do not have to be strictly religious — "Jingle Bells" and Santa are welcome! To get on the program email Pastor Vogts with the talent you will be sharing at pastorvogts@gmail.com.

Everyone is also asked to bring your favorite Christmas dessert to share in a "Dessert Potluck" — YUM! The fun will conclude with a Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long. Come celebrate the holiday season!



Because in the past the church could get very crowded on Christmas Eve, and there is still a desire for some "social distancing," we will once again have two services on Christmas Eve this year, Friday, December 24, with an additional Candlelight Carol Service at 5:00pm that will not include the children's program, and the traditional Children's Christmas Program at 7:00pm.

The 5:00pm service will open with Pastor Vogts singing "O Holy Night" and both services will feature your favorite carols, including "Silent Night" sung by candlelight, and the same sermon, "The Spirit of Christmas" based on Luke 2:14.

The 5:00pm service will follow an old *English* tradition for Christmas Eve, "A Festival of Readings and Carols," featuring favorite carols interspersed with Scripture readings. The 7:00pm service will follow an old *German* tradition for Christmas Eve, with this year's Children's Christmas Program, "One Night in Bethlehem."

Both the 5:00pm and 7:00pm Christmas Eve services will also be livestreamed on our congregation's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock) and later uploaded to YouTube (www.trinitylcms.org/videos).



Don Merle Prothe
Born August 27, 1959
Entered Eternal Rest
November 5, 2021

*"I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have
kept the faith. Now there is
in store for me the crown of
righteousness, which the Lord,
the righteous Judge, will give to
me on that day—and not only
to me, but also to all who have
longed for His appearing."
2 Timothy 4:7-8*



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.

December 5
Rev. Nicholas Salifu
Ghana (See Article Page 6)

December 12
Rev. Christian & Gudula Tiews
Germany

December 19
Rev. David & Jennifer Preus
Dominican Republic

December 26
Rev. Tom Park
Taiwan



William Walter Eilts
Baptized November 14, 2021

*"Arise and be baptized, and wash
away your sins, calling on the
name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)*



Our Christmas Day service on Saturday, December 25 at 10:00am is a great option for celebrating Christmas at the church and enjoying our beautiful decorations, while still having generous social distancing, since typically on Christmas Day there is a small 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 Example of the Shepherds"* based on Luke 2:8-20.

If you cannot attend in person this service along with our 5:00pm Carol Service and 7:00pm Children's Program on Christmas Eve will be livestreamed on our congregation's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock) and later uploaded to YouTube (www.trinitylcms.org/videos).



Tone Chimes for Christmas

We are getting a group together to play tone chimes for our Christmas services. This is a lot of fun and adds a beautiful element to our Christmas celebrations. All who are interested please contact Nancy Golubski.



No Service New Year's Day

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Our guest minister for January 2 and 9 will be Rev. Roger Schepmann. He will conduct the installation of church officers and board members for 2022 at the service on Sunday, January 2.

For pastoral care during Pastor Vogts' absence you may contact IRev. Christian Schulz of First Lutheran Church (785-313-4633). Also, thanks to modern technology you may contact Pastor Vogts while he is in England either by calling the parsonage phone (913 849 3711) or calling or texting his cell phone (913-594-9865).



December 5
Trinity Youth

December 12
Ally & Jake Henry
Mom Susan Schmitt's Birthday

December 19
Jan Minden

December 26
Woods

MISSION NEWS

Ghana's 7th Graders Put Most of Us to Shame

Just one example of the amazing stories our LCMS missionaries share from the mission field: Consider the 7th graders in Ghana studying the Augsburg Confession—and about half of them come from Muslim families!



It's hard to believe, isn't it? After all, even many confirmed Lutheran adults in North America have never read this important piece of Lutheran doctrine. But, at the Concordia

Preparatory School supported by he LCMS in northern Ghana, the young teens not only read the Augsburg Confession as one of their assigned texts, they also have questions—lots of questions!

“For example, when they read the ‘First Article: Concerning God,’ they discuss the Islamic view of God, what



You Are Invited to a

Christmas Open House

at the Parsonage

Sunday, December 5

1:00pm–5:00pm

All Invited – Everyone Welcome!

traditional [African idol] worshipers believe, and what we [Lutherans] believe, teach and confess,” says Rev. Nicholas Salifu, a native missionary pastor who attended the LCMS Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana and is now supported by the LCMS in his home country.

“When it came to the Son of God, the Muslims would not understand why God has a Son. Here we provide the explanation. They often have questions on the Trinity, which we also sometimes have. The Holy Spirit will help each and every one of us to understand the Word better.”

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 \$9 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.



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 for the Advent and Christmas seasons thru Epiphany on January 6 follow the theme “Child of Promise.”

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