



# **MONONA MESSENGER**

## **JANUARY 2019**

### **+ A Truly Blessed New Year +**

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

May peace and joy abound in your lives in the afterglow of the Christmas season as we begin a new year and remember how Jesus came into the world as our rescuer from sin and death!

Giving is the language of love, and the Christmas season (as well as all seasons) epitomizes God's awesome love and giving to us. God knew what we needed the most, so, at this time approximately 2,000 years ago, He gave us the most indescribable gift: *"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons"* (Galatians 4:4). As we start a new year afresh God's gift of His Son is the greatest gift that we will ever receive. God's gift truly keeps-on giving for, through Jesus, we receive full rights as children of God throughout the year.

As God's children, we know that Jesus is the reason why we live and move and have our being. We rejoice knowing that God has given us His Son. God has sent Him into the world to be the only gift that we truly will ever need. Jesus took on our own flesh and walked among us, and He willingly laid down His life in order to save our lives for eternity.

How do we respond to what God has given us? Shouldn't we be asking, "What have I given to Him?" Certainly, we don't go to the malls to shop for Jesus, but we do know that we please Him by our faithful acts of love and obedience. The best gift that we can possibly give Him is to show Him our love by faithfully and obediently doing what He asks of us. Our Heavenly Father is pleased when we seek to please Him by doing His will. In fact, we do His will by merely allowing Him to work in us. As the Apostle Paul wrote, *"I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13).

As your pastor, I want to thank you for your generous giving to our Lord for the mission and ministry here at Monona Ev. Lutheran in 2017 and very much look forward to it continuing in 2018. As I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, giving is the language of love, and your love is seen clearly as you give so generously of your time, talents, and money—for the glory of God our Father and the enrichment of the Gospel in this place and at this time. You should be proud of yourselves for God is doing great things through you. Because of your generosity, we are able to share the Good News of our Savior, born on Christmas Day, crucified on Good Friday, and risen again on Easter as our Savior—a gift to share with so many people.

May God's blessings be upon all of you as you rejoice in what we've been given, and stay focused on the most indescribable gift, the gift of Jesus.

Hope your Christmas season was a blessed one and continues into the New Year!

*Pastor Nowak*

## January 2019 Generosity Thoughts

SANCTIFICATION, VOCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

### DECEMBER 31/January 1 – *Eve of the Name/Name of Jesus*

Luke 2:21 “*And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.*” There it is: the shortest Gospel lesson of the whole Church Year. It is for the festival of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus.

What more do you need to know than the Name of Jesus? The Lord saves. That’s who Jesus is: the Lord who saves us sinners. That simple Gospel message is the foundation of our faith and the strength to live out our faith in action.

### January 6 – *Epiphany*

Matthew 2:11 “*And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.*” Worship and giving of gifts go together. This makes sense because God is the great Giver of every good gift, and we worship Him and desire to grow into His image. We receive His gifts in worship and then, being conformed to the likeness of His image, we imitate His generosity.

### January 13 – *Baptism of Our Lord*

Luke 3:21 “*Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened....*” We know why the people were baptized, but why was Jesus baptized? He didn’t need repentance or forgiveness. The answer is that He did it for us. The reason God sent His Son into the world is to fulfill all righteousness for us, to do what we could not do. The whole of Jesus’ life, everything He did and said was one great offering to the Father in our stead to fulfill all righteousness for us. With our righteousness fulfilled in Jesus and given to us in Baptism – our hearts now overflow with thanksgiving and praise.

### January 20 – *Second Sunday after the Epiphany*

John 2:3 “*When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’*” Behold the faith of Mary: she sees a problem and simply lays it before her Son and Lord, “They have no wine.” She does not offer a proposed solution, she does not demand, she simply states her need and waits for the Lord’s response. She trusts that the Lord is a giver, and she knows that He always provides. May such a faith be ours.

### January 27 – *Third Sunday after the Epiphany*

1 Corinthians 12:16 “*And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body.*” The Lord has called each of us individually and given each of us unique gifts. He has made our whole lives holy in our Baptism and has called us to a life together in the Church, His body. You are a part of that body, and that body needs you and the gifts the Lord has given you. This is your holy calling from the Lord.

**St. Stephen’s Food Pantry:** There is always a need for food pantry items. Next time you are shopping, add a couple of things to your cart for the Food Pantry. Donations of food, personal items, paper products, baby food and diapers are always gratefully received.

**House of Thrift News:** The store is located at 201 Cottage Grove Road. It is open from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm Tuesday through Saturday and from noon to 6:00 pm on Mondays. Donations are welcome during these hours. Please call them at 223-1228 if you have any questions or would like to become part of the *House of Thrift* team. Members of Monona work on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month.

**Ronald McDonald:** *Pop Tab Collection:* Don’t forget we are still collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Just put them in the container on the counter of the Welcoming Area. RMHC collects pull tabs since they have significant value in the recycling industry and they do not have the storage to collect cans.

RMHC collects pull tabs for two reasons:

1. Pull tabs have significant value in the recycling industry as they represent the purest form of aluminum.
2. RMHC does not have the storage space to collect cans.

**2019 Flower Chart** is hanging up on the wall in front of the office. Please consider placing fresh flowers on the altar in honor or in memory of someone special.

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### **Holy Humor**

Sunday after church, a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt."

Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for tea and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about.

He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?"

A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy.

"Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked.

"You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven... "

**Wednesday Morning Bible Study** continues at 10 a.m. in our Library. We are studying the book of Exodus. Everyone is welcome, there is no homework required, and you need not attend every session.

**The next Healing Service** will be held again on Sunday, **January 13<sup>th</sup>**, after the service. If you have a burden or sickness that you would like to commend to the Lord, this would be a great time to do so. Copies of the service can be found on the table in the narthex for your convenience.

**Volunteers Wanted:** Thank you to those who have signed up to volunteer. However, we could use a few more people to volunteer to be put on the schedule as an **usher, reader, greeter, assist with communion or helping on the altar guild**. The more people we have, the less times you will be put on the schedule. Please consider volunteering. There is a sign-up sheet in the Welcoming Area or call the church office (222-7071) with any questions anytime between 8 am and 1 pm; Monday through Thursday. Thanks.



Anneliese

**Monona Messenger:** If you have not already done so, please let us know how you would like to receive your Monona Messenger. Your choices are:

1. Pick up at church
2. Be notified by email when on the website
3. Have it sent to your email as an attachment
4. Mailed out to you
5. Remove me from the mailing

Thanks for your cooperation. Anneliese

**Updated Directory:** Please let me know of any changes to your address, email, phone number, etc. I would like to put out a new directory for the New Year.

**Sunday Morning Bible Study:** Please join us on Sunday's after the service as we continue to study the *Book of Revelation*.

**Portals of Prayer** is a great little devotional book that you can use for daily reading. The January, February, and March issue is available on the tables in the Narthex and in the Welcoming Area. Feel free to pick up one for yourself and/or share with a friend.

**LWML:** The next LWML gathering here at Monona will be on Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9 am. Visit the LWML-SWD website for information about the **2019 Winter Getaway** at the Wintergreen Resort in the Wisconsin Dells on February 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Entering the hospital?** Even if the hospital knows that Monona is your church home, we are not notified. Please have someone call the office.

*Birthday Celebrations in January*

<i>Gary Thompson</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Mark Steingraber</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Jana Hoffmann</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Norma Atwood</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Marie Schlender</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Marcel Lindert</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Lori Parisi</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>John McNeal</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Jeanette Schellpfeffer</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Isaac Loss</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Mike Reinholtz</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Ethan Bartlett</i>	<i>28</i>

*Congratulations and God's Blessings!*



**Blood Drive:** There will be a blood drive here at Monona on Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 1:00 pm until 6:00 pm. Please consider donating. If you are able to help with the blood drive, please contact Ann Rubin at 221-1495.

**Sunday School:** The next session of **Sunday** school will begin at 10:15 am on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Hope to see all children there. We are anxiously waiting to hear where all of our shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child ended up. Which country do you think they are going? *Sunday school teachers*

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**Prayer Chain**

Life presents challenges to all of us, but sometimes those challenges can feel like *it's* just too much. If you are experiencing situations, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, call our Prayer chain. You may give your prayer requests to Angie TerMaat at 608-246-9608, Susan Bartlett at 608-437-5765, or the church office at 222-7071 or call if you would like to become a part of our Prayer chain.

**“Hear my prayer, O Lord;  
listen to my cry for mercy.”**

# *Steward Builders*

*A newsletter to help you grow as a steward.*

The purpose of this newsletter is to share God's Word so that our members will better understand who we are to be and what we are to do in the light of the Scriptures. It is our hope that this monthly publication will help you grow in your relationship with the Lord and as a Christian steward.

## **Giving that Pleases Jesus**

In His Word, Jesus speaks and teaches a great deal about our attitudes toward money. He knows that money and possessions are a very necessary part of our lives. He also knows that money along with the things we acquire are more likely than anything else to replace God as the love of our lives. The love of money and possessions can become the focus of our hearts, and, if we succumb to the lure of money, our love and worship will be directed toward money.



To illustrate the importance of having a proper attitude toward money, handling it responsibly, and giving it generously, we find Jesus, in His last recorded teachings before His arrest and crucifixion, in the temple treasury watching people as they gave their offerings. Mark 12:41-42 tells us that Jesus saw the *“rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.”* He commended the widow because she in her poverty

gave all she had, whereas the rich gave out of their abundance. He saw the rich give large amounts, but He also knew that their love of money and possessions controlled their lives so they gave only a small portion of what they could have given. In contrast, the poor widow was motivated by Jesus' love, grace, and mercy to offer her gift out of gratitude to Him. She placed her entire trust in Jesus. Jesus desires us to have that same trust that would enable our generous giving. He wants us to acknowledge that He is the creator and owner of all good things. He wants us to understand the depth of His love that motivated Him to come to suffer and die for our sins so we can live abundantly now and live forever with Him in Heaven.



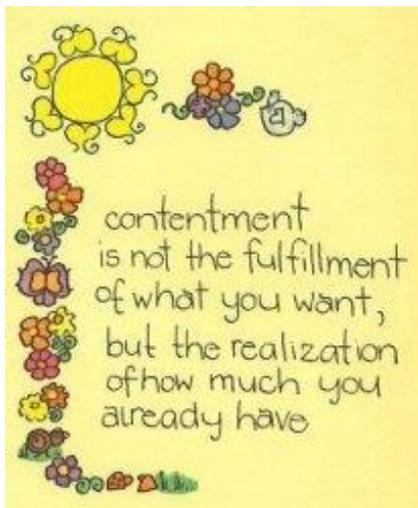
Knowing that Jesus is watching what we give will make us feel either good or uncomfortable. Jesus not only knows what we give, but He also knows what we keep back for ourselves. From this story, we understand that it is not the size of the gift that matters but rather how the amount that we give compares with our ability to give. We know the widow gave all while the rich contributed merely from their abundance. If we keep back much for ourselves, our giving does not reflect our ability to give. Jesus wants our giving to give evidence of our love, gratitude, and dependence on Him, and

our generosity, or the amount we give, should represent our ability to give. Through our God-given faith, may we all seek to please Jesus through our giving.

## Being Content

True contentment will never be found in the things of the world. God has given us that which alone can provide for us true peace of heart, true contentment. He has given us His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Through what Jesus has done for us on the cross and by the open tomb, we have the forgiveness of sins as well as life with Christ, here on earth and forever in heaven.

When we give more emphasis to our blessings of body and soul, we will give less emphasis to the things of the world. Count your blessings from God. You'll find they are countless! None of us deserves any of His blessings, especially the gift of His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior!



## Worth a Smile

A pastor asked a youngster: "Johnny, do you know where little boys go if they don't put their money in the collection plate?"

"Yes, pastor," the boy answered.

"They go to the movies."

One Sunday in church a little boy took off his tie and put it into the offering plate. "What are you doing?" asked the mother.

What the minister said," answered the little boy. "He told us to give our ties and offerings."

## Transformed Stewards

A steward is one who cares for something that belongs to another. Christians use the word stewardship as a reminder that all things belong to God. Even talents, gifts, and abilities that we call our own are His and are to be used according to His commands. The motivation for returning back to God what He has entrusted to us is a sense of duty, to be sure. But true stewardship in the life of a Christian grows out of much more. As the Gospel shines in our hearts, our hearts are changed from a path of self-interest. We are transformed into loving, serving, and giving people who live lives unto God in faith.



## Jesus Changes Us

The Gospel changes people's lives. People's hearts, ambitions, and desires are changed when they come into contact with Jesus. As an example, Matthew, one of Jesus disciples, was a wealthy tax collector. When Jesus told Matthew, "Follow Me," Matthew got up from his tax collector's booth and followed Him (Matthew 9:9). There was no hesitation from Matthew. He willingly left his wealthy lifestyle and followed Jesus. Is Jesus affecting the way you live your life? Do people see a difference in you? Are you using your time and money differently?

**Blessings on your Stewardship Journey!**

## MONONA MESSENGER

Newsletter of:

Monona Ev. Lutheran Church, LC-MS

4411 Monona Dr.

Monona, WI 53716

### Address Service Requested



#### **Divine Worship**

Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Monday Evening 6:30 p.m.

#### **Communion Services**

1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

Midweek Lenten & Advent

Vespers 6:30 p.m.

NO Monday Worship on Legal Holidays

#### **Sunday Christian Education Hour**

Adult Bible Classes 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School 10:15 am Sept. - May

**Pastor:** Rev. Thomas Nowak

**Office Phone:** 608.222.7071

**E-mail:** [mlc-ms@hotmail.com](mailto:mlc-ms@hotmail.com)

**Website:** [www.mononalutheran.org](http://www.mononalutheran.org)

#### **February 2019**

Messenger Deadline

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019**

NO LATE ARTICLES

Please submit articles by this date.

Email to: [mlc-ms@hotmail.com](mailto:mlc-ms@hotmail.com)

or leave a copy on the office desk

#### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

“Loving Christ, Serving Others through Preaching, Teaching, Reaching”