

# The Parish Beacon

Volume 43—No. 1

January 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With Christmas and Advent in recent memory, it is a good opportunity to recall angels. These spiritual beings that God made would bring messages from their Creator down to people like you and me. You've probably seen them around in nativity sets recently, often depicted as men or women in white flowing robes with wings and a halo around their head.

They're an important part of the Christmas story. It is an angel who bring messages to Joseph, telling him to marry Mary and protect their family by fleeing to Egypt. The angel Gabriel brings Mary the news that she would bear God's son. Gabriel also brought the news to Zechariah, the priest, that he and Elizabeth would bear a son in their old age who would be filled with the Holy Spirit and that he would be named John. Later known as John the Baptist. And again, it is angels who direct the shepherds in the field to Jesus their Lord.

You get the idea. Angels tell people news that God has for them. But apart from Christmas, we don't seem to hear too much about them. They are in other stories throughout Scripture, but they seem to appear few and far between compared to Christmas time. So, what are to make of them?

One thing that is especially clear from Christmas is that angels rejoice in and are glad for the birth of Jesus. The angels in heaven want the salvation of the human race and they even help make it happen. And not just at Christmas!

- They will gather God's chosen people to Him on the Last Day (**Matthew 24:31**).
- They help promote the work of the church and protect its servants. Often saving people in prison, such as Daniel and Peter, so the Gospel would continue to go out (**Daniel 6:22; Acts 5:18-20**).
- They guard and protect God's people (**2 Kings 6:15-17; Psalm 34:7**).

These things are true even to this day. God still sends you His angels. They still battle the spiritual forces of the devil on your behalf. Mostly out of sight, but hopefully not out of mind. Because they are real and interact with our world.

As nativities get taken down and packed away, consider the angels. Remember them as we sing the Sanctus before Communion that we are singing with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. Even while you pray, ask that God sends his holy angels to be with you.

As life moves forward into 2022, we can always use a helping hand and God's angels will surely lend you one, whether you realize it or not!

Have a blessed New Year!  
Vicar Lewis



**OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL**

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Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, bind our families together in perfect harmony and rule our hearts with the peace of Christ. Cause His Word to dwell richly among us, and let fathers and heads of the household teach and admonish their families in all wisdom. Let our songs, words and deeds be done in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, with thanksgiving.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, Your Son alone is judge of the earth, who decides all matters in equity and righteousness. Let us entrust ourselves to Christ and likewise delight in the fear of the Lord. Let us not put our trust in princes and leaders of this world, but we pray for their health and wisdom and ask that we may honor them for the sake of conscience before You.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, help the sick and suffering, especially those who desire our prayers [*We especially pray for **Pete Berry** (friend of Myrl and Denise Holida), **Dorothy Blume** (Carol Schuldt's sister), **David Caplin** (Lillian Moyer's son-in-law), **Susan Carlson**, **Earl Christensen** (brother-in-law of George and Carol Schuldt), **Mary Coblentz**, **Jody Cole** (Charles Calef's friend), **Larry Curran** (Cathleen Loney's father), **Chad Dyson**, **Emee Elkeurti**, **Gwen Enokian**, **Gabe Hundley** (grandson of Karen Abernathy), **Dora Jacobson** (granddaughter of George and Carol Schuldt), **David Jones** (Lonne Loney's uncle), **Ann Klopp** (Louise Klopp's mother), **Brad Koelper** (Donna Saehler's nephew), **Mildred Krogh**, **Norma Miller** (Twyla Freeman's aunt), **Shannon Miller** (friend of Gwen Enokian,) **Barb Nace** (Doris Siemer's niece), **Bob Nace**, **Deloris Nace**, **Chad Pence**, **Nora Sellers** (Great niece of Kevin & Laurel Sellers), **Cade Sexton**, **Rozie Siems** (Daughter of Mary Siems), **Mark Wilson** and **Beth Wu** (Schuldt's relative)]. Surround them with Your love in Christ and, according to Your gracious will, heal them.*

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, you instituted marriage between one man and one woman, and we give you thanks for the 53 years of marriage for **Mark and Pam Wilson**. Bless them and all married couples, strengthening the love between husband and wife and their love for You.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, let all who come to the Sacrament of the Altar this day see their salvation in the very body and blood of Christ given them to eat and to drink. Let all return home like blessed Simeon, well prepared to depart in peace.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we give thanks for our brothers and sisters who have departed in the peace of faith. Bring us with them to see with our own eyes the light of the nations and the glory of Israel.

Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, you tell us to bring to You our concerns. Listen to our silent prayers.

[*We pause for a moment for silent prayer.*]

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. **Amen.**



## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JANUARY

Office Closed  
**New Year's Eve  
 WORSHIP**  
 December 31  
 7:00pm

January 1  
**2022**  
 Happy New Year!

*Staff*  
 CHRISTMAS  
 PARTY  
  
 January 2, 12:00pm  
 Fellowship Hall

  
 January 5  
 Bible Class 11:00am  
 Lunch 12:00pm  
 Fellowship Hall

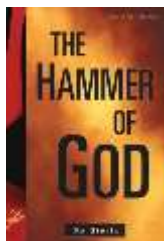
*Undeck  
 the Halls*  
  
 January 9  
 Immediately  
 following late  
 service

MLK Day  
 Office Closed  
 January 17

  
**Church Family Ski Day**  
 Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>  
 8 am— 6 pm  
*Open to entire congregation*  
 If interested, please email Kara at  
[youthcoordinator@ourredeemer.org](mailto:youthcoordinator@ourredeemer.org)  

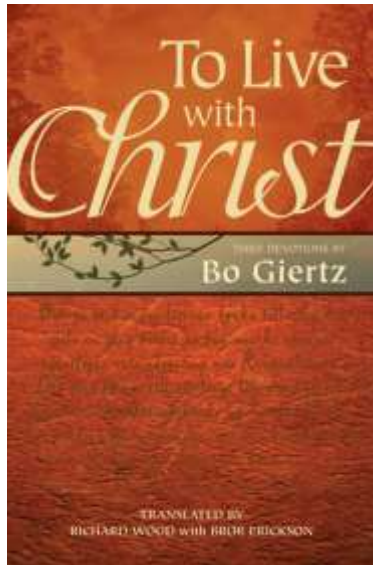

  
 Stephen Ministry  
 Training begins  
 January 18, 6:45pm  
 Room 208/210

  
 January 19  
 Bible Class 11:00am  
 Lunch 12:00pm  
 Fellowship Hall



Hammer of God  
 Book Club  
 January 20,  
 7:00pm  
 Room 123

  
**POPCORN PROVIDED**  
 January 27, 6:00pm  
 Fellowship Hall  
 Upcoming "feature":  
 The LEGO Movie  
 Rated (G)  

12/26	The Day after Christmas (Boxing Day)	p. 800
12/26	Sunday after Christmas	p. 73
12/27	Monday after the Sunday in Christmas	p. 75
12/28	Tuesday after the Sunday in Christmas	p. 77
12/29	Wednesday after the Sunday in Christmas	p. 79
12/30	Thursday after the Sunday in Christmas	p. 81
12/31	Friday after the Sunday in Christmas	p. 83
12/31	Saturday after the Sunday in Christmas	p. 83
1/1	New Year's Day	p. 802



**Building Healthy Families:** The beginning of a New Year can bring feelings of anticipation, excitement, and hope as we start with a clean slate, our resolutions to keep. Still looking for ideas that will bring new life to your New Year? How about one of these: Read from Scripture 15 minutes every day; go to church every Sunday without fail; set aside 20 minutes at the end of the day to pray; join a Bible Study group; start tithing; memorize Scripture (one verse per week). 6 weeks of doing something repeatedly makes it a habit. Happy & Blessed New Year to You!

**Lutheran Family Service** - [www.LutheranFamilyService.org](http://www.LutheranFamilyService.org).

### Adult Bible Class

Date	Topic
January 9-February 27	<i>To Die with Christ: Christian Death and Burial</i>
March 6-April 10	<i>Theology of the Cross</i>
April 24-May 8; May 29	<i>The Philippians: To Live is Christ. To Die is Gain.</i>
May 22	<i>Sunday School Celebration</i>

### Upcoming Sunday School Lessons

Date	Scripture	Bible Lesson
December 26		Christmas—No Classes
January 2		New Years—No Classes
January 9	Luke 1:26-56	An Angel Announces— <i>Jesus' Birth Foretold</i>
January 16	Luke 1:5-25, 57-66	Silence before a Son— <i>John is Born</i>
January 23	Luke 2:1-7, 22-40	The Temple Testimonies— <i>Jesus' Birth and Presentation</i>
January 30	Luke 2:41-52	His Father's House— <i>Boy Jesus in the Temple</i>

## Birthdays

Sun. 12/26	Garrett Sexton
Mon. 12/27	LaShelle Morrison, Ellen Wardenburg
Tues. 12/28	Cheryll Davisson, Justin Ellyson, Rachel Matel, Peter Mickelson, Megan Miller, Eunice Scheer, Marnie Schrader, Jerry Wear, Beau Zeman
Wed. 12/29	Michelle Hintze, Kevin Lake, Jim Thurston
Thurs. 12/30	Dylan Feuerbach, Jennifer Waddilove, Dave Yansky
Fri. 12/31	Dexter Anderson, Briana Ervin, Justin Ervin, Brian McKillip, Cory Sexton
Sat. 1/1	Laura Anderson, Ella Born, Jessica Morrison

## Stewardship—December 18/19

ATTENDANCE		TREASURES	
Recorded Service 12/18	10	Contributions	\$15,223.00
Sat. 12/18 In Person/LIVE STREAM 5:30pm	54	A Little Farther	\$2,473.00
Sun. 12/19 In Person/LIVE STREAM 8:00am	100	Monthly needs for budget	\$64,902.00
Sun. 12/19 In Person/LIVE STREAM 10:30am	127	Midweek Advent Service 12/15	109
<b>TOTAL WEEKEND WORSHIP ATTENDANCE</b>	291	Sunday School/Adult Bible Class	32/48

Thank you for your continued support.



MISSION	December
Iowa District East	\$3,333.33
UIHC Chaplain Endowment Fund	\$333.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,666.66</b>
Concordia Seminary	\$250.00
Lutheran Hour	\$500.00
Common Fund	\$625.00
<b>MONTH TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,041.66</b>
<b>MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	
CommUnity Crisis Center	***
Lutherans For Life	***
Concordia Seminary Food Bank	\$50.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,091.66</b>

## Membership Changes and Official Acts

<u>Baptisms</u>	
Macklin Thomas Sass	12-26-2021
<u>Released</u>	
Lisa Krause (Peterson)	12-06-2021
<u>Deaths</u>	
Phillip Schmid	12-14-2021



<b>Pledges received for the month of December</b>	\$3,882.97
<b>Total amount of pledges received</b>	\$275,159.46
<b>Total amount pledges promised</b>	\$365,174.87



Submitted by Marcia Hulse

# Stephen Ministry

We care, Christ cures.

Who benefits from Stephen Ministry?

The most obvious answer is the person who receives care. He or she no longer has to walk alone through life's struggles. A Stephen Minister walks alongside this person for as long as he or she needs care, bringing Jesus' unconditional love and acceptance to the person. Care-receivers often reflect on how close they have grown to Jesus because of the care received from a Stephen Minister during a time of need.

The Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders benefit. Although they participate in this ministry out of a desire to serve and care for others, they encounter tremendous growth themselves. Because of the confidentiality they cannot tell you who their care receivers were or what happened, but they can tell you how much they have grown, personally and spiritually,

Pastors benefit from being equippers as well as ministers. Stephen Ministry helps pastors fulfill their calling to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12 NRSV) by giving them the means to equip and organize laypeople for caring ministry. Pastors also benefit from the fact that they are not alone in meeting caring ministry needs. They are part of a community of caregivers.

The congregation benefits from Stephen Ministry. People feel cared for in time of need. There is a ripple effect to Stephen Ministry. Many Stephen Ministers are also active on church committees, in Bible studies and small groups, in fellowship groups and more. They find themselves using their enhanced caring ministry skills on everyone with whom they relate or interact. Our congregation becomes a more caring community where people know their needs are met.

Even if you never become a Stephen Minister or a care receiver, you also benefit for a couple of reasons. Probably everyone of us has known someone who has faced a difficult time — perhaps a neighbor, a coworker, a friend, or a relative. We may have wanted to help someone but didn't know how beyond saying, "I'm praying for you," or sending them a card. Sometimes we might even have avoided that person because we weren't sure what to say or how to help. Stephen Ministry gives you a way to connect those people with Jesus' love and care when they need it most. You can pull that person aside and lovingly say, "I know you've been going through a rough time lately. Let me tell you about a ministry in our church that provides one-to-one Christian care to people going through tough times." You can then put him or her in touch with Pastor Hartwig who can take the next step and, if appropriate, match him or her with a Stephen Minister. No longer do you have to stand by and not know what to do or say.

*Lord, thank You that with You I'm not alone even in my times of difficulties.  
Help me to enjoy my fellowship with You and to reach out to others. Amen*

#### STEPHEN LEADERS

<b>Pastor Hartwig</b>	<b>338-5626</b>
<b>Bill Benson</b>	<b>517-881-9848</b>
<b>Marcia Hulse</b>	<b>351-7059</b>
<b>Kathy Schweer</b>	<b>466-3084</b>
<b>Kevin Sellers</b>	<b>631-8924</b>

## Board Reports



The Our Redeemer Lutheran Church Board of Directors would like to take the time to wish everyone a safe and blessed New Year. Since there was no meeting held in December there will be no board report posted for this edition of Beacon.

### COOKIE WALK CHRISTMAS GIFTS DECEMBER 2021

Concordia Seminary Food Bank, St. Louis	\$365
Concordia Seminary Food & Clothing Co-op, Ft. Wayne	\$365
IDE Chaplaincy Endowment Fund	\$200
LCMS World Relief	\$200
Lutheran Indian Ministries	\$100
Lutheran Bible Translators	\$100
Lutheran Family Service	\$300
Lutherans for Life	\$100
Orphan Grain Train	\$400
Mission Central—Julie Lutz	\$1,000
Panama Mission	\$80
<u>Shelter House</u>	<u>\$170</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,380</b>



Thanks again to the bakers, workers, and patrons of the Cookie Walk. The proceeds have been given to the agencies listed.



# Steins at the Sem

*A somewhat-regular account of the Stein family's time at Concordia Seminary*

For previous editions of  
**Steins at the Sem**  
[CLICK HERE](#)

## Emily's Corner



On the homefront, the Stein family has been quite busy. This past month brought a crazy virus to the family. (No, not Covid thankfully!) Each kiddo missed at least three days of school, and I missed four. Don went to class online so he could help with the kids for some of the days.

Apart from the illness, we had a great time raking leaves, visiting family for Thanksgiving, and setting up the house for Christmas.

Beth and Lily earned participation awards for soccer and ran their first 1k! Emily walked/jogged the 5k with Penny napping in her stroller, and Don ran the 5k in 27 minutes! (He complains that it's 10 minutes slower than his best.)

We also had a wonderful date night celebrating our ninth wedding anniversary.

*Continued on page 2...*

## Extra-Curriculars

Classes aren't the only thing to do at Seminary. Read what else Don has been up to.

*Page 3...*

## A Few Seconds Before Happiness

*The following sermon was delivered as part of an Advent devotional series at Zion Lutheran Church in Mascoutah, IL.*

*"Prophetic Portraits:  
Messianic Prophecies from Isaiah  
in Word and Image"*

### [A Few Seconds Before Happiness]

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

This photo has a bit of joyful whimsy, doesn't it? The tiny little boy stands in prayerful expectation before this respected and trusted figure.

It's amazing when you consider things from the boy's point of view. Crop the puppy out—he can only see what is immediately in front of him. He faces uncertainty! Yet it is clear from his folded hands and expectant eyes that he hopes for a good gift. He faces uncertainty, yes, but responds in prayerful expectation.

Ah, and zoom back out! There's the whimsy, there's the joy! Yes, we can see resolution to the uncertainty. We see his prayerful expectation is not misguided! We see what he does not. We see the good gift behind that respected and trusted figure. We see what the prophet Isaiah might call "comfort, comfort." (Isaiah 40:1) Comfort incarnate, enfleshed—or, rather, enfurred—in the cuddly, wiggly body of a puppy.

We know this was taken A Few Seconds Before Happiness. That's the title of this photo: A Few Seconds Before Happiness. It was taken around 1955 or so. Photographer unknown. Location unknown. Subjects unknown. But that feeling of uncertainty is certainly known to each of us.

You've known the feeling of uncertainty since you were little. When you were summoned by your name—by your full name. In that tone. "Firstname Middlename Lastname!" Ooh, *"the grass withers, the flower fades when the*



*breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass." (Isaiah 40:7)*

Of course, you don't have to go back to childhood to feel uncertainty. You face it every day! I'm sure each of you could think about the uncertainty in your own lives. I'll share a little bit of the uncertainty in my own life, as an example for you.

In April I will, God-willing, receive a call somewhere in the United States to be a pastor. I will attend the special Call Day service, like a graduation. My fellow seminarians and I will each be summoned by our names—by our full names. Hopefully in a nicer tone than when we were little. "Firstname Middlename Lastname!" And where will we be sent? What sort of ministry will we do? Where will our children go to school? I face uncertainty. My family faces uncertainty. And I know that, in some part of your life, you also face uncertainty. But in the face of uncertainty, God proclaims comfort through his prophets.

*Continued on page 2...*

# Thank you...

...to everyone who has given us support of every kind. Your prayers and encouragement mean the world to us. Please be sure to let us know how we can pray for you, too:

[steido01@gmail.com](mailto:steido01@gmail.com)  
[rasmem01@gmail.com](mailto:rasmem01@gmail.com)

102 S. Railway St.  
Mascoutah, IL 62258

Gift cards for Amazon (books!) and Schnucks (food!) are always appreciated. If you are moved to assist us financially, we ask that you please do not withhold from your normal tithing; your neighbor is your first priority.

So your generosity can be recognized with a tax credit, we recommend giving through your church, our home church (Mt. Olive), or the Seminary:

Mt. Olive Lutheran Church  
Attn: Stein Seminary Fund  
2001 N. Alpine Rd.  
Rockford, IL 61107

OR  
Concordia Seminary  
Don Stein P000015255  
801 Seminary Place

\*\*\*Please be sure to include Don's name and P-number (see above) on checks to the Seminary, or your gift will not be credited to the Steins!

## Isaiah & Hezekiah

*Continued from page 1...*

### [Hezekiah's Uncertainty]

Uncertainty was a feeling that people knew well in the prophet Isaiah's day. He lived A Few [Hundred Years] Before Happiness. Seven hundred, to be exact. That's how long it would be before Jesus would be born.

Isaiah's people could only see what was immediately in front of them. And it wasn't exactly comforting. The once-great, united Kingdom of Israel had long been split—Israel in the north, Judah in the south. Israel had become so wicked, God allowed them to be conquered by the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians threatened Judah too!

The good king Hezekiah got his hands busy to mount a defense: he built walls around Jerusalem, dug a 1,700-foot tunnel to bring water into the city in the event of a siege, built up fortifications all around the country... And not a one of those busy solutions eased the uncertainty of his position. One by one, the fortifications fell. The last Southern stronghold, Lachish, was overrun like some ancient Alamo. Jerusalem alone remained, and she was surrounded.

In the midst of this uncertainty, God sent his prophet Isaiah to proclaim comfort: God provided a good gift. The city would not fall—not yet. One night, the angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 Assyrian troops. By God's good intervention, without any help from Hezekiah's busy hands, the Kingdom of Judah survived. (Isaiah 36-37) (By the way, if that sounds unbelievable, archeology confirms this event. The Assyrian conqueror

Sennacherib recorded what happened on a tablet, kept at the Oriental Institute in Chicago!)

Well, Hezekiah learned from this ordeal with the Assyrians. He learned that God doesn't proclaim comfort through busy hands. He learned the importance of prayerful expectation in times of uncertainty. So when the Assyrians regrouped under new leadership, Hezekiah got the prayerful expectation part right.

Unfortunately, he directed that prayerful expectation to the wrong place. Instead of looking to the God who proclaims comfort through his prophets, He looked to the wisdom of his own mind. Hezekiah welcomed ambassadors from a new and greater empire, Babylon. He took them on a tour of his forts and castles and temples and treasure houses, showed them all his

### **"God proclaims comfort through His prophets."**

silver and gold and spices and precious oils and his whole armory and all that was within his storehouses... (Isaiah 39) And after posting all his possessions on PleaseRobMe.com, he sent the Babylonians home with his social security number, the name of his first pet and his mother's maiden name.

### [Isaiah Proclaims God's Good Gifts]

In the face of uncertainty, God doesn't proclaim comfort through works of busy hands. In the face of uncertainty, God doesn't proclaim comfort through wisdom of our minds. In the face of uncertainty, God proclaims comfort through his prophets.

Hezekiah could only see what was immediately in front of him. But the prophet Isaiah could see the full picture. In our modern terms, we might say "The Law," was plain enough to Isaiah: Israel would be taken into the

Babylonian Captivity. No works or wisdom could help them now. It was too late.

And in that moment, frozen in the pregnant pause of impending doom, Isaiah the prophet did not proclaim the obvious Law to his people, but rather the sweet words of Gospel: *Comfort, comfort, my people! Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned...* (Isaiah 40:1-2)

In the face of uncertainty, God proclaims comfort through his prophets.

### [The Work of Our Hands and Wisdom of Our Minds]

How often have we been a Hezekiah, instead of that little boy in the photo? How often have we pushed aside the posture of prayerful expectation for busy hands? We have a God who proclaims comfort for us through his prophets, yet we restrain ourselves from hearing that comfort! Oh, sure, we'll hear it on Sundays or maybe Wednesdays during Advent. But what about the rest of the week?

In our own wisdom, we've got important things to do. We get our hands busy, like Hezekiah. Busy staying late at work. Busy getting that workout in. Busy getting the food out of the oven in time to take the kids to dance class or soccer practice. Busy, busy busy, but not busy with our devotional life. We do not make time to hear from the God who proclaims comfort through His prophets.

Now, work is good. Working out, eating right, taking care of our bodies is good. Being involved in activities like dance or sports are good. These are all gifts of God. More than that, they are gifts that we are called to use and care for.

*Continued on page 3...*

## An actual, real-life date night!

*Continued from page 1...*

It was probably the most romantic night we've had. Definitely makes the top three. And Don planned it all! The kiddos even got to have a sleepover at Aunt Christa's house with their cousins!

We are looking forward to more family time this Christmas break, visiting both sets of grandparents. Then we end out 2021 in Minocqua, Wisconsin at the Rasmann family cabin. We cannot wait for some uninterrupted family time!



## Prayerful expectation

*Continued from page 2...*

Hezekiah was called to build walls and forts and defenses; he would've been derelict in his duties had he not fulfilled his duties as king! Likewise, we would also be derelict in our duties to others if we did not do them! But the work of our hands and wisdom of our minds amounts to nothing if they're done without prayerful expectation.

I've had to keep that in perspective, as I wait for Call Day. The work of my hands and the wisdom of my mind offer no comfort to me. Neither can the work of your hands or the wisdom of your mind offer comfort to you in your uncertainties. In the face of uncertainty, God proclaims comfort through his prophets.

### [God's Proclaims comfort through His Prophets]

That's where we can receive comfort. The proof is throughout history. Again and again, God sent prophets to proclaim comfort to his people, to announce his good gifts. Isaiah was one prophet. John the Baptist was another!

The lectionary folks knew what they were doing when they made this an Advent reading. The lectionary pairs this reading from Isaiah with the sudden appearance of John the Baptist in Mark's Gospel! (Mark 1) John was a voice in the wilderness crying out "Comfort, comfort!"

though not in so many words. When John said it, it sounded a little more like "Repent!" but it meant the same thing: Don't suffer in uncertainty. Instead, repent—turn in prayerful expectation—to the One who gives certain "comfort, comfort!"

That's really what repentance is: certain comfort! Think about it. The Small Catechism talks about "repentance" as having two parts: Firstly, contrition. (We're usually pretty good about that part.) Secondly, we are to have faith in the certain promise of forgiveness. The certain promise! God says you are forgiven! You do not live in uncertainty! You live in "comfort, comfort" Isaiah says, because the full picture has been revealed to you:

*[T]he glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 40:5)*

The glory of the Lord was revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, who is that Good Gift Incarnate, enfleshed, bringing "comfort, comfort" for all. And none of it contingent on your work or your wisdom: **He** will tend his flock like a shepherd; **He** will gather the lambs in his arms; **He** will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. (Isaiah 40:11)

**He** has called you into His presence by name—by your full name. In the sweetest tone of all. And He's said:

## Extra-Curriculars

Pastoral formation doesn't happen only in class. Here are some things Don has been up to on Campus:

- President of the Life Team, which seeks to "affirm life from womb to tomb." Recently, the Life Team has been involved with the Christian Friends of New Americans to help settle Afghan refugees.
- Running the Inter-Seminary Relations Committee for the Student Government, helping set up social and academic events with the local Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Seminaries.
- Contributing to the Seminary's Daily Advent Devotions
- Leading Adult Bible Study at his fieldwork parish, Zion in Mascoutah.

"Firstname Middlename Lastname—have 'comfort, comfort; you are mine.'" In the face of uncertainty, God proclaims comfort through his prophets.

### [Proclaim God's Comfort]

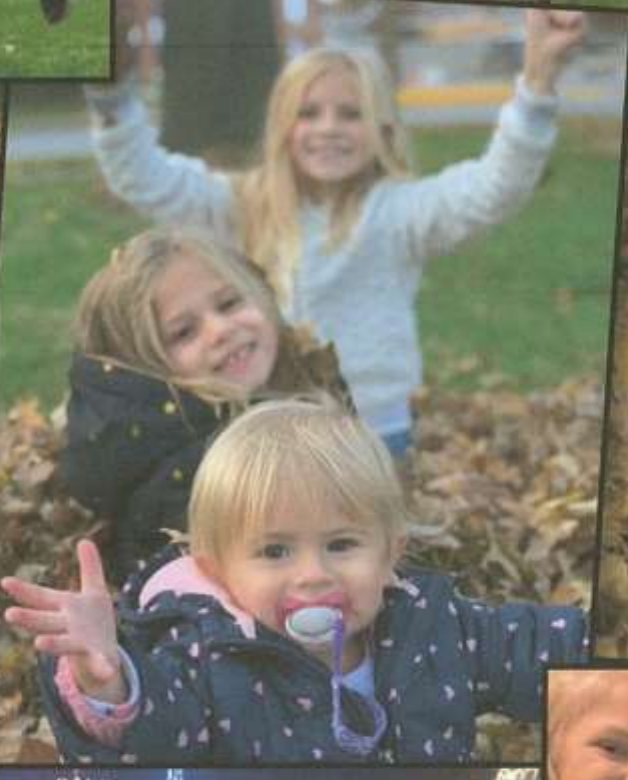
We began by looking at this photograph, A Few Seconds Before Happiness. We've explored the comfort available to us from the perspective of prayerful expectation. I want to close by looking at this image another way. Because the truth is, brothers and sisters, you are not only receiving good gifts, like the little boy. Like Isaiah, you are also working on behalf of the Good Gift-Giver. In the face of someone's uncertainty, God will proclaim comfort through you.

In a way, this room is filled with prophets. No, you're not receiving direct revelation from God like Isaiah or John. Nor are you called to be a pastor. But in your own families, in your own lives, you 'prophesy backward' to the same good, revealed Gift that they saw: Jesus. So listen to Isaiah:

*Go on up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good news;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;  
lift it up, fear not;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Behold your God!" (Isaiah 40:9-10)*

In the face of uncertainty, God proclaims comfort through his prophets. The comfort of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always. Amen.

# NOVEMBER IN PHOTOS





December 2021

"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us."

John 1:14

Julie Lutz, LCMS in Papua New Guinea



Peace-filled greetings, dear family and friends,

I love opening email these days to see so many annual letters coming from you. This year the reports of travels and special times with family are more prominent than last year when so many activities were curtailed. Month by month... so much fun! Not to be outdone, here is My 2021 in like manner:

Julie's 2021 Highlights

- January - Anton working from Port Moresby. The house is empty.
- February - March -
- April - First COVID vaccination May -
- June - July - Second COVID vaccination
- August - Vacation with family September -
- October - Working remotely from SIL, Ukarumpa, for 5 weeks
- November - December - Christmas with family



With Lora and Lois, now in high school, in the Christmas meri blouse they gave to me! We're almost triplets!

That's it -- The notable events of my 2021! Fortunately, contentment, peace, fulfilling relationships, and meaningful service don't come only from the Special Events and Travel.



<-- Screenshot from our Lutz chats



By God's grace, our family has been well. Paul and Rebecca are in Stroudsburg, PA, USA. David and Tabby, in Papua New Guinea. Anton in PNG. Laura and Nathan Hall are in Fryburg, ME, USA.





I've had a line from Robert Browning running through my head lately -- "God is in his heavens and all is right with the world." It sounds like something I'd like to believe; clever and catchy. But ... No, not all is right with the world. The troubles of 2020 didn't evaporate with 2021, nor will they magically disappear for 2022. The hopes we had for greater unity, fewer natural disasters, less injustice, a life little impacted by COVID, more kindness, peace, and joy -- those hopes didn't materialize. We have all stood close to loss and grief this year, our friends' grief if not our own. No, not all is right.

We in Papua New Guinea are no different. Not all is right. Among other woes, Sorcery Accusation Related Violence persists. The lads in the picture above lost their father who was murdered after being accused of sorcery. Our efforts haven't banished the belief or atrocities. Yet I have hope that change is coming. Others are stepping up as part of the growing community which says, "No! Not Now, Not Ever."

And as for the first portion of the Browning line, "God is in His heaven ..." no, that is not entirely correct, either. Heaven is not God's perch from which he callously observes the wreckage of our world, refusing to intervene. No. God came to dwell among us -- Jesus came to live with us in our atrocities, grief, and forlorn hopes. It is God's love, descending from heaven in the Babe Jesus, that we celebrate at Christmas.

Around here, the message of God saving us in Christ is heard in preaching, witnessed in baptisms, and sent out through the pastors and evangelists of the Gutnius Lutheran Church, pictured below. Yet we, dear friends in Christ, wherever we are, we, too, in our words and lives of love are witnesses to God in us and amongst us.



May God bless us each in this coming year.

I am grateful to you who filled in my skeleton year with warm connections and supported my service in Papua New Guinea with your prayers and gifts. Thank you! It wasn't an empty year. God is in His heaven, and much is right with the world.

Peace and joy in Jesus,

**Julie Lutz**

Lutz.travel@gmail.com. Julie.Lutz@lcms.org.  
PO Box 803, Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea



The missionary service of Julie Lutz can be supported with a monthly, quarterly, or yearly giving plan or with a one-time gift. Visit [lcms.org/lutz](https://lcms.org/lutz) or call LCMS Mission Advancement at (888) 843-5267.

Alternatively, you can send checks payable to the LCMS with "PNG/Lutz" on the Memo Line to:  
LCMS Mission Advancement  
1333 S. Kirkwood Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63122-7226

You may also visit our dear friends at [missioncentral.us](https://missioncentral.us) or send your gifts to:  
Mission Central  
40718 Highway E-16  
Mapleton, IA 51034



64 Bakers  
15 pounds fudge  
566 dozen goodies  
\$3,300 raised  
85 customers  
(not counting workers)



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# CHRISTMAS & COOKIES



Eat a cookie,  
Give a cookie  
away.

A dozen for  
you,  
A dozen for  
friends.



December 5



64 People  
15 Pizzas  
35 Dozen Cookies



# Christ's Birth and Christmas Gifts

Director/Teacher, Kaja Mueller      Assistants, Kate Ramsey M/W/F, Sara Cross T/TH  
Preschool Phone: 319-338-3949      www.ourredeemerpreschoolic.org      preschool@ourredeemer.org  
*Our Redeemer Preschool where children play, learn, and grow in Jesus!*



Thank you! Your support of items for the Preschool Christmas Wish List is so appreciated. Your gift will directly help each and every student that walks through our doors. Your gift will help our unique LCMS Christian preschool education will continue.



Unwrapping our Christmas Presents. Thanks to all!



Consign through the Stuff; this is a fundraiser for our preschool. You can donate items by dropping them off yourselves or placing them in a box outside the preschool. Preschool will receive 50% of the profit from the donated items that are sold at Stuff. All items given to Stuff will be a donation if they cannot sell them. Iowa City #43522



# LIVE NATIVITY

December 12, 2021

High school youth present the live nativity. The Outreach Committee serves cookies, cocoa, and hot cider indoors.





# Children's Ministry

Birth—5<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Toddlin' age**—11<sup>th</sup> Grade

9:20 a.m. — 10:15 a.m.

*Invite your friends and come learn about Jesus!*

January 2	<i>New Years – No Classes</i>	
January 9	Lesson 2: Luke 1:5-25, 57-66	Silence before a Son – John is Born
January 16	Lesson 3: Luke 2:1-7, 22-40	The Temple Testimonies – Jesus' Birth and Presentation
January 23	Lesson 4: Luke 2:41-52	His Father's house – Boy Jesus in the Temple
January 30	Lesson 5: Matthew 3: John 1:29-34	The Pointing Prophet – John Points to Jesus



## KIDS CLUB

4 year olds —5<sup>th</sup> grade  
Wednesday nights  
6:45 pm Kids Club/Midweek

**January 5**

Prophecy Window

*Teachers: Jonie & Vicar*

**January 12**

Nicene Creed

*Teachers: Jonie & Paula*

**January 19**

Holy Spirit Window

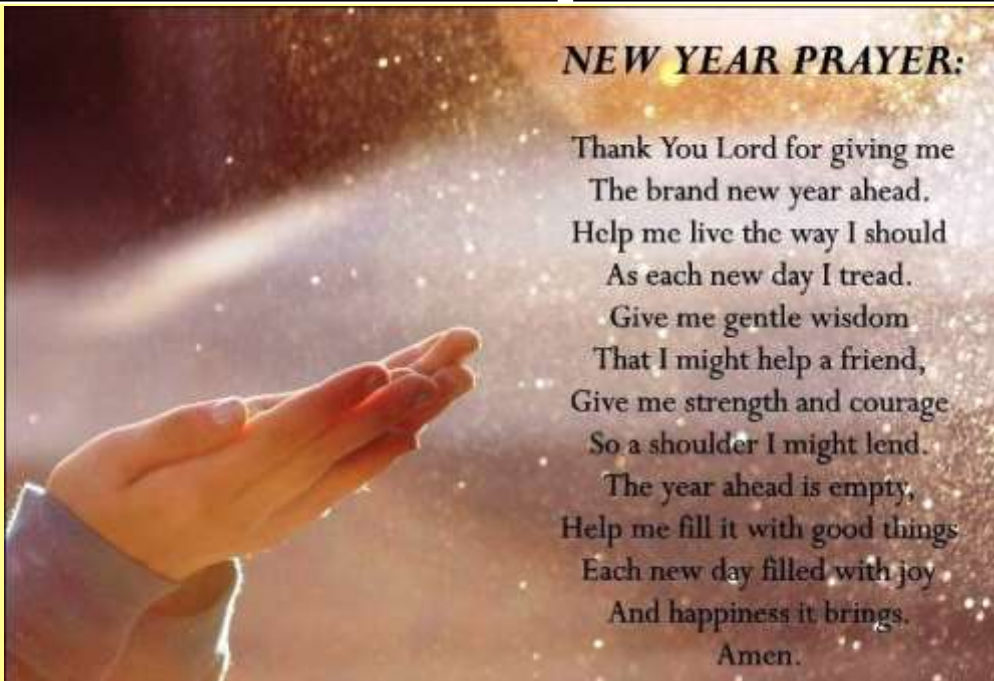
*Teachers: Jonie & Vicar*

**January 26**

*College Care Packages in Fellowship Hall  
with High School*

## NEW YEAR PRAYER:

Thank You Lord for giving me  
The brand new year ahead.  
Help me live the way I should  
As each new day I tread.  
Give me gentle wisdom  
That I might help a friend,  
Give me strength and courage  
So a shoulder I might lend.  
The year ahead is empty,  
Help me fill it with good things  
Each new day filled with joy  
And happiness it brings.  
Amen.



# Children's Christmas Service

Sunday, December 12, 2021



Chorus



Joseph & Mary



Narrators



Wisemen visit Jesus



Travelers to Bethlehem



Preservice Music



Preschool

# Children's Christmas Service





# Youth

6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Graders



JANUARY  
2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

DATE	EVENT	TIME
12/31	New Year's Eve Worship	7:00 pm
3	Youth Committee Meeting	6:00 pm
5	Midweek Meal	6:00 pm
5	Midweek	6:45 pm
9	Undeck the Halls	12:00 pm
12	Midweek Class	6:45 pm
17	Family Sky Trip 	8:00 am
19	Midweek Class	6:45 pm
26	Confirmation Classes College Care Packages	6:45 pm
27	Christ in Film "The LEGO Movie" Rated (G) 	6:00 pm

Confirmation Classes  
&  
High School Midweek  
Resume Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>  
6:45 p.m.

Midweek Meal  
Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>  
6:00 p.m.

We celebrated Jesus' birthday following the Advent service on December 19<sup>th</sup> with a birthday cake.



Church Family  
Ski Day

Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>  
8 am— 6 pm

*Open to entire congregation*

\$69/person for lift, rental & lesson

If interested, please email Kara at  
[youthcoordinator@ourredeemer.org](mailto:youthcoordinator@ourredeemer.org)



## OUR REDEEMER OFFICE DIRECTORY

Office: 338-5626 Fax: 338-9171 Website: <http://www.ourredeemer.org> Preschool: 338-3949  
 Prayer Chain: 351-5297 or [prayerchain@ourredeemer.org](mailto:prayerchain@ourredeemer.org) Special Announcements Line: 338-3505

<u>STAFF &amp; EMAIL</u>	<u>PHONE NO.</u>	<u>STAFF &amp; EMAIL</u>	<u>PHONE NO.</u>
Brent Hartwig, Senior Pastor <a href="mailto:bhartwig@ourredeemer.org">bhartwig@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church) 337-2403 (home)	Kaja Mueller, Preschool Director <a href="mailto:preschool@ourredeemer.org">preschool@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-3949 (preschool) 338-5626 (church)
Kyle Lewis, Vicar <a href="mailto:vicar@ourredeemer.org">vicar@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church)	Lorrie Bailey, Office Coordinator <a href="mailto:reddeemer@ourredeemer.org">reddeemer@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church)
Sara Cross, Preschool Assistant <a href="mailto:preschoolassistant@ourredeemer.org">preschoolassistant@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-3949 (preschool)	Sarah Gabel, Bookkeeper <a href="mailto:bookkeeper@ourredeemer.org">bookkeeper@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church)
Kara Hartwig, Youth Coordinator <a href="mailto:youthcoordinator@ourredeemer.org">youthcoordinator@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church)	Denise Holida, Adult Coordinator <a href="mailto:smallgroups@ourredeemer.org">smallgroups@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church) 930-0165 (cell)
Louise Klopp, Director Choirs/Properties <a href="mailto:choirdirector@ourredeemer.org">choirdirector@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church)	Marilyn Paetz, Organist <a href="mailto:organist@ourredeemer.org">organist@ourredeemer.org</a>	351-4262 (home)
Laurel Sellers, Consultant <a href="mailto:consultant@ourredeemer.org">consultant@ourredeemer.org</a>	319-331-3242 (cell)	Kevin Sellers Director of Technology <a href="mailto:technology@ourredeemer.org">technology@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-5626 (church) 631-8924 (cell)
		Sheena White, Preschool Assistant <a href="mailto:preschoolassistant@ourredeemer.org">preschoolassistant@ourredeemer.org</a>	338-3949 (preschool)

### 2022 Board of Elders

Bill Benson	517-881-9848
David Bohnsack (chair)	319-430-2054
Tim Eick	248-514-2881
Rick Gienapp	319-331-7425
Ryan Haack	319-325-7915
Skip Kempnich	319-351-5297
Eric Kooker	319-339-0175
Chad Pence	319-321-5686
Art Schwarting	319-325-6152

### 2022 Board of Directors

President	Denny Schrader	319-461-7318
Vice President	Arlan Thompson	319-338-2938
Secretary	Barb Schanbacher	319-351-3998
Treasurer	Kari Kibby	319-573-4127
Board of Elders	David Bohnsack	319-430-2054
Properties	Dave Yansky	319-621-7694
At Large	Jeff Kucera	563-316-1088
	Marilyn Albright	319-430-8129

### DEADLINES

**Reflections** (printed weekly): Information must be submitted (written, typed, emailed or faxed) each Wednesday by 5:00 pm

**Beacon Newsletter & Church Activities Calendar** (printed monthly): Information must be submitted (written, typed, emailed or faxed) by noon on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### RADIO

**Lutheran Hour Ministries on Radio**—WMT 600 AM Radio on Sunday mornings at 6:30 am, and KXEL 1540 AM Radio on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am. For more information on Lutheran Hour Ministries go to [www.LHM.org](http://www.LHM.org).

### VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND SCREENING

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church has a strong, caring ministry with children and youth. To promote the safest and most secure environment possible all employees and volunteers, both new and existing, undergo a background screening before working with younger members. Performing background checks provides safeguards and peace of mind to our staff, volunteers, parents, youth, and children.

# Night Drive

Ephesians 5: 8-14

Each vehicle gropes its way  
through the night  
surrounded  
by a small aura of light  
dimming its lights  
when meeting another  
permitting the driver to see  
only a constricted view  
of the landscape--

Each awaits the dawn.

We Christians journey on our way  
through life  
surrounded by His light  
not dimming our lights  
when meeting another  
but permitting others to see  
past this constricted view  
called earth  
to heaven--

We await the Second Dawn.

Carol Schuldt