

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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December Newsletter



Hello December

In this issue...

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Pgs 3-6 | Message from Pastor |
| Pg 7 | President Saunders Article |
| Pg 8 | Trinity Lutheran Church Advent & Christmas Concert |
| Pgs 9-10 | LC-MS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter Article |
| Pg 11 | Orphan Grain Train |
| Pg 12 | Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca |
| Pg 13 | Confirmation Memory Work Schedule |
| Pg 14 | Advent Service Schedule |
| Pg 15 | Christmas Service Schedule |



Pastor's Message

This Advent Season, in preparation for our celebration of Christmas, we are going to spend our Advent midweek services reflecting on the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and the explanation the Small Catechism. This preparation is meant to deepen our harking with the herald angels in singing, "Glory to God in the highest and peace among those with whom He is pleased." (Luke 2:14)

To help in your preparation, I invite you to read Luther's Large Catechism on the First Article. I also encourage you to read a chapter of Luke beginning on December 1.

May the Lord bless your Advent preparations and Christmas celebrations.

The First Article

9 *"I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth."*

10 These words give us a brief description of God the Father, his nature, his will, and his work. Since the Ten Commandments have explained that we are to have no more than one God, it may be asked: "What kind of being is God? What does he do? How can we praise or portray or describe him in such a way as to make him known?" This is taught here and in the following articles. Thus the Creed is nothing else than a response and confession of Christians based on the First Commandment.

11 If you were to ask a young child, "My boy, what kind of God have you? What do you know about him?" he could say, "First, my God is the Father, who made heaven and earth. Apart from him alone I have no other God, for there is no one else who could create heaven and earth."

12 For the somewhat more advanced and the educated, however, all three articles can be treated more fully and divided into as many parts as there are words. But for young pupils it is enough to indicate the most necessary points, namely, as we have said, that this article deals with creation. We should emphasize the words, “maker of heaven and earth.”

13 What is meant by these words, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker,” etc.? Answer: I hold and believe that I am a creature of God; that is, that he has given and constantly sustains my body, soul, and life, my members great and small, all the faculties of my mind, my reason and understanding, and so forth; my food and drink, clothing, means of support, wife and child, servants, house and home, etc.

14 Besides, he makes all creation help provide the comforts and necessities of life—sun, moon, and stars in the heavens, day and night, air, fire, water, the earth and all that it brings forth, birds and fish, beasts, grain and all kinds of produce.

15 Moreover, he gives all physical and temporal blessings—good government, peace, security.

16 Thus we learn from this article that none of us has his life of himself, or anything else that has been mentioned here or can be mentioned, nor can he by himself preserve any of them, however small and unimportant. All this is comprehended in the word “Creator.”

17 Moreover, we confess that God the Father not only has given us all that we have and see before our eyes, but also daily guards and defends us against every evil and misfortune, warding off all sorts of danger and disaster. All this he does out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a kind father who cares for us so that no evil may befall us.

18 But further discussion of this subject belongs in the other two parts of this article, where we say, “Father almighty.”

19 Hence, since everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given and sustained by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to his service, as he has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments.

20 Much could be said if we were to describe in detail how few people believe this article. We all pass over it, hear it, and recite it, but we neither see nor consider what the words enjoin on us.

21 For if we believed it with our whole heart, we would also act accordingly, and not swagger about and brag and boast as if we had life, riches, power, honor, and such things of ourselves, as if we ourselves were to be feared and served. This is the way the wretched, perverse world acts, drowned in its blindness, misusing all the blessings and gifts of God solely for its own pride and greed, pleasure and enjoyment, and never once turning to God to thank him or acknowledge him as Lord and Creator.

22 Therefore, this article would humble and terrify us all if we believed it. For we sin daily with eyes and ears, hands, body and soul, money and property, and with all that we have. This is especially true of those who even fight against the Word of God. Yet Christians have this advantage, that they acknowledge themselves in duty bound to serve and obey him for all these things.

23 For this reason we ought daily to study this article and impress it upon our minds. Everything we see, and every blessing that comes our way, should remind us of it. When we escape distress or danger, we should recognize that this is God's doing. He gives us all these things so that we may sense and see in them his fatherly heart and his boundless love toward us. Thus our hearts will be warmed and kindled with gratitude to God and a desire to use all these blessings to his glory and praise.

24 Such, very briefly, is the meaning of this article. It is all that ordinary people need to learn at first, both about what we have and receive from God and about what we owe him in return. This is an excellent knowledge, but an even greater treasure. For here we see how the Father has given himself to us, with all his creatures, has abundantly provided for us in this life, and, further, has showered us with inexpressible eternal treasures through his Son and the Holy Spirit, as we shall hear.

Hymn 'To Shepherds as They Watched by Night'

TLH 103



1 To shep - herds as they watched by night Ap - peared a
2 At Beth - le - hem, in Da - vid's town, As Mi - cah
3 Oh, then re - jice that thro' His Son God is with
4 What harm can sin and death then do? The true God



host of an - gels bright; Be - hold the ten - der
did of old make known; 'Tis Je - sus Christ, your
sin - ners now at one; Made like your - selves of
now a - bides with you. Let hell and Sa - tan



Babe, they said, In yon - der low - ly man - ger laid.
Lord and King, Who doth to all sal - va - tion bring.
flesh and blood, Your broth - er is th'e - ter - nal God.
rage and chafe, Christ is your Broth - er— ye are safe.

5 Not one He will or can forsake
Who Him his confidence doth make.
Let all his wiles the Tempter try,
You may his utmost pow'rs defy.

6 Ye shall and must at last prevail;
God's own ye are, ye cannot fail.
To God forever sing your praise
With joy and patience all your days.

Text: tr. Richard Massie, 1854, alt.; Martin Luther, 1543; tr. Richard Massie, 1854, alt.; Martin Luther, 1543

Tune: Musae Sioniae VI, 1609; Musae Sioniae VI, 1609

Text and tune: Public domain

+ Sola Deo Gloria +
Rev. Dr. Joel G. Koepp

President's Piece for Peace

How quickly the clock moves. We are entering into a new year because God has given us more time on this earth to live for Him and gather for His Kingdom. Time is not something God is bound to. He created it and can end it whenever He wants. Time is simply an element of measurement so we can mark out the day, week, month, year, and so on. It is valuable to us as we set schedules and deadlines. As time marches on, so do the tasks we wish to accomplish in the allotted time given from God.

As I said, time is an element of measure for us who live in the flesh. King Solomon wrote about time as the Holy Spirit led him to pen the book of Ecclesiastes. In the third chapter of that book, first verse, he says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." It is because we live under heaven (on the earth) that we leave 2024 behind and welcome 2025. We live here and are bound to the time that moves forward until God decides to end it.

Therefore, time is a gift from God. As a gift, it is appreciated and exercised with faithfulness to the reason that we are afforded it. During the time of the Church (the time we are living in right now) it is our privilege to spend it with Jesus as He comes to us in His Word and Sacraments. The Word of God and the Sacraments come to us from eternity that we may be fed now and prepared to live when there is no more measurement of time. In heaven there will be no more measure of time. It will only be eternity, eternal bliss. The flesh by which we lived in this life will be raised from the dead, but from then on it will be incorruptible. There will be no death in heaven because there will be no sin. It will be a constant now of eternity worshipping the Lord in all His glory.

In heaven there will be no more measure of time. It will only be eternity, eternal bliss.

While we look forward to the certainty of that promise being fulfilled in our lives, we still live in time now. For each year, month, day, hour and even for each minute in time we have another privilege. We are allowed to speak the Holy Gospel. The opportunity to speak forth words that flow from our lips to other ears is this: "God is not against you. He is for you in His Son Christ Jesus." There are so many ways we can tell of Christ to our neighbor. God is affording us time for so many reasons, but none more important than inviting folks to Church where the Word of God transcends time that it may enter the ears of the sinner where it brings peace to the conscience and rest for the soul.

Our prayer, each and every day given us, is that opportunities may arise for giving witness to Christ Jesus. I pray our new year of 2025 would find us loving the time we have, and leading others to the time when time will cease, and eternal bliss will go on without end.

Happy and Blessed New Year,

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders
District President

***“Gloria In Excelsis”
An Advent & Christmas Concert***



**Trinity Lutheran Church
Cordially Invites You to Our Holiday Concert
Featuring Area Musicians!**

**Come and Enjoy
An Afternoon Filled with Praises to Our King
on December 8th at 2:00pm
at 206 1st Ave South
State Center, IA 50247**

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship
Newsletter Article – December 2024

Repenting of “Yours” and “Mine”

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God's Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn't consider “equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn't bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

*That knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,”
assured that only what’s withheld is lost.*

Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is “mine!” But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” There isn’t anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the “yours” and “mine” and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord’s house.



Orphan Grain Train, Inc.
Central Iowa Branch 23
302 Bevin St., PO Box 120
Clemons, IA 50051

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus from Orphan Grain Train, Central Iowa Branch 23, Clemons, Iowa!

Dear Friends at Immanuel,

Thank you for your very generous donation to Orphan Grain Train. Our latest shipment was August 20th to the Ukraine. We will be sending another load to the Republic of Georgia Tuesday, November 19th. Your monetary donation will help defray the cost of that load. We are also working with local charities donating quilts and other needed items. In addition, we have been working on improving our facilities here at Clemons. Our roof sustained damage in a storm several weeks ago and will need to be replaced. We continue our mission of serving our Lord by providing for the needs of peoples all over the world, both in other countries and here at home. This is only possible because of individuals and groups like you who support us materially, financially, and prayerfully. Please continue to include us in your prayers and we pray that God will bless you as you serve your Lord. We always welcome visitors. We are here every Tuesday morning from 8:00-12:00. Coffee is at 10:00 sharp.

In His Love and Service,

Bonnie Berrey, Secretary

Branch Manager: Trisha Adams (641) 751-2479
Assistant Branch Manager: Richard Hartwig (515) 708-6234
Secretary: Bonnie Berrey (641) 477-8222
Treasurer: Julie Wengert (641) 488-2325

Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca



December 2024

Into the New Year!

Registration

As 2024 comes to a close, we have begun planning and preparing for summer of 2025! We are excited to announce our theme of *With Open Arms*, focusing on how God works his salvation, using the open arms of multiple figures throughout Scripture, and especially the open arms of Christ on the cross. This will be taught during each session of camp this summer. Summer camp is slated to begin on June 11, 2025. Registration will open on January 20th, 2025!

Camp has also updated our registration system. We are moving into the digital age! All of the forms that previously needed to be printed may now be filled out online! This will increase the speed and efficiency of registering for summer camp as well as the sign-in/ registration process on the first day of each camp session. We will be sharing some of the ins-and-outs of the updated online registration process on our social media pages in the days leading up to the launch of registration.

Giving

Camp is looking to make various improvements to our programs and facilities throughout the next year. Those improvements include repairing the sewage lagoon filtration system in order to keep it up to code and keep Camp operational. Another is fixing the lights over the recreation area by Alpha Lodge to create a space where campers and retreat guests can enjoy swimming as well as playing basketball, volleyball, gaga ball, and human foosball all after dark! Lastly, we have plans to continue improving the facilities that are necessary to operate our horse program. Stay tuned for additional updates on that front! We ask that as you consider any end-of-year giving, that you prayerfully consider continuing to support Camp and our mission to promote and provide Christ-centered education, recreation, and inspiration for individuals and groups of all ages. Thank you for all of your support in helping make this ministry possible!



IDE Middle School Retreat (and Snowlympics!) January 24-25

The upcoming IDE Middle School Retreat and Snowlympics is scheduled for January 24-25, 2025 at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca! Pastor Miguel Gonzalez- Feliciano from Readlyn, IA will present on **Heroes of Honor, Saints of Shame, and Christian Courage**. Visit <https://lcmside.org/msretreat/> for more information and to register!

SUMMER 2025 Theme: With Open Arms

Registration opens at 1:00pm on January 20th!



Confirmation

MEMORY WORK SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

5th & 6th Grade Memory Work (Class time for Dec. is 4-5:15pm)

Dec 4th: 1st Article and Meaning

Dec 11th: 1st Article and Meaning

Dec 18th: 2nd Article and Meaning

Dec 25th: No class

8th Grade Memory Work (Class time for Dec. is Thursdays 7-8:30pm)

Dec 5th: 1st Article and Meaning

Dec 12th: No class

Dec 19th: 2nd Article and Meaning

Dec 25th: No class



Mid-Week Advent Services

A fellowship meal will be served from 5:00-6:15pm
Evening Prayer Service begins at 6:30pm

Wednesday, December 4th
'Jesus Shows Us Our Creator'

Wednesday, December 11th
'Jesus Shows Us Our Provider'

Wednesday, December 18th
'Jesus Shows Us The Father's Heart'



Christmas

SERVICE TIMES

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 15th at 10:30am

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Tuesday, December 24th at 4:00pm

CHRISTMAS DAY DIVINE SERVICE

Wednesday, December 25th at 9:00am

NEW YEAR'S EVE DIVINE SERVICE

Tuesday, December 31st at 6:30pm

JOIN US!