

Good News of Peace

January 2018 A.D.

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

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Happy New Year!

As hard as it is to believe, the holidays are now behind us. Unless, of course, you've been saving your Christmas celebration for Epiphany, sometimes known as the "Gentile Christmas" (see below). And even though our frigid weather this week isn't especially motivating, I suppose, the new year is still an opportune time both to look back – upon the year behind us. And to look ahead – to the new year that lies before us.

Often this may take the form of evaluating the parts of our lives we would like to change, to improve upon, etc. I appreciated the perspective of a January 1 devotion I read, however, which also encouraged its readers to reflect upon the things they did right during the past year and not only upon the things they did wrong or wish they had done better. That's a healthy perspective, I think. Not so much as to serve as a source of pride. But as an opportunity to consider in gratitude what kinds of things the Holy Spirit accomplished in and through us. Jesus not only calls us to be salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16), after all, but He also promises to equip us by His Spirit for doing so.

Specifically, the devotion encouraged its readers to create a list of five things they are proud of from the past year. Kindness shown to someone in need, for example. Or a special gift given to someone. Or having been patient with someone. Or having taken the time to listen to someone. Or having given encouragement to someone. Or having refrained from saying something hurtful to someone. Your list might wind up surprising you. And maybe also spurring you on to more of the same in the new year.

At the same time, of course, identifying needed improvements in our lives, or challenges before us, or goals, can also be very beneficial. A New Year's E-mail I read suggested ending the old year and beginning the new year by asking ourselves questions such as these:

- What was your biggest success in 2017? And did you celebrate it?
- What was your favorite book you read in 2017? And why?

- What was your biggest struggle in 2017?
- What person had the biggest impact upon you in 2017?
- What is the biggest challenge facing you personally – or a ministry with which you are involved – at the end of 2017?
- What action might God be prompting you to take in 2018 that you haven't taken yet?

The author of the E-mail suggested actually writing down the answers to those questions and then sharing one or more of them with someone else. I like that idea. I haven't done it yet, but I'm going to make a point of doing so personally and am also going to be encouraging our congregational leaders to do the same in the coming weeks. I would encourage you to take the time to do so, as well. And I would also invite you to share one or more of your observations with me – whether in writing or by text at phone number (309) 840-0989 or you may contact me by E-mail at (pastorjdiddle@gmail.com or pastorjdiddle@peacecms.org) so that I might keep you in my personal prayers in these first weeks of 2018.

I invite you, by the way, to share personal prayer requests of any nature with me at any time. Many of you do from time to time. And when you do, I want you to know that I try to be very intentional about writing those down so that I may actually add them to my personal prayer list. I consider that one of my most important responsibilities as a pastor, as well as one of my greatest privileges. It's the very first thing on my to-do list each day, as a part of my daily devotion.

Most often, when someone shares a prayer request with me, it is in the event of an illness or a crisis of some sort. However, maybe you are facing a challenge in your life at the beginning of this new year, or struggling with a difficulty of some sort, or working towards a personal goal. If so, I would be delighted to include you in my personal prayers, and you can always be assured that your prayer requests remain completely confidential.

A blessed New Year to each of you in Christ, our Savior!

In His Service,

Pastor Derek Riddle

What is Epiphany?

Epiphany is from a Greek word meaning to “reveal” or “make manifest.” The season of Epiphany is our time to focus on the revelation of “who” Jesus is: both true God and man.

On the Festival of Epiphany, January 6, we hear the reading of the visit of the wise men (Matthew 2:1-12). In that event, these foreigners bowed down in acknowledgment that this infant was indeed the Christ, the Son of God.

The Sunday after Epiphany we hear the story of the Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17). Here, God the Father confirms this man standing in the water is His beloved Son. The following Sunday we hear the story of the changing of water into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11). Through this event, Jesus revealed His glory and His disciples put their faith in Him. – from www.lcms.org FAQ

Also from Pastor

When Helping Hurts

I would like again to invite all interested members of the congregation to participate in a monthly study and discussion of a book entitled, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor ... and Yourself*. This is for all who are interested in being a part of our ongoing congregational discussion of the most effective and faithful way(s) for us to reach out to and serve our community in Jesus’ name. Five of us met for the first time in November and began with an initial discussion. When we meet again on Thursday, January 18, at 7:00 p.m., we will be discussing the Introduction and Chapter 1 of the book. It is not too late to join us; if you would like copies of the reading and discussion materials, please see me.

Passions, Problems & Possessions: *What does God have in store for us?*

- What gives you energy? What matters to you? What societal need tugs at your heartstrings?
- How does the unique culture of the Rogers City area affect people's ability to be physically and emotionally healthy?
- What resources has God given the members of our congregation to meet the needs of the people around us?

God’s people are created to do so much more than sit in a pew once a week. Perhaps 2018 is the year in which we work together to move beyond good intentions into becoming actively engaged in God's mission. What an exciting thing it is to think of what might lie in our future as a congregation.

Elected congregational leaders are asked to join Pastor and Julie Riddle on January 30, 7-8:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall for in intensive exploration of the *Passions, Problems and Possessions* God has given to the people of Peace Lutheran Church. The evening’s goal is to work together to find focus for our mission energies and to create a simple plan of action that fits the people God created us to be, here in our unique little corner of the world.

A pre-meeting worksheet will be shared with elected leaders shortly. Non-elected members interested in being a part of this discussion are invited to speak to Pastor or Julie for more information.

Jesus and the Ark

Last month I mentioned a book I have been reading by author Ken Ham, the founder and president of Answers in Genesis, entitled *Ready to Return? The Need for a Fundamental Shift in Church Culture to Save a Generation*. In chapter 7, entitled “Jesus and the Ark,” he writes the following:

“Even for those who profess belief in Scripture, the story of the ark and the Flood raises many questions, which when left unanswered, tend to also raise the Christian’s doubt level. To be clear, the credibility of the Flood event has a huge impact on how people view the rest of Scripture.”

He then proceeds to address some of the most-frequently asked questions concerning the ark and the Flood that he has been asked from both inside and outside the Church. He explains, “If such questions remain unanswered, this can be a major contributing factor to why so many in the 20s generation have left (and are leaving) the Church. Answering them is part of equipping believers with a reasonable apologetic (defense of the Christian faith and the truth of the Scriptures).”

Last month I shared Ham’s answer to the question “Were Dinosaurs on Noah’s Ark?” This month I’d like to share his answer to the question “How Could Noah Fit All the Animals on the Ark?” He says the following:

“First of all, the ark did not need to carry every kind of animal – nor did God command it. It carried only air-breathing, land-dwelling creatures. Aquatic life survived outside the ark (although the variety we observe today makes it obvious that many did not survive the Flood). This cuts down significantly the total number of animals that needed to be on board.

Another factor greatly reducing the space requirements is the fact that the tremendous variety in species we see today did not exist in the days of Noah. Our researchers (at Answers in Genesis) on the basis of which animals have been documented to breed together, believe that the Hebrew word for “kind,” in most instances, is equivalent to the “family” level in man’s classification system. So only the parent “kinds” of the various species of land

creatures were required to be on board in order to repopulate the earth. For example, only two dogs (there is one dog family), were needed to give rise to all the dog species that exist today.

Our researchers believe the number of actual kinds needed on the ark could be as low as 1000, but up to 1500 (using fossil evidence that is very fragmentary). Also, there is debate as to whether those that went on the ark in seven means seven pairs or seven individuals. So the number of land animals needed on the ark could be as low as 3000 (or even less) or as high as 7000 (which is probably way too high an estimation). Most land animals are not that large. The point is, when considering the size of the ark there was plenty of room for all the land animal kinds.

We would conclude that much less than half of the cumulative area of the ark's three decks were needed for the animals. This meant there was plenty of storage room for fresh food, water, and lodging for Noah and his family."

For more information about the ark, see the Ark Encounter web site at www.arkencounter.org or the Answers in Genesis web site at www.answersingenesis.org.

Board of Elders

The old has gone, and the new has arrived. The year that was is now the year that is. We hope that you had a blessed Christmas celebrating the birth of Jesus. For some it was a sad but joyful Christmas, with family and friends completing their journey here on earth and now living with our heavenly Father. Thanks be to God.

At our January meeting we had election of officers: David Grulke-Chairman and Jeff Karsten-Secretary. Our sick and shut-in list was looked over and discussed. If you want a visit or know of someone who wants a visit, please let the Elders know.

Someone asked about a Wednesday evening service for Thanksgiving Eve in place of a Thanksgiving Day service. Please give your thoughts and concerns to an Elder. Church cancellations will be put on our website and on radio stations WATZ 99 and 96.7.

May the New Year bring you blessings of FAITH, HOPE and LOVE.

As we begin the new year, many of us make resolutions to give something up or to start something new. As we look back on the last year, we remember many things that happened -some good and some not so good. Count the blessings that you received from God. How many did you count? Did you remember them all? May we all remember that all things (everything) comes from God. God gives us all we need for our spiritual growth through the Holy Spirit as He works inside us, teaching us to live as He shows us in His Word. A resolution for this New Year? Read your Bible daily. The Bible shows us how to live

with the Law and the Gospel. The Bible teaches us as we grow in His Word, equipping us to go out into our community and share His Word. May God continue to bless us as we grow in His Word. PRAY, PRAISE and GIVE THANKS always.

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. 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/.

January 7

"Breaking News!"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer

Epiphany calls us to believe that the Light has come into the world. A New Year's message about confidence, if you'll believe it!

(Isaiah 60:1-6 ("Arise, shine, for your light has come."))

January 14

"How Well Does Jesus Know Me?"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus
It's nice to have someone know and understand you. Today the Lutheran Hour asks, "How do you feel about Jesus knowing you?"

(John 1: 48-51)

January 21

"Meeting Millennials Where They're at"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer

Robots can't produce disciples. How can we mentor those who don't know Jesus, or don't know Him well enough?

(Mark 1:14-20 (Jesus calls His first disciples.))

January 28

"Cause I Said So"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus
Many have pretended to be the Messiah. In today's text, Jesus authority is recognized and obeyed by His competition.

(Mark 1: 21-28)

Stewardship Corner

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless. But it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions: Who are you? To whom do I give? And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the Small Catechism informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society,

family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties and our questions arise in giving to the church.

So, what is our duty as members of the church with regard to giving? The Table of Duties, again, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer, a member of the church who receives instruction, St. Paul taught: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor. 6:1-2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

Taken from www.lcms.org

Note: Our **Informal Midweek Service** will not be held during the months of January and February. We will use this time to take a break between Advent and the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 14. We will tentatively plan to resume following Easter in early April and continue until the beginning of the summer.



Sub Luncheon Benefit

for Kathy & Mary, members of Peace (the family of Gayle Zimmerman), to help with medical and funeral expenses upon the death of Gayle.

What: Subs (made to order), dessert, and beverage

When: Sunday, January 14 from 11 am - 1 pm

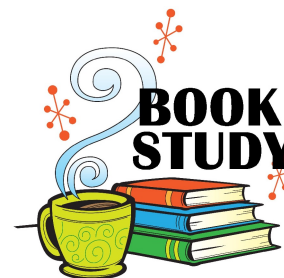
Where: Fellowship Hall at Peace

Take-outs available

Free-will donation

Sponsored by members of Peace Lutheran Church and Thrivent

Pastor would again like to invite all interested members of the congregation to participate in a monthly study and discussion of a book entitled, **When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor ... and Yourself.** This is for all who are interested in being a part of our ongoing congregational discussion of the most effective and faithful way(s) for us to reach out to and serve our community in Jesus' name. We met for the first time in November and began with an initial discussion. When we meet again on Thursday, January 18 (7:00 p.m.), we will be discussing the Introduction and Chapter 1 of the book. It is not too late to join us; if you would like copies of the reading and discussion materials, please see Pastor.



Reminder...

The Peace Project Hygiene Pantry holds its monthly distribution on the third Monday, from 10-11:30 a.m. and from 6-7:30 p.m. Items include laundry detergent, dish soap, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes, and toilet paper. No proof of income is required. Donations are always welcome! Contact Cinda Grulke or any member of the Board of Evangelism for more info.

Bible Study Classes Currently Available...

Adult Bible Class meets Sunday mornings following coffee fellowship. We will continue our discussion of Martin Luther and the Reformation as we begin a video-based study entitled, "A Man Named Martin, Part 3: The Movement." Everyone is welcome!

WOMEN'S JOINT BIBLE STUDY – The next session of the LADIES' BIBLE STUDY will be Monday, January 22 at 7:00 p.m. at St. John's. If anyone would still like to join us, please show up or contact Linda Schalk at 766-8073.

Thursday Small Group Bible Reading: Our next meeting will take place Thursday, January 25, at 9:30 a.m. We are currently studying the Gospel of Luke and are in Chapter 20. Everyone is welcome! Call Bart or Cathy Hellmuth with questions: (810) 599-3525 or (517) 546-0943.

January 2018

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 8:00 pm AA	2 10:00 am Music Worship 5:00 pm Deacons	3 9:30 Food/Baby Pantry	4 9:00 am TOPS 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	5	6 Epiphany of the Lord
7 Communion 10:00 Choir 11:00 Worship 12:30 Coffee Time 3:00 AA	8 10:00 am – Remove tree decorations 8:00 pm AA	9 9:00 Men's Breakfast at Karsten's 10:00 am Take tree down 7:00 pm Session	10 9:30 am Circle 1	11 9:00 am TOPS 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	12	13
14 10:00 Choir 11:00 Worship 12:30 Coffee Time 3:00 AA	15 8:00 pm AA	16	17 9:30 Food/Baby Pantry	18 9:00 am TOPS 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	19	20
21 10:00 Choir 11:00 Worship 12:30 Congregational Meeting Let's Brunch at Kortman's 3:00 AA	22 8:00 pm AA	23	24 7:00 pm Circle IV	25 9:00 am TOPS 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry	26	27
28 10:00 Choir 11:00 Worship 12:30 Coffee Time 3:00 AA	29 8:00 pm AA	30	31			

More Calendars: [Feb 2018](#), [Mar 2018](#), [2018](#)

MEMORIALS

General Fund

In memory of Doris Sabin

By Beach & Kellie Hall
By Owen & Marion Lamb

Choir Fund

In memory of Doris Sabin

By Ken & Barb Rasche
By Pat Erfurdt
By Anthony & Mary Przybyla

Memorial Fund

In memory of Doris Sabin

By Jane Ann Geyer