



MONONA MESSENGER ***DECEMBER 2024***

Greetings in the name of our newborn King, Jesus!

This past year seemed to pass too quickly, although it seems we are eager and ready for a change. As this New Year begins to unfold, we are hopeful that we won't again experience some unprecedented economic turmoil as we did in 2024. Last year was a difficult year for many people. With the economy, inflation, and a wild stock market with many people losing their jobs. It was hard to imagine how things could change and seem to unravel so quickly.

In this changing world, the only constant is God Himself. In Malachi 3:6 God said, "I the Lord do not change." God remains faithful to His people. Regardless of how difficult things become, God promises never to leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Only God's plans and purposes will last. In Isaiah 40:8 we read, "the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." The world may seem to be collapsing around us, but He is our rock and refuge.

Thank you for your unwavering support of our church. With God's strength and your involvement, our church will continue to be a beacon of hope in a fallen and dark world. Through your commitment and financial support, we offer God's peace, joy, and comfort to needy and desperate people. In this challenging time, God may be presenting each of us with an opportunity to reach out to people who are hurting. They need to hear how much God loves them and wants the best for them. I hope all of us will share God's love within us with others especially during this Christmas season.

Such times as these is where faith always is tempted to give up—not under the influence of angles and worship and hymn singing, but out there when the days become gray with a constant sameness that would overshadow the glory of God. Hardships may cause us to raise an eyebrow when the messengers of God come to us. And in the fretful contacts in which people shove us around, we begin to shove back.

Right here is the real hurt of life, when God's promises don't seem to apply to us and God no longer appears to have anything to do with us. And the only answer from God to it all is that we go once again and find His Son wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

There is where WE behold God's glory in the highest and His peace WITH US—there in the baby, the Savior who is born to US.

In the love of the Christ Child,
Pastor Nowak

Birthday Celebrations in December

Harlan Simmons	12 th
Michelle Wallestad	15 th
Brian Culles	17 th
Tim Rubin	17 th
Jess MacLeod	22 nd
Dave Krivanek	23 rd

Congratulations & God's Blessings!!



The Lutheran Layman: The fall issue from Lutheran Hour Ministries is available on the tables in the Narthex and Welcoming Area. Check out how they have created resources for anyone and everyone to connect with Jesus and spread hope and faith throughout a community.

Calvary Lutheran Chapel:

The campus ministry for UW-Madison at Calvary Lutheran Chapel provides lunch to the congregation after services, provided typically by volunteers from the local LCMS churches in the area. We are looking for volunteer groups to serve lunch immediately following services on Sundays. The services are at 11 am on Sunday with lunch immediately following.

If you or anyone in your congregation would be interested, please call me at Calvary, 608-255-7214 or email me at mike@calvarymadison.org so we can set up specific dates. We would be looking for volunteers from late January through the middle of May to serve food for roughly 30 people.

Thank you so much for your help!

Sincerely,

Mike Helland

Administrative Assistant
Calvary Lutheran Chapel



Lutheran Women in Mission

LWML:

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 12th at 9:15 am at Steingraber's house. Our Bible study will be from the LWML fall quarterly, page 17 – ***A Reason to Celebrate***. Please join us as we study God's word and fellowship with one another. *Ellen*

Upcoming Events

2025 LWML SWD Winter Getaway

January 31st – February 1st, 2025

Location: Wintergreen Hotel and Conference Center

Guest Speaker: *Rev. Michael Salemink – Executive Director of Lutherans for Life*

LWML 2025 Convention

June 26th – 29th, 2025

Theme: Growing in God's Grace

Location: Omaha, Nebraska

More information can be found on the LWML-SWD website.

Mark732 Deaf Outreach:

You are encouraged to support the Deaf ministry by putting a donation in one of the envelopes found on the table in the Welcoming Area.



Journey to Bethlehem

Come and see *Journey to Bethlehem* at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Sun Prairie, WI. *Journey to Bethlehem* is an immersive dramatic experience telling the story of the birth of Christ, featuring over 75 costumed characters and live animals lining the streets of ancient Bethlehem. This event is on December 7th and 8th, and you can stop by anytime between 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm. More information can be found at bethlehemlc.org/jtb

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.



Rise and Shine

In his Gospel John wrote, *"In [Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of men"* (John 1:4). The prophet Isaiah some 700 years earlier foretold the Messiah by saying, *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn"* (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Darkness covers the earth—darkness so thick we cannot see our own way, but Isaiah encourages us, *"The Lord rises upon [us]."* No longer do we

grope our way. No longer are we left to our own wisdom and resources. No

longer do we live in despair. No, we *"Arise,"* and *"shine,"* for our light has come upon us!

The night of His birth, the sky was filled with light as the angels brought the message of good news to the shepherds. The bright star in the East continued to shine to guide the Wise Men to the Christ Child that they might worship Him.

Jesus, the Light of the World, continues to draw us to Himself, and, as we reflect the light of Christ in our lives, others will see that light and be drawn to Him.



John the Baptist, sent from God, witnessed to the light of Christ. As individual Christians, we have a responsibility to do what John did, to testify to *"the true light that gives light to every man"* (John 1:9). Each of us has been individually gifted and equipped to work together within the whole body of Christ that we might testify to Christ, *"the light [Who] shines in the darkness."* (John 1:5).

As you reflect during this Advent season on all that Jesus has done for you, pray that the same grace and love **that moved**

John the Baptist to tell others about Jesus move your heart to share the Good News with others.

More Blessed to Give

Have you ever become really excited about giving a gift to someone? For a birthday or at Christmas you were so excited that you could hardly wait for the person receiving the present to open it. Do you remember how proud you felt when the recipient opened the gift and was so happy and thankful to receive it? Then, when you saw that person use or wear your present, you beamed with pleasure because you had given it.

Giving gifts can be fun, and it is an activity that as Christians we are called to do. Jesus said in Acts 20:35, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* If you have had the experience related above, you know what Jesus meant.

Giving is part of life. Parents constantly give to their children. Teachers give care, attention, wisdom, and information. God created things in nature for your use and enjoyment that keep on giving: the sun gives energy, the clouds rain down moisture, cornfields share their nutrients, and apple trees bear their fruit.

God Who loves you receives more joy in giving to you than you can imagine. He knows you by name. He gives you food to eat, clothes to wear, and a warm place to sleep. It is God Who has given you life and the world to live in.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote that God also has a plan for you—a plan to

prosper you, to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

God uses us to help provide for the needs of others so that we, too, may experience the joy of giving. As His stewards, we are merely His conduits through which He feeds the hungry, shelters the homeless, and provides clothes for the naked. Through His grace, He will give us all that we need so that we *“will abound in every good work”* (2 Corinthians 9:8).



Prayer for Christmas Day

Dear Heavenly Father, today all of Christendom sings with jubilation, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” How incomprehensible the love You have for us that would cause You to send Your only Son to earth to bring us joy! Yet we confess that we often are mired in discouragement and grief. While looking at our present circumstances, we forget that You have gone before us on the roads we travel, and You are with us to take us through all the difficult passages of life. Suffering with our various losses, we forget that You, in the Person of Your beloved Son, have come and are still with us today to bring us abundant joy. Forgive us for our lack of trust in You. Help us to keep in our hearts every day the joy of this holy day and to share that joy with all we meet. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

Blessings on your Stewardship Journey!

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 or call the church office at 608-222-7071 or if you would like to become a part of our Prayer chain.

"Hear my prayer, O Lord; Listen to my cry for mercy."

Lutheran Hour Ministries:

Please feel free to pick up one of the *Advent Devotions* from Lutheran Hour Ministries. This year's devotion is *"Come, Let Us Adore Him"*. You can find copies on the table in the Narthex and also on the table in the Welcoming Area.

Sign Language Class:

Class meets every Wednesday at St. Paul beginning at 7 p.m. New and returning students are always welcomed to the class.

Portals of Prayer is a great little devotional book that you can use for daily reading. The *January to March 2025* issue has arrived and can be found on the tables in the Narthex and Welcoming Area. Feel free to take one home and/or share with a friend.

Loving and Losing:

We continue meeting on the second Monday of each month with a Bible study at 10:00 am for those that have lost a loved one—especially widows and widowers. We meet again on Monday, December 9th, with Pastor Nowak leading the group.

Flower Calendar: If you would like to give flowers on a particular Sunday for a special occasion or just to bring beauty to the sanctuary, please sign up on the Sign-Up sheet hanging in front of the office.

Any Changes??

Please let the church office know of any changes you may have in your phone number/s; email address/s; change of household dynamics; changed your name; or any information we need for the church directory. We would like to put out an updated directory at the beginning of 2025.

Partnership Events in December

Launch Day!

There will be a **Partnership Launch** Worship service with Communion on Sunday, December 8th.

All participating four churches will have their service at Immanuel beginning at 9:00 a.m.

A **Partnership Council** meeting will also take place on Sunday, December 8th at Immanuel beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Advent Services

St. Paul Church will host the Wednesday evening worship services with Communion beginning at 6:00pm on the following days:

December 4th

December 11th

December 18th

Carols & Candlelight

The partnership is holding a *Carols and Candlelight* service again this year on Thursday, December 19 @ 7:00 pm at **Immanuel**. This is an



Immanuel tradition that was opened up to the whole partnership last year. It is a service of carols and readings, full of all sorts of music. This year, we are also planning to include the contributions of the children of the partnership. The Ringing Badgers Bell Choir, under the direction of Mark Bloedow, will also be joining us. We hope you will join us too for a night filled with carols, bells, candle light, and the reading of the Christmas story.

Christmas Day

Immanuel Church will host a worship service with communion beginning at 9:00a.m.

New Year's Eve

Monona Church will host a worship service with communion beginning at 6:00p.m.

Everyone from the Partnership Churches is encouraged to attend one or all of the services and special events.

January Messenger articles are due on or before Tuesday, December 17th, 2024. Please email to: mhc-ms@hotmail.com OR leave a copy on the office desk.

MONONA MESSENGER
Monona Ev. Lutheran Church, LC—MS
4411 Monona Dr.
Monona, WI 53716
Address Service Requested

DECEMBER
2024



Divine Worship

Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Communion Services

1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

Midweek Lenten & Advent

Vespers 6:00 p.m.

Sunday Christian Education Hour

Sunday School 10:15 am Sept. - May

Pastor: Rev. Thomas Nowak

Office Phone: 608.222.7071

E-mail: mlc-ms@hotmail.com

Website: www.mononalutheran.org

Stewardship Thought

Our Gifts to Jesus

Christmas is the gift-giving season. In spite of our best efforts, it is often difficult to find just the right gift for every person on our lists. God had no such problems. He knew exactly what each person needed. In fact, He knows our needs better than we know them, and He knew them before we were ever born. The timing of His most indescribable gift was perfect. *“When the time had fully 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). Now, that’s a gift that can’t



be topped! And it’s the gift that truly keeps on giving! How do we respond to what God has given us? Shouldn’t we be asking, “What have I given to Him?” 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 honored when we seek to please Him by doing His will. In this Advent and Christmas season, remember that, even though we don’t gift-wrap presents for Jesus, we can give Him the gifts of love and obedience.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, thank You for leaving the glories of heaven to be my Savior. Thank You for Your love that teaches me to love. Grant me faith so I can follow Your ways and be obedient to Your Word. I ask Your blessings on this Christmas season. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.*

Blessings on your stewardship journey!

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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