

TIDINGS OF HOPE

DECEMBER 2022



HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
LADYSMITH, WISCONSIN

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration

December 2022

Thoughts on Advent

By Pastor Christopher Martin

As the years go by, I have come to have a great appreciation for the season of Advent. While it seems that the world around us keeps wanting to get a jump on Christmas earlier and earlier every year, I appreciate how Advent, in what is such a busy time of the year, forces us to slow down, tune out everything that we're hearing in our world, and focus on the Word that points us to the promises of the comings of Jesus. His coming in the manger in Bethlehem, His coming to us today through the Word and in the Sacraments, and in His promised coming on the Last Day. As we take the time to gather for worship around God's Word this Advent season, I want to draw your attention to one of my favorite Advent and Christmas narratives from the Gospels. I encourage you to take out your Bible and read Matthew 1:18-25. I will be preaching on this text on Sunday, December 18th, the last Sunday in Advent, but I want to bring it to your attention now because I really believe it helps set the scene for us as we soon begin our Advent journey.

This account focuses on Joseph. When Matthew first introduces us to him, Joseph has plans for his life. He is established in his career path as a carpenter. He's betrothed to Mary. He's preparing his home so that she can fully become his wife. If you were to meet him at the beginning of this text, he's confident he has his life all planned out. That is, until he receives some earth-shattering news. Mary's expecting a child, and he isn't the father of this child. And the story that Mary has just adds to the turmoil that Joseph is experiencing. Mary is telling him this child isn't the product of adultery, this child was conceived in her by the power of the Holy Spirit, because this child is the Son of God, the promised Messiah. While Mary is declaring to Joseph the Word of the Lord in its truth and purity, Joseph, based on his experience in the everyday world,

(Pastor's column, cont.)

doesn't believe it at first. He believes what his eyes see, that Mary has been unfaithful to him, and now he's faced with a choice. Turn her in for the sin of adultery, which would result in her being stoned to death, or divorce her quietly, hoping this entire thing will blow over and eventually, he can pick up the pieces of his shattered heart, and move on with life.

But, that's not where God leaves Joseph. He sends an angel, a messenger, to declare the truth: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-22) From that moment on, Joseph's life changes again. He continues with his original plans of preparing his home, taking Mary to be his wife, and they will be the earthly parents of the child, Jesus, our Savior. It still isn't what Joseph had originally planned, but what God intended for his life was much different. Joseph will play an important part of God's plan of salvation as the guardian of the Savior.

Now what does this have to do with you and me, as we approach Advent and Christmas, 2022? It's been over 2,000 years since this all happened. And yet, you and I can relate to Joseph quite well. We all had plans for our lives when this calendar year began. You had things you expected to happen over the course of this year. And, for many of us, what happened to those plans? Our work situations didn't play out the way we hoped. Our health, or that of someone we love, took a turn we were not expecting. An important relationship in your life became strained, or is broken, perhaps beyond repair. You're struggling in your marriage or with your children. Many of us have lost loved ones to death, and in some cases, it came suddenly, when we were not expecting it to happen, and we're struggling to pick up the pieces and move on in the midst of our grief. For these and many other reasons, we're struggling as we enter this season where our world wants us to be all about joy and happiness, finding it in things like gift-giving or warm wishes.

If that's all we have, then, friends, we're going to be disappointed. That's why instead, I want to encourage you to slow down a bit in your rush to get to Christmas. Make worship during Advent a priority, especially if you haven't been here in a while. Set aside

(Pastor's column, cont.)

everything in your mind that is distracting you from what God wants to accomplish through His Word when you are here, whether it's a squabble with another church member, a bad experience you had in the past, grief that's unbearable, or whatever it is that is keeping you away. Just come, set all of that aside, and listen to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit as you hear and ponder the Word of the Lord that we hear during Advent. It may call you to change. It may call you to take a closer look at your own life, and the sin within it, and take steps to eradicate it from your daily life. It may call you to find ways to reach out to your neighbor, and take a bold step in joining Jesus on His mission of redemption as you build relationships with others, or engage others you already know in your daily life. It may mean embracing whatever change is there, knowing that just as God had other plans for Joseph in his life, God perhaps has other plans for yours, too. That doesn't mean that the struggles you have will magically go away. But what it means is that, as with Joseph, God's plans for you may be bigger than you ever imagined possible. It won't always be easy, but the eternal rewards are an inner peace and joy the world cannot give.

As you go through your Advent journey this year, I look forward to seeing you join us for worship at church as we listen to God's Word, rejoice in the good news our Savior is born in Bethlehem, and look for ways we can share the joy of Christmas with others in our world.

Operation Christmas Child

The Operation Christmas Child project is now complete at Hope Lutheran Church. We have forwarded 55 boxes, which will be sent to Chicago and then distributed throughout the world to children who may have never received a Christmas gift before. Each child will also be receiving 12 lessons to teach them about Jesus Christ, who they may not have heard about before. Thank you to Hope Lutheran Youth for all the boxes that were packed, families who packed their own boxes, and to everyone who provided the \$10 shipping fee for each box. We were able to track some of our boxes from last year (2021) and found that children in Malawi and Columbia received our gifts.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Saturday, December 24
4:00pm & 9:00pm

Christmas Day Service
Sunday, December 25
9:00am

Community Christmas Dinner

St. John's Lutheran Church will be hosting a FREE Community Christmas Dinner for families in need and for those who will not be able to celebrate with family and friends. This event will be held on Christmas Day, December 25 from 11:30am-1:00pm at St. John's Lutheran Church (515 College Ave W). RSVPs are requested but not required. To RSVP, please call 715-532-5780.

Mission Statement

Hope Lutheran Church is commissioned to make disciples, commanded to love God and others, and committed to serve.



Hope Lutheran Church Women



Christmas Party: The HLCW will hold monthly meeting on Thursday, December 15 at 9:30am. All women of Hope are welcome!

Quilting: The quilting group will NOT meet in December but quilt squares are available to be sewn at home. If you have questions, please contact Karen Skeels (715-452-5444).

Socks & Underwear Collection: The HLCW will again be collecting underwear and socks to be distributed to area schools and shelters. Leggings and sweatpants (children's size 4-7) will also be accepted. Donations of new items can be brought to the church and placed on or under the tree in the narthex.



Christmas Cookie Walk

Saturday, December 3

10:00-11:30am

Dozens of varieties of Christmas cookies sold by the pound, Scandinavian pastries, lefse, julekaga and Norwegian meatballs will be for sale.





★ Christmas Pageant ★

The children's Christmas Pageant will be held during the 9:00am worship service on Sunday, December 18. All children are welcome to participate. Rehearsals will take place during the Sunday School time (10:15-11:00am) on December 4 & 11. If you have questions, please contact Heidi Jo Sovacool.

Adult Education & Fellowship Opportunities

Bible Study: The women's Bible study on the book of Revelation will meet on Sunday, December 4 at 10:30am.

Book Discussion: This group will meet on Sunday, December 18 at 10:20am to discuss The Christmas Promise by Donna VanLiere.

Meal of the Month: The December Meal of the Month will be held at La Casa Mexican on Tuesday, December 13 at 11:30am. Please contact Kathy Ducommun if you have questions.

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study: Men of Hope meet each Thursday at 7:00am the Ladysmith Family Restaurant for breakfast, fellowship and a study of the week's lectionary readings. All men of Hope are welcome!

Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry Committee has been busy making plans for 2023. Upcoming events include a movie night in January, skiing/tubing at Christie Mountain in February, and a game night in March. Please watch for more information coming soon!

December Meetings

Church Council – Tuesday, December 20 at 6:30pm
Adult Education & Fellowship – Friday, December 2 at 12:00pm
Cong. Care & Outreach – Wednesday, December 14 at 3:00pm
Property – Tuesday, December 13 at 6:00pm
Social Ministries – Tuesday, December 6 at 3:30pm
Stewardship & Finance – Tuesday, December 13 at 5:30pm
Worship & Music – Tuesday, December 6 at 6:00pm
Youth Ministry – Tuesday, December 6 at 5:30pm



Poinsettias

We will once again be using poinsettias to decorate the church for Christmas. If you would like to donate a plant, please complete the form and return it to the church office no later than Monday, December 19. Plants should be brought to the church by Thursday, December 22.

Name: _____

Phone #: _____ # of plants: _____

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____



Deadlines...

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the January newsletter are due in the church office by December 15.

The preferred method of submission is via email (hlcladysmith@gmail.com) or electronic file. Items may also be left in the office mailbox or dropped off at the office during office hours.

Change of Address and/or Phone Number?

If you have had a change in address or phone number, please notify the church office of these changes. Also, in an effort to improve communication we are seeking email addresses for members of the congregation. If you would like to have your email address added to the list, please email the church office at hlcladysmith@gmail.com.

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Christopher Martin
Church Secretary	Bonnie Billings
Custodian	Rosemary Warwick
Organists	Lisa Borman Karen Tappon Terry Wedwick

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Ladysmith, WI 54848
Church Phone: 715-532-7739
E-Mail Address: hlcladysmith@gmail.com
Website: hlcladysmith.org



DECEMBER

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | |
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| 1 Dawson Barber
Bill Kaul
Olyver Soviak | 17 Amanda James
Taylor Sokolowski
Tyler Warwick |
| 3 Nicole Weber | 18 Dan Krisik
Doug Moore, Sr.
Adrianna Hanaman |
| 4 Danita Everett
Karen Skeels
Terry Wedwick | 19 Robbie LaBlonde |
| 5 Dylan Harka
Jake Nelson | 20 Alison Moffat
Zachary Martin
Doug Thompson |
| 6 Kaleb Segebrecht
JJ Titera | 21 Jana Nyhagen |
| 7 Joe Kesan
Melody Larson | 22 Chad Kaul |
| 8 David Cooley
Lori Gorsegner
Jack Pederson | 23 Mary Barker |
| 9 Cadence Calkins
Hans Schultz | 24 Kelsey Lemke-Howard
Jason Murray
Joyce Tomczak |
| 10 Gary Nelson
Kathy Peterson | 26 Sharon Kaul
Yvonne Curik
Bill Rands
Dylan Stoneberg |
| 11 Mary Kauphusman
Ned Lindberg
Emma vanDoorn | 27 Hazel Peterson |
| 12 Sally Anderson | 29 Max Bentley
Jeffrey DeWolf
Riley Vetterkind |
| 13 Priscilla Barber
Erik Nelson
Robin Tuma | 30 Brian Curik
Jennifer Kienast
Christie McGinn |
| 14 Kylee Becker | 31 Lisa Barfknecht
Brian Buchholz
Sawyer Solberg |
| 15 Louise Boller | |

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| 4 Eric & Carol Hillan | 26 Charlie & Chris Holtebeck |
| 21 Eric & Sherry Pederson | |



4	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Aileen Tauchen, Irene Titera Irene Titera Bradon Martin Tanner Davis
11	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Gordie & Bev Dukerschein Dukerschein Linda Campbell Izzy Solberg
18	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Aileen Tauchen, Irene Titera Jana Nyhagen George Lawrence Briley Burmeister
24-4pm	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Don & Judy Soyryng Bonnie Billings Bev Dukerschein Izzy Solberg
24-10pm	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Dave Borman George Lawrence George Lawrence Tanner Davis
25	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Irene Titera Irene Titera Linda Campbell