

December 2011



Messiah Fall Worship Schedule

Sunday Church School 9:00 am

Worship 10:30 am

Fellowship-Coffee Hour 11:30 am

Advent – Christmas – Epiphany.

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Pastor's message

Wow! All three go by at lightning speed. From the first locust-breathed cry of, "Prepare the way of the Lord," to the angelic messages and songs, right down to the third King's "All they had left in the gift shop was this myrrb—yes, I do know it's for embalming," Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are over and done with before you can say, well, Advent Christmas Epiphany! Weeks collapse into days into hours as we careen out of control, speeding through the season like a hot rod through a one-stop-light town. At least it feels that way to me.

I think part of the rushed feeling of the season is due to the false sense of urgency that our consumer culture wraps us in. Things have to be done quickly and efficiently (*before it's too late!*), according to a plan of attack which involves synchronized shopping, whirlwind celebrating, and then moving on to the next Hallmark holiday. Buy now! Free shipping! Black Friday! Yule log! Presents, presents, presents! *And* returns. Credit card bills. On to Valentine's Day! I said a "false sense of urgency" because I don't believe we have to buy into the whole Christmas rush thing. We can either opt out and do it a different, slower way—which is what all the talk of Ad-

vent *waiting* is about. Or we can co-opt some of the less consumer driven traditions, and make them our own.

The latter is harder to do, but it only need be done once, and in the end it's worth it, because it reduces the friction between "churched and un-churched." What do I mean by friction? To illustrate I say, let's face it—you can say, "Keep the Christ in Christmas," and "Merry Christmas, not Happy Holidays," till you're red and green in the face. But in a pluralistic world, you'd only be squirting high test on the fire of interfaith misunderstanding. And repulse those wounded by the church at one time or another. Not to mention projecting an image of intolerance to the majority of our neighbors—who may be spiritual, but aren't the least bit into things religious.

This Advent Christmas Epiphany I'm going to take a few of the secular culture's most loved traditions and re-imagine them within a framework of *theotokos*, which means "God bearer." What I plan to come up with are several ways you can do what everyone is doing seasonally, but infused with Jesus. I'll be doing that during the sermons and Advent mid week services and on the Up to Date. But here's one that fits early December.

Marking Time:

Advent is an imprecise season in the church year. It can contain anywhere from 25 days to 28. It just so happens that this year is one of the long Advents. All the better for using an Advent calendar! But wait! Commercial Advent calendars have only 25 little windows. And not many are religious—they're more Santa and reindeer laden. So, we could reject the store-bought calendars and make our own, with bible verses and suggestions on what good work to do each day. Or we can use the ready made, thus saving time, money, and from self-righteousness. To put a Lutheran spin on the calendar, as you open each door or window, try and think how God's grace—demonstrated in the incarnation is reflected in what you find there. Let the passage of time be marked by sharing the highs and lows of each day in Advent.

Ministers, All the people at Messiah

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Communications Team,

All of the people of God at Messiah

Editor, Lisa Teichmann

Midweek Advent Worship

7:00 pm on 11/30, 12/7,
12/14, 12/21

We gather together Wednesday nights during the season of Advent, to offer Evening Prayer (Holden), to look at Advent from a new perspective, and to respond to the night's gospel in a tangible, meaningful way.

Rather than focusing on "waiting," we'll approach from the viewpoint of the certainty of the coming of Jesus. (We get the word advent from the Latin for "coming.") Jesus'

advent is a past—present—future event—blurring the concept of linear time with the certitude of God's radical relationship with us. Because he loved us, because he loves us, because he will love us—we benefit always from that love, even as we doubt, sin, and just obstruct God in general. So, joy and thanksgiving permeate our waiting, making it a prolonged festival of welcome. Instead of speakers this year, we will hear a bit about how the secular and sacred collide

in the Advent – Christmas season, and how that's not necessarily a bad thing. In fact we can even take the world's commercialized Christmas traditions and recharge them with the "divine intent"--making them usable for we who confess that in Jesus, God took on human-ness. *And*, in the world, making them usable in a new way that reflects the vulnerability of the child of Bethlehem.

Christmas Eve Worship at 5pm and 11pm

...we will welcome the God who comes to us, not in power to destroy, but as a baby, to love, be loved, and turn that love loose!

The 5 pm service is great for kids of all ages, and adults, too. The sermon is interactive, there are lots of familiar carols, and the story of Jesus' birth is told in language that is understandable to them. For the adults, all the candlelight, music, and the laughter of children enjoying praising God for the gift of his son, will make for a fitting Christmas worship.

The 11 pm service is quieter and more reflective of the wonder and mystery of the incarnation. The sermon includes periods of silent meditation as well as the good news of great joy. As midnight brings the Day of Jesus' Nativity, we will welcome the God who comes to us, not in power to destroy, but as a baby, to

love, be loved, and turn that love loose!

Since Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, and we don't normally have a Christmas Day service, there will be no worship service that morning (December 25).

Income & Expense Summary

(through October 2011)

	Actual	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Total Income	\$ 160,262	157,989	2,273
Total Expense	\$ 158,600	156,065	2,535
Net Income	\$ 1,662	1,924	-262

Note - Full details of each Monthly Treasurer's Report can be found on the hallway bulletin board next to the kitchen entrance.

In Our Prayers

Al DeMello, **Barbara Wilson** (B. Wurst's Mom), **Janey Stokes** (rel of the Wurst's), **Perham Family**, **Ed Burgess** (friend of B. Wurst), **Terry Klecker** (rel. of the Costa's), **Sarah, Pat Sapienza** (Friend's of the Costa's), **Pastor Tom** (Parkinson's Disease), **Mike** (friend of R. Bonfiglio), **Andy Wyliee**, **Gen Retelle** (T. Retelle's step-Mom), **Marie Brundage** (R. Brundage's Mom), **Sue**

Strock (R. Ball's sister), **Frank Genna** (friend of the Ensinger's), **Judy Johnson**, **Becky Herlihy** (friend of the Davison's), **Barbara Bonfiglio** (Bob's Mom), **Our military personnel**, **Peter Chuchul**, **Annemarie Chuchul**, **Bill Wurst**, **Rebecca Peterson**, **Peggy Pulfer** (Doug's Mom), **Tom & Jeannine** (friends of L. Teichmann), **Jean Ahrendt** (Nancy's Mom),

Lois Yensz (Mike's Mom), **Brandon Hammerstrom**, **Virginia Yensco** (K. Brundage's Mom), **Krista Seckinger** (Karla's sister), **Taylor Cordts**, **Bob Ensinger** (Rob's Dad), **Phyllis Duesing** (K. Duesing's Mom), **Charlotte Hildebrandt**, **Gabrielle King** (J. Mitchell's relative), **Pat Goodrich** (L. Gordon's Aunt).



Ladies of Messiah Book Group

Come join us for some reading, fun, and fellowship! ! The Ladies of Messiah Book Group will meet December 15 at the home of Melissa Clickner. We will be discussing *The Arrivals*, by Meg Mitchell Moore. For more information, call Tonya Pisinski at 673-1540 or email tonyapisinski@yahoo.com, or call the church office at 673-2011.

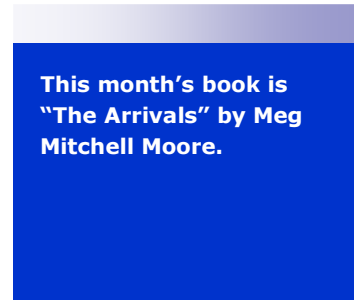
Below is our schedule of books and hosts through the year. We're still looking for a host for June. Come on, *you know* you want to host!

December 15 - *The Arrivals*, by Meg Mitchell Moore – Melissa Clickner

February 16 - *The Sixteenth Round*, by Rubin "Hurricane" Carter – Lynn Schur

April 19 - *Noah's Compass*, by Anne Tyler – Michelle Castell

June 14 - *The Last Days of Dogtown*, by Anita Diamant – To be determined



Christmas Dinner Auction

Messiah's Annual Christmas Dinner Auction will be on Saturday, December 3. We are looking for donations of gift worthy items and hope that some gift certificates can be gathered from area businesses as well. Jay Davison can provide our tax free ID number if requested. Stay tuned for more details

Dinner Groups

Dinner groups will be resumed in January!

"A Taste of Messiah" Cookbook

Our 25th anniversary cookbooks are now available for purchase! They are \$10 each and are available from the church office.



Messiah's 25th Anniversary Celebration

So, where to start... Messiah's 25 Anniversary Celebration Service on Sunday, Nov 20th was amazing!!

I would like to reflect on the day through the focus of our mission statement: Invite, care, grow and share.

Preparations for this event started a few months ago and culminated into a memorable experience.

Invite:

We were blessed to have some special guests joining us that are and have been important in the life of Messiah Lutheran Church: Bishop Margaret Payne, Pastor Kari Keyl, Pastor Hans Arnesen, Pastor Don Blume, Pastor Robert Waworuntu (Immanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church), several of the members of Immanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church, Janine Arnesen-Nolt, Pastor Fred and Clare Teichmann, and Pastor Roland and Joyce Klauack.

Care:

Behind the scenes preparations included "primping" up our building and grounds through the lead of Jean Pituck and Lynn Schur. Many painting, cleaning, organizing and yard work sessions were arranged and used volunteers from our congregation to complete the tasks.

Through our 25/25 campaign we are able to help our partnering church Immanuel Indonesian Lutheran in Newington, NH with a donation to use toward their mission. A fabulous luncheon for over

140 was coordinated by Marge Ball and Lynn Schur with the help of many "elves" to set up and clean up.

Grow:

Bishop Payne assisted with the children's sermon, clearing up the question "What does a Bishop do anyway?" and then proceeded with the sermon for us, complementing Messiah on our example of giving financially and of ourselves and left us with the thought "What in God's name are *you* doing?"

Pastor Tom brought together a meaningful worship experience (per usual) with details to musical choices, bible readings, prayers and children's sermon that all made this worship experience moving and memorable.

Share:

The Sunday school children, the adult choir and the Faith, Hope and Love band led us with an original celebration song composed by our own Linnea Micciulla. John David and Rick Birkhead shared their instrumental talents. Joanne Theil presented every family with an original hand painted 25th anniversary Christmas ornament

We had the unveiling of our beautiful new banner(s) made by Lisa Teichmann, Trudi Costa and Connie Wisneski that now adorns the back wall of our sanctuary!

Did you notice the new hymn boards on each side of the sanctuary? We have Richard Ball and Lynn Schur to thank for these.

Rande Neukam produced a video that included short interviews of Messiah members and friends talking about their favorite memories of Messiah. I don't know if you noticed that Rande also was filming throughout the day, it should be a terrific video of the event as well. Priceless!

I'm looking forward to seeing the photographs taken by our own Bob Hammerstrom documenting this historical day!

A Taste of Messiah Cookbook is complete, a compilation of many wonderful recipes from the cooks of Messiah that also includes a history and pictures of our church.

There were many behind the scenes volunteers to make all of this possible as well.

Messiah Lutheran Church is truly blessed to have such dedicated members and friends, many of whom were not able to be with us physically for this celebration but who are continually with us spiritually. Let us cherish our 25 year history, continue with our present mission and press on in the future for dreams, hopes and challenges that will direct our changing vision for the future and the work we do in His name.

In Christ,

Deanna Cordts

Council President

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Photos courtesy of Bob Hammerstrom

Anniversary Congratulations...

"Giving thanks to God for the congregation of my heart! You have blessed + formed me in more ways than words could ever express. Congratulations to the people God has gathered as Messiah (saints before us, saints with us + saints to come) on the occasion of 25 years of faithful ministry. May the Holy Spirit continue to blow in + through your lives as you celebrate the faith, hope + love of God... inviting, caring, growing + sharing in the name of Jesus."

Pastor Bill Petersen

"It was nice be on the ground at Messiah again. The memories came flooding back..."

From humble beginnings to a more permanent foundation, God was guiding. And we trust that same guiding hand for this time. Sometimes the overarching plan is not always easy to see at the moment. But with the eyes of faith, standing back to gain perspective (which is the purpose of an anniversary), my prayer is that Messiah Lutheran Church will continue to build, only now it is building up the body of Christ, reaching out I word and deed...

May God bless all of you and the common bond of Christian mission and fellowship that we share..."

Pastor Dwight Hanson

"With great delight I offer heart felt congratulations to you from your sister ELCA congregations in New Hampshire on Messiah Lutheran Church's Silver Anniversary. Twenty five years of congregational life is worthy of a celebration.

God bless your celebration of this very important occasion in your life together as the Holy Spirit continues to form and shape your faith community around the risen Christ."

The Rev. Donald E. Blume

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