

Living Word Lutheran Church LCMS

**December 2006
Newsletter**

"Communicating the Love of Jesus"



**Traditional Worship : 8:00 a.m.
Christian Growth Hour: 9:15 a.m.
Contemporary Worship: 10:30 a.m.**

Living Word Lutheran Church

Located on the West of Spicer on Cty Rd 10
in old Prairie Meadows building
PO Box 242, New London, MN 56273
Phone: 320-796-0742
Website: www.livingwordlutheran.net



Questions for Pastor...

Where did the tradition of the Christmas tree get started ?

That's a great question, because traditions - like the Christmas tree - are such a HUGE part of the Christmas season. Unless we know the origin of the tradition it loses its meaning and becomes something we keep doing "because we've always done it that way." (You've all heard the story of the Christmas Ham with the end chopped off. If you haven't heard it, ask me. It's a great illustration of traditions that are kept without knowing why.)

Anyway, the origins of the Christmas tree are disputed, and it's hard to separate legend from fact. That is to say, no one really knows for sure how/when we started using them. Even so, it is pretty well agreed that using an evergreen tree as part of a Christmas celebration began somewhere in Germany, sometime between the 8th and 16th centuries (how's that for pin-point accuracy?!). Martin Luther is sometimes credited with putting candles on a tree and bringing it in the house as part of a celebration. But we also know that Luther gets credited (and blamed) for lots of things he didn't do, so whether he is the "father of Christmas tree lights" is open to question.

However, it is safe to say that using an evergreen tree as part of a mid-winter celebration was not a new thing when Christians first started celebrating the birth of Christ. (And Christ's birth was not a holiday celebrated by Christians until the fourth century. The Resurrection of Jesus was - and is - the most important holiday for Christians.)

Pagan (nature-worship) mid-winter celebrations before the time of Christ used evergreen trees and wreaths as symbols of the certain hope that the days would become longer, winter would end and spring would bring all the other plants to life again. For example the Norse pagans and Celtic Druids revered evergreens as manifestations of deity because they did not "die" from year to

year but stayed green and alive when other plants appeared dead and bare.

Christians eventually settled on celebrating the birth of Christ in December to provide an alternative to the Pagan mid-winter celebrations. They gave Christian meanings to some of the pagan traditions - like the use of evergreens. Instead of worshipping the tree, Christians began to use it as a way to help them remember to worship the God who gave us that tree.

Some of the aspects of the Christmas tree that remind us of Jesus:

The Evergreen:

Reminds us of the Everlasting life that belongs to everyone who repents of sin and trusts in Jesus.

The tree points

Reminding us not (as the pagans do) to worship the created to heaven thing but rather the Creator

The lights on the tree:

Remind us that Jesus came to be the "light shining in the darkness" - shining our way to God. (John 1)

The star at top:

Reminds us of the star the wise men followed that led them to the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. (Matthew 2)

Angel ornaments:

Remind us of the angels who told of Jesus' birth (Luke 2)

Shiny ornaments:

Reflect the lights of the tree, reminding us that we are to reflect the light of Jesus (Matthew 5)

I'd be interested to hear other Christmas tree traditions and decorations that help you remember that Christmas is about the birth of Jesus.

This year at Living Word we are using another tree - known as "The Jesse Tree" to help us celebrate the birth of Christ. Come on Sunday, December 17 at 4:00 p.m. to hear the Sunday School students tell what a Jesse Tree is and how it tells the story of Jesus. Make sure you stay for the Christmas Ham Dinner after the program.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

A HUGE Benefit Thank-You

- + To our Benefit Team for the many hours of planning and organizing
- + To All Who Helped with our Benefit for Kristina
- + To everyone who came and donated
- + To God who continues to bring healing to Kristina
- + To God for the blessing of nearly \$6000 raised.
- + To Thrivent Kandiyohi Chapter for supplemental funds of \$1000.

*"THANK YOU" from Pastor David & Violet
for all the prayers and help after Violet's mom went
home to Jesus.
God bless you all!*

Have You Seen Our Sign ?

Head out County Road 9 between New London and Spicer and check out the new "Future Home of Living Word" sign. Thanks to Jamie Iverson for designing and producing the sign.

Still to come: 4' x 8' letterboard under the sign for changeable messages.

Stress In Your Life ?

(Who doesn't have it this time of year?)

Learn How to Deal With It

In our free booklet rack (in front of Pastor's office)

Stress is natural in a world damaged by sin. Stress can actually be a good warning sign - if we heed the warning and deal with it appropriately. But what is "appropriately"? Pick up one of the booklets on Stress - or others like it - from our friends at Lutheran Hour Ministries. Then pass it along to someone else.

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Caroling Anyone ?

Saturday, December 16 at 1:00 (after the Sunday School Christmas party) we will head out to sing some carols. Please let Pastor David know of places and people who would appreciate some carols. And, of course, come and help us spread the true message of the season in song.

2007 National Youth Gathering:

We have seven youth signed up to attend:

Anthony Dauk
Rebecca Dauk
Peter Erickson
Allan Fuglie
Joe Johnson
Vince Mische
Dani Skaggs

Pam Johnson and Bryson Wachter will be our Group Leaders.

Watch for upcoming Fund-raising Activities.

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Thanks to Nicole

08-09-2005

FEAR NOT, FOR I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS ...
I JUST SAVED A TON ON MY AUTO INSURANCE
BY SWITCHING TO GEICO

Opportunities to "Share the Love of Jesus in Practical ways"...



Join our Prayer Force

One of the most practical ways you can share the love of Jesus is by praying for people in need. That's what people on our "Prayer Force" do. The "Prayer Force" is an e-mail prayer chain. You simply receive re-

quests via email, then take those requests to the Lord in prayer.

Email Pastor David to sign up: dvdaulk@mail.tds.net

Welcome New People

Keep your eyes open for people who move into your area.

One way we would like to begin "*Sharing the Love of Jesus in Practical Ways*" is by taking a basket of cookies to new people who have moved in. It is a simple way to share the love of Jesus.

Here's what we need you to do:

Keep your eyes open for people who have just bought or rented a home (or apartment) in your area. As soon as possible, notify our Visit Coordinator, Violet Dauk (220-0344) She will notify our cookie bakers and move-in visitors to go make a "welcome" visit.

We also need more:

Cookie Bakers & Move-in Visitors

Please call Violet if you can help with either of these.

Of course, don't forget to take your own batch of cookies (or whatever) to the new folks to welcome them to your neighborhood too.

Help with our "All Stars for Jesus" Program

Our Wednesday evening program for 4-6th graders still needs

- 1) A meal coordinator to schedule meal providers
- 2) an adult group leader for Bible stories & memory work
- 3) an activity leader for games and crafts

Please talk to Pastor David if you can help. Thanks

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Be a "Secret Paul"

One of the things the Apostle Paul was noted for was praying daily for people. Paul prayed for their protection. He prayed for them to grow in their faith. He prayed for them to grow in putting their faith into action. He prayed prayers of thanks for them. **See details on page 16**

Be a Meal-Maker ...

As a way of sharing the love of Jesus in helpful ways, get involved in our new "Make-A-Meal" program.

See details on page 17

AN EXAMPLE OF CHRISTMAS GIFT-GIVING FROM CHRIST...

As we approach the Christmas season and the celebration of His coming to earth, He gives us the example of the gift to give. What gift did He give us on his birthday (setting the example of something He later said, "It is more blessed to give than receive.")?

The most basic gift Jesus gave was the gift of Himself. God came to be with us as one of us.

As you are tempted this month to buy all sorts of material gifts for the people close to you, remember what they really want is your presence - not your presents. Get creative and think of ways to give your presence *throughout the coming year* - not just for a week or so after Christmas...

Some ideas:

Give your spouse the promise of a "date a month"

Give your kids the promise of a special day spent with each of them each month. If they no longer live at home, promise them a visit more often than in the past. Or mark dates each month (week?) when you will call them.

The same thing applies with your parents and your friends. The gift they really want is your presence. It's the example that Jesus set the first Christmas. You will be blessed and so will they.

p.s. Don't forget, that's also the gift Jesus wants for His birthday - and the rest of the year.

Mark your calendars...

November 29, December 6 & 13 @ 7:30

Advent Midweek Worship

"The Gift of Imitation"

It's been said that "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." God doesn't need our compliments, but He has created us to "be imitators of God," (Ephesians 5:1).

The 9th Grade Confirmation class will assist us in imitating Jesus with sermon messages based on their recent Bible study *Just Like Jesus*.

The Igniters' Youth will serve Ice Cream and toppings for a time of fellowship following each service. Please take time to prepare your life for Christmas by attending Advent services.

December 7 @ 7 p.m.

Capital Fundraising (for building) Information Meeting

Pastor Dave Strohschein from the District Office will be here for our initial information meeting about beginning our Capital Fundraising Campaign. This is the exciting "next step" in making a new building a reality.

Everyone interested in learning about this next step Text please come at 7 p.m.

December 3 or December 11 ?

Attention all shoppers:

Looking for a few good shoppers to car pool for a fun day to the Maple Grove/Arbor lakes area. If you are at all interested please contact Tammy Miller @ 354-4161 and let me know if Saturday December 3rd or Monday Dec. 11th would be better.

December 17

Christmas Program and Christmas Dinner

Program: @ 4:00 p.m.

Dinner: @ 5:00 p.m.

(Program practice resumes Saturday, Dec 2, from 9-10:30)

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Schedules & Studies...

Sunday Morning Study :

Sunday, December 3, we finish up our look at the beliefs of other religions.

On December 10 and 17 we travel to the Holy Land via video for a look the geographical, cultural, and political surroundings at the time of Jesus' birth.

Please join us at 9:15 for coffee, baked goods and our study of the teachings of these other belief systems.

"Destination Vision"

Get a vision of God's destination for You

Saturday, November 18

This month "Destination Vision" will have a little different "look." Instead of Sunday night worshippers, we will be Saturday evening servants. Youth will help with the Kristina Scholl benefit.

What Do Missouri Synod Lutherans Believe ?

NEXT CLASS:

TUESDAY, November 14, from 6:30 - 8:00.

We'll take a look at what the Bible teaches about:

Heaven / Stewardship / Church Membership

Plus Living Word goals and organization structure

Please talk to pastor if you have questions about the class or would like to attend.

Confirmation Students:




note: We start at 6:30 the next three Wednesdays

9th Graders: Make sure you have your Advent sermons done

7-8th Graders: Make sure you have memorized the Creed AND Martin Luther's Explanation memorized

December

Living Word Lutheran Church - Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 8:00 Traditional Worship w/Lord's Supper 9:15 Growing in Christ Hour Sunday School 10:30 Contemporary Worship w/Lord's Supper 11:45 Fellowship	4 Pastors' Conference @ Montevideo	5 NOON Bible Study "Mark" @ Geneva Olson's	6 6:00 Meal 6:30 Confirmation 6:30 All Stars 4 Jesus 6:30 Confirmation Parents 7:30 Advent Worship "Gift of Imitation" 8:15 Ice Cream Filwshp	7 6:00 Elders' Team 7:00 Capital Fund-raising info mtg w/Rev Stroschein	8	9
10 8:00 Traditional Worship 9:15 Growing in Christ Hour Sunday School Adult Forum 10:30 Contemporary Worship 11:45 Fellowship	11 Shopping Trip ?	12 NOON Bible Study Mark @ Geneva Olson's	13 6:00 Meal 6:30 Confirmation 6:30 All Stars 4 Jesus 6:30 Picture Imation Parents 7:30 Advent Worship "Gift of Imitation" 8:15 Ice Cream Filwshp	14 2:00 Outreach Team	15 	16 10:00 Christmas Pgm Practice 11:30 S.S. Party 1:00 Caroling
17 8:00 Traditional Worship / L.S. 9:15 Growing in Christ Hour Sunday School / Adult Forum 10:30 Contemporary Worship/LS 11:45 Fellowship 4:00 The JE SSE Tree S.S. Christmas Program 6:00 Christmas Ham Dinner 7:30 Destination Vision Study	18	19 NOON Bible Study Mark @ Geneva Olson's	20	21 7:00 Mission & Ministry Team	22	23 
24 CHRISTMAS EVE 8:00 Traditional Worship 9:15 Growing in Christ Hour Sunday School Adult Forum 10:30 Contemporary Worship 5:00 CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP	25 CHRISTMAS 9:00 Christmas Worship W/Lord's Supper	26 	27	28	29	
31 8:00 Traditional Worship 9:15 Growing in Christ Hour Sunday School Adult Forum: Cabalism 10:30 Contemporary Worship 11:45 Fellowship	1	2 NOON Bible Study "Mark" @ Geneva Olson's	3 6:00 Meal 6:45 Confirmation 6:45 All Stars 4 Jesus 7:00 Confirmation Parents Mtg	4	5	

December 5-Minutes-a-day Devotional Reading

New Reading Program Begins Dec 10: Prophecies of Jesus' 1st & 2nd Coming

Dec 3 Readings this week focus on more of what the Bible says about HEAVEN

Dec 4 Hebrews 9:24-28 _____

Dec 5 Hebrews 11:13-16 _____

Dec 6 Revelation 21:1-7 _____

Dec 7 Revelation 21:22-27 _____

Dec 8 Revelation 22:1-5 _____

Dec 9 1 Peter 1:3-9 _____

Dec 10 Readings this week will focus on prophecies of Christ's First Coming

Dec 11 Genesis 3:15 _____

Dec 12 Deuteronomy 18:15-19 _____

Dec 13 Isaiah 7:14 _____

Dec 14 Isaiah 9:1-7 _____

Dec 15 Isaiah 11:1-10 _____

Dec 16 Isaiah 40:1-11 _____

Dec 17 Readings this week focus on more prophecies of Christ's First Coming

Dec 18 Isaiah 62:10-12 _____

Dec 19 Haggai 2:6-7 _____

Dec 20 Micah 5:2-5 _____

Dec 21 Psalm 2:1-12 _____

Dec 22 Malachi 3:1-5 _____

Dec 23 Luke 1:29-38 _____

Dec 24 Readings this week focus on the fulfillment of Christ's First Coming

Dec 25 Luke 2:1-20 _____

Dec 26 Matthew 1:18-24 _____

Dec 27 John 1:1-14 _____

Dec 28 Galatians 3:26-4:7 _____

Dec 29 Luke 2:21-40 _____

Dec 30 Matthew 2:1-12 _____

Dec 31 Readings this week focus on prophecies of Christ's Second Coming

Jan 1 Matthew 24:36-44 _____

Jan 2 John 14:1-3 _____

Jan 3 Matthew 25:31-46 _____ Picture

Jan 4 Matthew 26:59-68 _____

Jan 5 2 Peter 3:3-10 _____

Jan 6 Revelation 22:12-20 _____

SUMMARIZE WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST'S COMING

REMINDER: Go to www.livingwordlutheran.net

Click on "Pastor's Notes" for Pastor David's comments on the daily Bible readings. You can add your own insights by clicking on "comments" below Pastor's comment

A Minute for Parents...

TEACHING THE FAITH AT CHRISTMAS

God commanded the Israelites to hold yearly celebrations commemorating major things He had done for them. (e.g. Passover). One purpose for these annual celebrations was so they would never forget what God had done (God knows how quickly we forget things He does for us). Another purpose was to force the people to *tell their children* what God had done. (The quickest way to forget what God has done is for one generation to not tell the next generation.)

Although God never commanded us to celebrate Christ's birth, it is a great thing to do each year, because it forces us to stop and think about the great thing God did for us in sending His Son to earth. It also gives us an opportunity to tell (or remind) our kids about Jesus. Here are some tips on ways to make sure your kids don't grow up thinking that Christmas is really about "some really fat chimney sweep who dresses in hideous clothes and never shaves."

Quick tips to help you set an example of what the REAL Christmas celebration is about:

1. In your prayers at supper, include a prayer for each person you received a Christmas card from that day.
2. Invite someone to join you for one or more of the special services (Advent midweek, Wednesdays @ 7:30; Christmas Program/Dinner @ 4:00 on December 17; Christmas Eve Candlelight @ 5:00; Christmas Day @ 9:00) Many people who wouldn't accept an invitation other times, will accept one this time of year.
3. Give your lighting scheme a "Jesus" theme by having a star or cross as the central focus.
4. When decorating the tree, take time to read the Christmas story and have everyone share what Jesus birth means to them. Don't forget to point out some of the aspects of the tree that remind us of Jesus (see the "Questions 4 Pastor" article)
5. Have everyone write down (or draw and color) gifts they will give Jesus, then wrap these in little (or big) boxes and put them under the tree. Open and read them when you open your other gifts
6. Remember: The "perfect" Christmas isn't made perfect by gifts, of food, or traditions, but simply by celebrating Jesus and His presence

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Confirmation Parents...

Our next "Parent" class is this Wednesday, December 5 @ 6:30

We'll talk about the "Five Love Languages of Teenagers." I'll also update you on your student's progress in confirmation.

NOTE: the students will have class on while we are in our parenting session.

The JESSE TREE

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. [2] The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— - Isaiah 11:1-2

The symbol of the Jesse Tree comes from this passage in the book of Isaiah. Each branch on the tree is a story rooted deep in Scripture that tells of the relationship of God and His people. It is a biblical "family tree". (Jesse is the father of King David from whom Jesus was descended)

On **Sunday afternoon, December 17 @ 4:00 p.m.**, Sunday School students will present a special Christmas Program based on the Jesse Tree. There will also be special music and congregational singing. Please join us for The Jesse Tree.

(Don't forget to bring some friends and relatives and invite them to stay for our Christmas Ham Dinner following the program)

December Discipleship Verse...



*"My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in
God my Savior,*

Luke 1:46-47

Be A Secret Paul...

This spring at Living Word we went through a study called "Battle Cry for a Generation." **We were reminded of the need to be involved in the lives of the young people of our congregation and to be for them what a church should be - a caring, extended family.**

One idea that came out of our study was to pair up each young person with an adult who would commit to pray for them daily. As a way of also getting the young people involved it was suggested that we have each one of them commit to pray daily for an adult in the congregation. We then expanded on that idea and decided to include the entire congregation in the prayer program. **"Secret Paul" is the name we have chosen for this "prayer pal" program.**

In coming up with a name for our program we were reminded that the Apostle Paul was noted for praying for other believers every day. Paul prayed for their protection. He prayed for them to grow in their faith. He prayed for them to keep putting their faith into action. He said prayers of thanks for them. **We will seek to follow Paul's example and be in prayer daily for each other.**

The **"Secret"** part of the program name comes from the fact that we will not reveal who is praying for whom until the end of the year at a special banquet. We will be "secret prayer pals" or "Secret Pauls" for each other.

As part of the program **each person will receive a packet of information about the person you are paired up to pray for.** That packet will include a picture, birth date, hobbies/interests and special prayer needs.

That brings us to what we need from you right now: **Please fill out and return the information card you received your mailbox at church.** It will include information you want put in the packet to be given to the "Secret Paul" who will pray for you.

This is a church-wide program, but if you don't want to be included please let us know.

Pictures for the Church Directory and "Secret Paul" program Will be re-scheduled.

Exact dates are pending finding a photographer.

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Make A Meal Program...

Our "Make-A-Meal" program has been one of the most successful ways we have of "Sharing the Love of Jesus in Practical Ways" with people going through a tough time.

We will be making a couple of changes to the program to hopefully make it even easier to share the love of Jesus:

1) You will notice special "PRAYER and CARE" cards in the worship attendance folders. Please use these cards to give us the names of people you know who could use a meal. (You can also use the cards to give prayer requests for Pastor and/or the Prayer Force prayer chain). The cards can be filled out and placed in the offering plate.

2) We would like to put our "Meal-Makers" on a schedule. "Meal makers" can sign up for specific months they would like to be available to make meals. It would work best to have two "Meal Makers" per month. (You can sign up for just one month or as many as you'd like).

So, if you have already signed up to be a "Meal Maker" please pick what month(s) would work best for you. If you have not signed up and would like to be a "Meal Maker" - here's your chance.

Thanks for making a meal and making a difference!

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Thanks to Christopher Huffman

12-24-1998

HOW ABOUT IF INSTEAD OF GIVING YOU EVERYTHING THAT YOU THINK YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS I GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED?

Thank Offerings...

If you haven't already done so . . .

God commanded the Israelites to come to the temple once a year for a joyful celebration of the blessings God provided in the harvest. This harvest festival was called The Feast of Weeks.

Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you.
Deuteronomy 16:10

In keeping with the example of the Israelites, on Thanksgiving Eve we came together for a special joyful celebration of the blessings God has provided us. Each of us were encouraged to bring a special freewill offering in proportion to how God has blessed us this past year. If you weren't able to be there on Thanksgiving Eve, you can still give your ThankOffering the next time you are at worship.

(If each of us thanked God for His blessings by giving Him a special thank-offering of just \$1 for each week this past year we could make up most of our current budget deficit. If we each thanked God by giving back just \$2 for each week of blessings we'd be able to wipe out our deficit - with some left over for special outreach projects in December.)



Please pray about your Thank-offering proportion. Use the special Thank-offering envelopes at church.. Simply place it in the offering along with your regular offering.

For those who have already made their ThankOffering:
Thank You!

"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."

King David in 1 Chronicles 29:14

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Youth Servants...

We have lots of servants waiting to serve (and raise funds for the Igniters' Youth).

Please check this list and then sign up to rent a servant.

Anthony Dauk	Yard work; playing music, "just about anything."
Cole Erickson	Anything you need help with
Peter Erickson	Anything you need help with
Joe Johnson	"Pretty much anything"
Jesse Medalen	Any outside stuff Take someone fishing
Sierra Cobb	Babysit; Petsit; Mow lawn Yard work
Rebecca Dauk & Dani Skaggs	Babysitting; house cleaning; groom animals; (Servant team) Baking; Yard work (no cleaning 'doggy-do')
Alicia Willer	Baby sit; Clean house
Allan Fuglie	Math tutoring "Pretty much anything - with instructions"
Mariah Welsh	Babysit Clean house Laundry Pet sit Yard Work
Bryson Wachter	Anything you need help with.
Pastor Dave	Paint a room Take someone to a Twins game
Chuck Weflen	Haul stuff in pickup truck



We need funds for our 2007 National Youth Gathering, so when you 'rent a servant' it's a Win-Win Situation: You not only get some work done, The Igniters' get funds for stuff like the National Youth Gathering. Thanks!