

A Note from our Pastor:

Growing up in California, I'd never seen a white Christmas. We'd drawn the snow pictures in school, watched the movies and Christmas specials, sung the sleigh-bell songs, but a white Christmas was always just a tantalizing dream. Bing Crosby or no, most of our churches are probably celebrating tonight with not a flake of snow on the ground.

Those who do have snow every year may chuckle about all this, but one December, 7 years ago, the dream did come true for me. It was cold, enough to snow. It did. It's been 9 months, not just for Mom, but for Tino, just about time for him to arrive. And he did. In the fullness of time, a winter wonderland may or may not be over-rated, but oh, the trembling joy in the promise of a child. We made sure to bring him to church, just so he would hear of THE CHILD. And so a new little voice in our midst would remind us that God was with us, Emmanuel, a little voice, calling. As we arrived for worship that Christmas Eve, now in the Midwest, a light snow had just begun to fall, barely enough to sweep off the steps up to our church door. By the drive home, though, it was heavy, and all evening we looked out our window as the snow pelted down on lawns and trees. Bright, white, glistening.

And I've realized since that that's more meaningful than just a Norman Rockwell painting or a warm and cozy nostalgia. We came to church tonight and saw new paraments—white, the color of holiness. This holy night, whatever the weather outside, whether we can see the stars brightly shining or snow falling, is the night of our dear Savior's birth. And he came to make us holy. "Though your sins are like scarlet," God says through the Christmas prophet Isaiah, "they shall be as white as snow" (Is 1:18).

So how shall we look upon a baby? Not as another mouth to feed; nor are babies "to be seen, but not heard." For how shall little Jesus communicate? For weeping and dying was not short the glory of Almighty God. Rather His crying showed the Father's Love Begotten. If only we adults could sing freely, as His little ones, trusting what we are here to do. No we aren't in a wintery wonderland, are we? But the Wonder of the Heavens became flesh, and so destroyed death. "With tears he fights, and wins the field." With that, a Christmas hymn, to outlast jingly bells and fan aflame

the cold of this season...

“This Little Babe”, by Benjamin Britten

This little babe so few days old,
is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at his presence quake,
though he himself for cold do shake;
For in this week unarmed wise
the gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and wins the field,
his naked breast stands for a shield.
His battering shot are babish cries,
his arrows looks of weeping eyes.
His martial ensigns Cold and Need,
and feeble flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitched in a stall,
his defense but a broken wall;
The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes,
of shepherds he his muster makes.
And thus as sure his foe to wound,
the angels' trumps alarm sound

My soul with Christ
join thou in fight;
stick to the tents
that he hath *pight. (*pitched up*)
Within his crib
is surest *ward; (*defense, protection*)
this little Babe
will by thy guard.

If thou wilt foil thy
foes with joy, then
*flit not from this (*move quickly, dart, dash*)
heavenly boy!

He is in the flesh. Yours. You've heard the Word, so the seed is cast. It takes root, so you believe it. Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Be watered, remembering your baptism. Hold fast to the light, for God lets this candle flicker, to calm your storms. In this, Christmas is yours, every day. When I'm feeling down, may I with

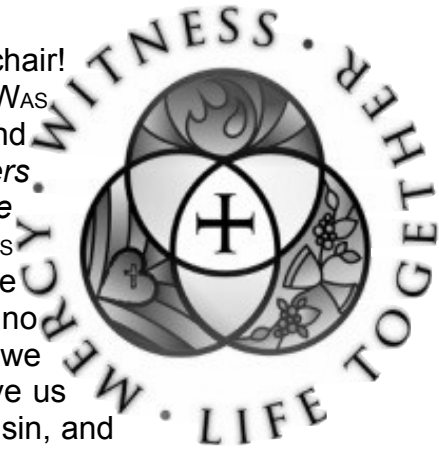
reverence recall "AND WAS MADE MAN."

He became what's sitting on your chair!
So slow down, savor those words "AND WAS
MADE MAN," savored for their wonder and
glory! Then at the cross, the *soldiers*
knelt before Him in mockery; and so we
stand before Him in awe, "AND WAS
CRUCIFIED." Don't just go through the
motions, faithless, winter-cold, as if no
heavenly boy was born. May we in all we
do confess with our body what God gave us
to believe, Jesus our savior from death, sin, and
the grave.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Shaw

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News from our Church Council:

LWML- Members met on Saturday, December 17 and prepared 20 "Goodies" trays for distribution to members of Mt. Olive. Thank you to those who baked cookies, prepared the trays and delivered them. We have purchased \$200.00 of Safeway gift certificates for distribution to local veterans of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has generously approved \$500.00 to our LWML to cover the cost of the Thanksgiving dinners, the Safeway Gift Certificates and costs of the "Goodies" trays. Thank you Thrivent!

There are extra "Mite Boxes" on the narthex table. If you would like to help with the LWML CNH District Mission programs, pick up a box, fill it with your change, bring it to church on the first Sunday of each month, and these funds will be sent in to our district LWML treasurer to pay for mission projects.

Our next regular meeting will be Saturday, January 14 at 12 noon beginning with pot-luck lunch.

(s) Elaine Meiburg

SERVICE – The prayer chain continues strong and thank you to all who participate.

NURTURE- The Children's Christmas Service was wonderful. Even though we had 5 children, they all spoke beautifully and stayed on cue. Thank you so much to the children and parents for their hard work in bringing this together. A special thank you to Elaine Meiburg for being patient with all of the music and Stefan Gudjohnsen for helping to put the final touches on our creche scene. It's always great to see everyone coming together for this production.

FELLOWSHIP- We held two delicious soup suppers followed by a 7pm advent service on December 7th and 14th. We celebrated “Hanging of the Greens” on December 11th with many helpers putting up the Christmas tree and beautiful decoration in our sanctuary with hors' doeuvres served.

We thank the following members for donation poinsettia plants to decorate our church for Christmas:

- The Byrne Family in memory of George and Tami Byrne
- The Fausés in praise and thanksgivings for blessings
- Shelly Fischer in memory of her sister Connie Woods
- Karen C. Fredericks in praise and thanksgiving for Our Lord on High
- Karen C. Fredericks in memory of Thomas R. Cunningham and Anne S. Cunningham
- Guenter and Elaine Meiburg in memory of their parents, Lorin and Elva Burger, and Henry and Erna Meiburg
- Tim and Martha Meiburg in memory of their grandparents, Henry and Erna Meiburg, Lorin and Elva Burger, Augustus and Eva Batchelder, and Glenn and Edythe Graf
- Irene Nagy in memory of Jim Nagy
- Irene Perkins in praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings showered on her family and in memory of Rodney and Pete Rimando
- Russell Souza in memory of Siv Souza and Gary and Judy Gudjohnsen

LLL- The men of the LLL met on December 14th. We watched and discusses Men's Networ “A Carpenter of Steel” about Joseph and












Mary's early life together. There were 7 men in attendance. Bob Winsby donated the Christmas tree for church and a thank you to him for being so generous. The cooks in January will be Guenter and Jerry.

WITNESS –Steve Vekasy, of Keene, N.H., tells about faith-sharing conversations with an old friend battling an illness.


"I recently had a conversation with an old friend I hadn't seen in over a year, and found out he had stomach cancer surgery this past summer. I was able to share with him that I would pray for him, and that faith in Jesus' death on the cross for our sins not only brings the benefits of prayers heard in this life but also salvation in the life to come."

Hear the **The Lutheran Hour**'s new speaker: local stations
KAWZ, Los Gatos, CA, 88.1 FM, Sun 7:00 AM
KCBC, Oakdale, CA, 770 AM, Sat 5:30 PM and Sun 7:30 AM

Mt Olive Birthdays:

-  Duane Becker on January 3
-  Mark Miller on January 4
-  Mary Wilson on January 4
-  Irene Nagy on January 6
-  Tylan Dannenbring on January 13
-  Rachel Garman on January 13
-  Georgia Fauss on January 14
-  Connie Martinez on January 17
-  Anita Dannenbring on January 18
-  Jerry Brown January 21
-  Jan Nicholas on January 30

Mt Olive Anniversaries:

-  Scott and Chris Korte on January 18, 15 years

Treasurer's Report

Bank Account Balances Less Dedicated as of the end of October, Fiscal Year 2011

Checking Account	\$5,283.42
Total Assets in Bank Accounts:	\$5,283.42
Dedicated Accounts	
Building	\$110.49
Inter-Church Food Pantry	\$250.00
LYF	\$431.67
Memorials	\$20,475.00
LLL	\$1,311.68
Education Assistance Fund	\$666.75
SCRIP	\$9,259.38
Sunshine	\$603.61
Transitory	\$791.24
Health Reimbursement	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total Dedicated Funds:	<u>\$33,899.82</u>
Undedicated Bank Account Assets	-\$28,616.40

Bits & Pieces:

Thank you to all who have been keeping Gretchen in your prayers.
(s) Judy Hartwig

Thank you to Shelly Fischer, Tim Meiburg, and Jerry Perkins as they continue to trim bushes, rake leaves and mow and clean up areas around Mt. Olive.

Thank you to the Advent Soup Makers, Georgia Fauss and Shelly Fischer.

Thank you Julie Byrne, Rosemary Olson, Pastor Shaw, and Erica Shaw for helping and producing the Children's Christmas Service.

Please pray for:

✠ All of our shut-in members: Celia Almind, Edward Beuckins, Deloris Hanni, Leonard Key, Ralph Schultz, Lee Snodgrass, and Anne Souza.

✠ Mary Stricklin as she mourns the death of her husband on December 10.



If there are any prayer requests for future Newsletters, please place them in Julie Byrne's mailbox in the narthex.

Monthly Readings:

January 1 *First Sunday in Christmas*

1st Reading: Numbers 6:22-27

Psalm 8

Epistle: Galations 3:23-29

Gospel: Luke 2:21

January 6 *Epiphany*

1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-11 (12-15)

Epistle: Ephesians 3:1-12

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

January 8 *The Baptism of Our Lord*

1st Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

Psalm 29

Epistle: Romans 6:1-11

Gospel: Mark 1:4-11

January 15 *Second Sunday after the Epiphany*

1st Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)

Psalm 139:1-10

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Gospel: John 1:43-51

January 22 *Third Sunday after the Epiphany*

1st Reading: Jonah 3:1-5,10

Psalm 62

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

January 29 *Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany*

1st Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 10:(19-30)31-11:1

Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

Volunteer Schedules for January:

Worship Assistants

- 1 Judy Hartwig
- 8 Tim Meiburg
- 15 David Byrne
- 22 Judy Hartwig
- 29 David Byrne

Acolytes

- 1 Shelly Fischer
- 8 Cordell Meiburg
- 15 Judy Hartwig
- 22 Shelly Fischer
- 29 Judy Hartwig

Altar Guild

- 1 Irene Perkins
- 8 Shelly Fischer
- 15 Shelly Fischer
- 22 Karen Fredericks
- 29 Karen Fredericks

Ushers

- 1 The Meiburg Family
- 8 Russ Souza & Stefan Gudjohnsen
- 15 The Meiburg Family
- 22 Russ Souza & Stefan Gudjohnsen
- 29 The Meiburg Family

New volunteer schedules will come out mid- February. If you would like to be added, removed or have questions about any of these tasks please let Julie Byrne know!

Thank you!

Sunday Worship Schedule

9am - Adult Sunday School

10am - Holy Communion

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL– immediately following
communion

Organizations

LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE (LLL)

3rd Wednesday of every month 12 Noon

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE (LWML)

2nd Saturday of every month 12 Noon during September - May

LUTHERAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP (LYF)

As Announced

YOUNG/MATURE ADULT FELLOWSHIP

As Announced

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

Every Wednesday, 6PM