

# Good News of Peace

December 2016 A.D.

A Caring Family ✚ Reaching Out ✚ Sharing Christ's Love ✚ Teaching God's Word!

## From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Well, 'tis the season. Just like that, it is winter in Northern Michigan. And even though it doesn't feel like it, at least to me, the Thanksgiving holiday is upon us this week. And just three days later, the start of another Advent season. And before we know it, it will be Christmas. And then the New Year.

Of course, for advertisers, retailers, and the Hallmark Channel on television, the holiday season has been well underway for at least a couple of weeks already. All of that always comes far too early for my liking. This year, however, it was especially difficult to reconcile all of that with the fact that I was able to work out in the yard in short sleeves during the third week of November.

But ready or not, it is indeed time to turn our thoughts to the Advent season, which helps to turn our thoughts and hearts to the true meaning of Christmas. Which is not, by the way, holiday decorations, shopping lists, holiday movies, or even Lexus's "December to Remember Sales Event," which a radio ad I heard this morning suggests is what really makes the season complete.

In the midst of the busyness of the holiday season, Advent is a time for us to pause. It is a time for us to pray. It is a time for us to prepare. And most importantly, it is a time for us to worship (I ran out of "p" words). On that note, please take note of this year's Advent and Christmas worship schedule below. And please consider incorporating one of the Advent devotional resources mentioned below into your personal devotional routine.

### What is Advent?

The Church divides the year into different seasons that emphasize the life of Christ and the life of the Church. Beginning on Sunday November 27, we will enter the season of the Church year called Advent. Advent is the season of preparation and anticipation leading up to Christmas on December 25, and continuing to Epiphany on January 6.

The focus of Advent is two-fold. On the one hand, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world as both God and man so that our sins might be forgiven. On the other hand, we anticipate the day when Jesus will return to Earth and bring an end to this world. Those will be scary days, but we can look forward to the end of the world with hope because through faith in Jesus, the end of this world will mean the beginning of a new life with Christ for eternity.

Advent, then, is a time for us to repent and believe. Knowing that Jesus was born to forgive our sins, we repent (admit our failures to God) and believe that we are forgiven because of the death and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf. Also, knowing that Jesus is coming back, we repent and believe that when He returns, He will give us eternal life. – from [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org)

In His Service,

Pastor Derek Riddle

## 2016 Advent-Christmas Schedule

Please mark your calendars for these upcoming services:

### Advent Midweek Services

Wednesdays, November 30 and December 7 & 14 at 6:30 p.m.

November 30: "How Shall I Greet You?"

December 7: "Advent's Fiery Preacher"

December 14: "Not Another Advent!"

Pre-Service Suppers (served by the youth) at 5:30 p.m.

**Christmas Cantata:** "Go Sing It On The Mountain", Sunday, December 11 at 3:00 p.m.

### Christmas Eve Family Service & Children's Program

Saturday, December 24 at 6:00 p.m.

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

Saturday, December 24 at 8:30 p.m.

### Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion

Sunday, December 25 at 9:30 a.m.

### New Year's Day Service with Holy Communion

Sunday, January 1 at 9:30 a.m.

## Advent Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries

### Christmas Memories

Thinking back on Christmases past is a fun way to reflect on the good old days. The wonderful lights and decorations, festive holiday atmosphere, warm family get-togethers, unforgettable melodies, and jovial Christmas cheer all make for pleasant memories. But, of course, our hearts aren't merry for these things alone. Christmas is the believer's celebration of the arrival of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, "who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a Servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:6-7).

Hallelujah! It is this Gift of God—His own beloved Son—whom we joyously adore with our hearts this Advent season. Jesus, who took on human flesh so that we might partake of His divine redemption, is the One to whom our Christmas memories turn, worshipping and adoring Him for all He has done for us. Take time this holiday season to make Christmas memories that last—memories that lovingly honor the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Christmas Memories** is available on-line, for either reading or listening, at [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org). You may also subscribe to receive these daily devotions via E-mail or listen to them via Podcast. You may also read or listen to them on your mobile device by downloading the Lutheran Hour Ministries app.

**Advent devotional booklets from Lutheran Indian Ministries** will be placed in member mailboxes at the beginning of the Advent season.

## *Cantata Notes*

Each year Peace offers a special gift to the community by way of a Christmas Cantata. And 2016 is no exception. A group of 25 singers has been practicing since September for this festive event. What is unique about this traditional holiday mission, however, is the fact that Peace Choir and Friends has grown to become a very ecumenical group - it now consists of singers from SEVEN DIFFERENT area churches. Our diversity is an indication that other vocalists see and feel the need to share through song the glorious Christmas story to people throughout the surrounding communities. How blessed we are to have so many join our choir for this holiday outreach! "Go Sing It on the Mountain" will be presented on Sunday, December 11 at 3 p.m. We will again be holding a reception at the conclusion of the cantata. Because Peace is the host for these activities, we encourage members of the congregation to assist us in providing snacks and finger-foods. Thank you and God's blessings to all who find it in their heart to be a part of this musical mission.

## **Board of Elders**

Where does all the time go? The seasons seem to come and go in the blink of an eye. I hear some saying it seems summer was yesterday, and now it's Thanksgiving, and Christmas will be here before we know it. Last Sunday was the last Sunday of the church year, and the new church year begins. The Advent season is also upon us, beginning with our first Advent service on November 30th and continuing on December 7th and December 14th. COME, join with your brothers and sisters in Christ in worship at 6:30. Also come, join in on our Senior Youth-sponsored soup suppers at 5:30, where we feed our souls with His Word in service to Him where He calls us. COME, and let us encourage one another and say, "let us go to church and worship the Lord with His people."

Advent is the season we prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus, our Savior, the greatest gift God has given us. Pray, praise and give thanks to God for all our blessings. Have a Christ-centered and blessed Christmas.

## **The Lutheran Hour**

The Lutheran Hour can be heard locally on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. on 92.5 FM and at 11:00 a.m. on 1450 AM. You can also listen on-line or via podcast at [www.lutheranhour.org](http://www.lutheranhour.org). Now you can also download the new Lutheran Hour Mobile App to your mobile device. Instructions for doing so can be found at [www.lhm.org/apps/](http://www.lhm.org/apps/).

### **December 4**

"Wait Until He Comes!" (Isaiah 11:1-10)  
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz  
A broken world waits, yearns, and hopes for restoration. Jesus has already done everything to make that restoration a reality.

### **December 11**

"Let the Adventure Begin" (Isaiah 35:1-10)  
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz  
In Christ, all of life is an adventure, one that is full of His promise and hope.

### **December 18**

"Peace On Earth, Peace That Lasts" (Matthew 1:18-25)  
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz  
What is the key to real and lasting peace on earth? Jesus, God with us.

### **December 25**

"What We Really Want" (Galatians 4:4-5)  
Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus  
What do you want this Christmas? Jesus is God's greatest gift to a sinful world.

Click on this hyperlink [www.michiganintouch.com](http://www.michiganintouch.com) to view this month's Michigan in Touch supplement.

Peace Project Hygiene Pantry: We give away bags with hygiene items: toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, bar soap, deodorant, dish soap, toilet paper, laundry soap...on the 3rd Monday of each month. Each of these bags are worth about \$10. Each month we give away from 25 to 45 bags...so that is anywhere from \$250 to \$450 a month. It started as a Board of Evangelism project but has grown beyond just a board project. Now we will have to decide if this is a mission we want to budget for and continue. This project has helped many who have a harder time than most. Many single Moms, handicapped individuals, grandparents taking care of grandchildren, and elderly on fixed incomes. Everyone needs help at one time or another. They thank us and many times with tears in their eyes. What a mission we could embark on!

The "Giving Tree" is up. If you decide to be a part of this project, we just want to remind you of a few things. Take the star(s), shop, wrap (or not), and please ATTACH the star back on the gift so we know where the gift goes. Also, the gifts need to be back to church no later than DEC. 18; this will give us time to deliver before schools are dismissed for Christmas vacation. If you would like to help with this project but can't or don't want to shop, you can make a donation and we would be happy to shop and wrap for you. Just call Cinda at 734-2926. Also, if your star says boots and socks and you would like to add something else, please do so. Most of these children need just basic items like boots, jackets, underwear, hats and mittens. Thank you for making this a wonderful holiday for them!

## **Stewardship Corner**

Every Christmas present that sits wrapped under your Christmas tree will wear out. It will break or go out of style. This fact was there, somewhere, in the back of your mind even as you bought them, but you bought them anyway. For you love the person you bought them for, and you wanted to see that look of joy it brings to their face.

So also God gives to you. But greater. What He gives will never wear out, break down, or go out of style. For what He gives is His eternal and only-begotten Son, wrapped in your flesh, and placed upon the tree of the Cross. He gives His Son for you. He gives that you may have everlasting joy. He gives because He loves you. This is why the Word became flesh to dwell among you.

And that is who is given to you. The Word who is God yet was with God from all eternity. The Word through whom all things were made. The Word who is the only-begotten Son of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, being of one substance with His Father. The One who called all things into existence, the One who spoke to Moses from the bush that burned yet was not consumed, the One whose glory filled the tabernacle to dwell among His people, God Himself, has taken on your flesh.

Even though the Word is made flesh, even though God became Man, His Divinity is not lessened. His Divinity is not changed. His Divinity remains, pure and unchanging, but your flesh, your human nature, is exalted. Your flesh and humanity is assumed into God. God became man so that you would become like unto God—holy and righteous, without sin, without death.

And so it is that the Son given to you wrapped in your flesh is placed upon the tree of the Cross. And no tree was ever adorned more beautifully. Its ornaments were nothing less than the Blood of God, poured out as an atoning sacrifice for your sins. Its garland the Body of God, hanged in death that you may have life. Its light the incarnate Light of the world, strung up to call you and all men unto Himself, to enlighten you, to make you His own. He gives you His life, He gives you joy and peace—peace with God in heaven and peace with one another on earth.

And from the tree of the Cross the Lord Jesus places another gift for you upon the Altar. It is the Fruit of the Cross, His crucified and risen, living Body and Blood, the Fruit of the Tree of Life, wrapped in bread and wine and given to you. He fills you with His Glory. He makes your mouths and your hearts His manger. He abides in you and you in Him.

The Word became flesh to be placed under the Cross for you. You are forgiven. This is why we give. We give because He has first given to us. And just as it was a joy for Him to give all He had to us, it is a joy for us to give to one another and His church so that this message of forgiveness, life, and salvation may be proclaimed.

Taken from [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org)