

# NEWSLETTER

December, 2017

Vol. 24 No. 12

## Midweek Advent

### Magnificent Verbs of the Magnificat

A wise professor once said, "Look at the verbs, the action is in the verbs!" When you apply this idea to scripture, you begin to see all that God has done and is doing for you. This year we are going to look at some of the verbs of Mary's Magnificat, a hymn that she offered in praise to God upon reflection of the importance of the baby that was now growing in her. She praises Him for what it means to her and to the entire world. Each week, we're going to be looking at a different verb, which describes the action of God in our lives through the coming of His Son. It will prove helpful in preparing our hearts for Christmas.

**December 6 "He Regards"**

**December 13 "He Brings Down and Exalts"**

**December 20 "He Remembers"**

## Soup Suppers

Advent Soup Suppers begin on Wednesday, December 6. These will be served at 6:00 p.m. prior to the 7:00 p.m. Midweek Advent Services. This is an enjoyable time to share soup and sandwiches with our fellow members before worship. You don't have to rush home and make supper before you come to church during this time of year that can get pretty hectic. All are welcome.

**Our Fellowship Team Leaders are running the show but you can help by signing up to provide a pot of soup (or hot dish) and/or a dessert. Sign up with your team or whatever Wednesday works best for you.**

## Life in Christ Children's Sunday School Christmas Program



Sunday, December 10  
4:00 p.m.

Social with desserts and refreshments following the program

*Sign up in the narthex if you would like to provide cookies.*

## Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 10, at 10:00 a.m. The 2018 Budget will be presented for discussion and approval.

The Church Council may add other items to the agenda so long as these items are communicated to the members of the congregation at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting. Any communicant member of this congregation who is 18 years of age or over, is eligible to vote.

## Time to Rethink?

It never ceases to amaze me how our creator has built love into His creation. You can see it when a mother bird plays like she's injured to distract you away from her little ones, you can see it when a mama cat gently gathers her kittens to herself, or when a calf cries for his mother when separated. You can also see it in the glistening eyes of human parents who have been blessed with a little child. You can see it when their child grows up and leaves home and their eyes glisten once again. The world God created is at its best when it operates on the principle of love which is the original reflection of the creator.

Consider how God designed the Family. A man and woman come together and pledge to love and be faithful to each other for as long as they live. With the help of God, they learn to sacrifice for each other as they carry out their vows. This vow of love and fidelity not only forms the basis for a good marriage, but also the basis for good society and good country.

It has been demonstrated again and again that children raised in a home where a mother and father are lovingly committed to one another simply do better, better psychologically, socially, academically, professionally, and personally. Being loved and living in an environment of love is important for the personal development of children. Likewise, children benefit greatly from living with masculine and feminine role models. So it perpetuates. Healthy marriages tend to create more healthy marriages making for better homes and better countries. The more that I have observed life on God's green earth, the more I want to praise God for His marvelous design which operates best on love.

The institution of marriage as well as the families that come to be as a result of marriage are so important that God has built a hedge around them with two distinct commandments. God has commandments that protect marriage (#6) and parenthood (#4). So of the first formal words that God commanded to be written down for His people to be read and remembered, a full 20% of it had to do with marriage. Do you think God is saying something to us? Some imagine that the Law of God is somehow inimical to love, but they don't understand love. Remember Jesus summarized the Law of God with that very word. All the commandments can be boiled

down to love: Love God and love your fellow man. The world that God built was made to function best on love and the fidelity it entails.

"What's love got to do with it?" Tina Turner asked in a song, whose tune just popped into your head. In the song she goes on to explain that love and commitment is difficult and that it may be better just to treat sexual relations as a thrill ride rather than a consummation of something deeper. She wrongly refers to love as a "second-hand emotion" and denies that love is actually a decisive action of the will. Tina is not the source of this sort of thinking, she merely reflects the degraded understanding of sex and love that has become popular in our culture since the late 60's. History has proven that humanity has always tilted this way, but what makes the situation in America a little more concerning is that we are now applauding sexual aberrations and making laws to protect them.

I don't think our nation is really all that happy with the current sexual weirdness that we are treated to every day. There is much eye-rolling going on privately as each new perverse predilection is foisted upon us as normal. Having now come to believe the sexual gratification is an end unto itself, our culture has opened Pandora's box to monstrous and frightening results. The spirits that have been released upon our culture and country will not be so easily recaptured. Having said that, I sense a turning of sorts, or at least a willingness to reconsider. Most people actually long for decent, loving familial relationships. Many have deep regrets for ruining all of their relationships by adulterous and wanton sexual behavior.

Maybe this is where we Christians can help. Jesus once said that we are meant to be a shining city on a hill, an example of how things could be. Maybe this is our role at present, to support marriage by maintaining good marriages as good examples for our children and anyone else who might come to know us.

It would mean also that we teach our kids to live sexually pure and decent lives. Boys must be taught to respect girls as people and not objectify them as objects of lust. Girls must avoid the temptation of objectifying themselves by dressing and acting in suggestive ways. Kids who are in their teens must be taught that premarital sex is unacceptable and that moving into the same house without being married is also  
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unacceptable. This is a thumbing-of-the-nose at marriage and the commitment to love that it represents; this sort of behavior is based on the assumption that one is somehow more knowledgeable and authoritative than the God who created them and therefore is high handed rebellion. So the first commandment is broken along with the sixth in this way. So what might have been the beginning of a decent, long-term relationship begins with undertones of guilt. God Forgives of course, but planning on being forgiven after a year or two of sinning is not a good plan!

Indeed, many have thought that the chaste behavior of sincere Christians is quaint. A recent example was Vice President Mike Pence, a Christian, who said that he will not go out to dinner or lunch with another woman without also having his wife along. The press cackled like vile hyenas when they heard this. But the sleazy revelations that have dominated the news have led some of them to now say, "maybe Pence is right."

There is a better way, a better way for life, the way of love and commitment. This was God's design and this is simply how things work best.

Pastor Trask

## **THE CANTOR'S VOICE**

### COME LORD JESUS – QUICKLY COME

The title of this month's article invokes the common table prayer that all of us know. Some might even remember it as "Komm, Herr Jesu, Unser Gast" (For those of you who still remember the "mother tongue"). At every meal, we invite Jesus to be the guest of our time of gathering. Advent is also such a time of gathering.

We spend a lot of time waiting during Advent. We wait for gifts to be bought, we wait for the opportunity to buy and trim the Christmas tree, we wait for Christmas cards to be received from friends and loved ones far and near. We also wait for the retelling of the miracle of our Savior's birth, both by children and in the spoken and proclaimed Word of God on Sunday mornings. One manifestation of our waiting also comes from

the fact that Advent not only looks back, but also looks forward. We not only remember the fact that Christ came to be our Redeemer, but that He will also come again at the end of the age to take all who believe in Him unto Himself in heaven.

I am reminded of when it pleased Almighty God to take Dr. Paul Manz to Himself in heaven on October 28 some years ago. At the memorial service, Dr. Manz's signature choir anthem was sung by the National Lutheran Choir. This anthem was written back in the early 1950's as a prayer to God when Dr. Manz's son John was ill, and near death. Many a Concordia University/St Paul graduate, faculty, or connected person will be very familiar with this text. It is taken from Revelation Chapter 22 and speaks of the triumphant reunion all of us will have with Christ on that Last Day. I share it with you now as your Advent devotion:

*Peace be to you and grace from Him  
Who freed us from our sins;  
Who loved us all and shed His blood  
That we might saved be.*

*Sing Holy, Holy to our Lord –  
the Lord, Almighty God  
Who was and is and is to come;  
Sing Holy, Holy, Lord!*

*Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,  
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below;  
For Christ is coming, is coming soon;  
For Christ is coming soon.*

*E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come,  
And night will be no more;  
They need no light, nor lamp, nor sun;  
For Christ will be their All!*

May this be our prayer not only this Advent season, but for all time as we await the glorious return of our Savior!

See you in church –  
Cantor Duane Esterly

## **Snow shoveling**

We are looking for volunteers for snow shoveling. There is a sign up sheet on the sign up table in the narthex. Note cards are available with tasks that need to be done. If you have any questions, call Larry Affield, Board of Trustees chairperson, at 763-234-1243

## **Wednesday Evening Bible Classes begin January 3, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

**LiFelight: Exodus Part I**  
**Lead by Tom Kuenzel**

Participants will better understand the covenant God made with His people in Exodus and the significance it has for God's people of the new covenant. This class is 9 weeks long and will be discussion based. Individual preparation at home is required.

Sign up and pick up materials at the stand near the office.

## **Poinsettias For Christmas**

Sign up at the cabinet near the Fellowship Hall if you would like to provide one or more Poinsettia plants to help decorate the church for Christmas (you can pick them up after the Christmas services). The cost is \$8.25 per plant (6 1/2 inch pot). You can add this to your regular offering by indicating "Poinsettia" under special gift on your offering envelope or use a blank envelope found in the pews but please put your name on it also).

## **Calendars! Support LOGOS youth!**

For \$7.00, you can help youth throughout the year; keep track of important dates, and enjoy beautiful pictures and inspirational verses. They are available in the narthex, or ask a LOGOS youth group member for help.

## **Monthly Financial Updates**

You may have noticed that included in this newsletter is a new page with financial information for your perusal. This is something that the Church council has decided to start publishing in our monthly newsletter. Formerly, financial reports were always available in the three-ring binder that sits atop the little mail boxes on the sign-up table, but in the interest of availability and transparency, the council thought it best to simply put in the newsletter as well. The three-ring binder will remain available and currently offers reports going back to 2013, for those seeking a historical perspective.

***Christmas is coming.*** It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: *"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"* (Luke 2:10-11).

We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased"* (Luke 2:14)!

We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger, but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God's people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deut. 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas, but throughout all the year.

We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us.

We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us.

*LCMS Stewardship Article*