

Ripples

Stillwater Free Lutheran Church

“Sharing Jesus Christ with Our Neighbors”

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For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

From the Pastor's Desk

December is here, and everybody is preparing for a COVID Christmas.

Shopping is different this year, and as a matter of fact, I read that on-line retailers had the biggest day in sales EVER on Cyber Monday with over 10 Billion in sales!

And, if Thanksgiving is any indicator, then Family gatherings will look different also. One TV add suggested a ZOOM, or SKYPE gathering instead of meeting in person, and another suggests a VRBO gathering for a remote get away. Crazy right!!

So, no matter your stance, or your plans for the Holiday season, things are most definitely different.

On Sunday, we lit the first Advent Candle, ushering in the season of preparation. The time we prepare ourselves for the Coming of Jesus into the world. Both His first coming as we celebrate Christmas, and His future second coming, because He has promised that He will indeed return!

And, let's face it, we definitely need to prepare ourselves! This Pandemic has all of us on edge, and most major cities have seen more violence these last few months than decades before!

As we lit the Advent candle on Sunday, our theme verse was from Luke 2:8-15. The story of the Angels visiting the shepherds and telling them of the Saviors birth. Verse 14 says: (a great company in heaven said) "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

With all the turmoil we see in the news, and dealing with gathering restrictions, and social distancing, and possible shutdowns – How much PEACE do you have this Christmas?

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote a poem on Christmas day in 1863, and we have a familiar Christmas carol based on it today. The first stanza goes: I heard the bells on Christmas day their old familiar carols play, and wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, good will to men.

This carol is sung often during this season, and we all want the Peace and comfort that the Angels message promises, and Henry's poem entices, but really – How peaceful do you really feel?

If you were to ask a dozen people, I bet that Peace on earth is most definitely wanted, but probably pretty far from our minds, and every time I get reminded to put on my mask, and stay six feet away, there is not a lot of Goodwill on my mind toward my fellow man!

While we know the first stanza of that song pretty well, and it belts out a wonderful message, we all struggle with grasping and keeping it. It seems allusive and slippery, just out of reach most days.

Here's the kicker - Longfellow seems to have been in the same place we are today! The third stanza goes: "And in despair I bowed my head: 'There is no peace on earth,' I said, 'For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men.'

This poem was written at probably the lowest point in Longfellow's life. In the course of 2 years he lost his wife in a horrible burning accident, then his eldest son, Charles, joined the union army during the civil war. He was severely wounded and thought dead.

I think it is safe to say that Peace and Goodwill for Henry were far away!

Is that where you are finding yourself? Are the things going on in our nation, state, and community stealing your peace? Well maybe, it's because you are overlooking the source of Peace?

It's not in the things we have or get. It's not in the places we go or can't go. It's not even in the places we stay. And, while they are usually a great comfort- Peace isn't in just our families!

No - the source of true Peace and Comfort is found only in Christ Jesus!

Interestingly enough, Mr. Longfellow understood this when he wrote: Then pealed the bells more loud & deep: 'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to men.'"

Jesus is the provider and sustainer of peace! Micah 5:5 in speaking about the Messiah - Jesus - Says: He shall be their peace! Isaiah declares the source of peace in Isaiah 40:1-2: Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

These words bring hopefulness and peace, because they are from God. This text is God's response to a weary people. A response of peace and comfort.

The comfort Isaiah is telling us about is the everlasting comfort in knowing that our God is looking out for us!

So, as we move closer to Christmas and Peace on earth AND goodwill toward men – remember that the source and sustainer of our PEACE and COMFORT is God Himself through Jesus our Lord and Savior!

MERRY CHRISTMAS and GOD BLESS!

Our youth group is selling Christmas cookie plates again this year! They will make some of their own cookies, but still ask that some be donated so the plates will be filled with many different varieties of cookies and goodies for you to buy.

Look for them in the foyer after service all December!

Free Flyers Youth Group

The Free Flyers are committed to serve the community through our strength in Jesus Christ.

Welcome to December everyone, we made it, gold stickers for everyone, but most importantly all glory to God for always being our foundation no matter what circumstances come our way.

I'm sure all of you are still very tired from Thanksgiving and working out to protect yourself while Black Friday shopping (that's the true season where you have to wear orange so you don't get hunted), but tired or not, there's never a bad time to thank the Lord for the blessings we have. I recently saw a picture that really reminded me how many things I take for granted, and don't show my gratitude to the One who provides it all. There was a man riding a bike who gets passed by a car and thinks, "Man it would be so nice, if I had a car and didn't have to ride this lame bike everywhere." He then rode past a man walking who was thinking, "Man it would be so nice if I could have a bike and wouldn't have to walk everywhere." Watching the man walk was a man behind him in a wheelchair who thought, "Man I just wish I could walk."

Without Christ we will never be truly satisfied, John 4:14 reminds us, "But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." In all situations, let us be thankful for what we have, because though we do have earthly blessings that we should be thankful for, they pale in comparison to the glory God promises us in eternity. One thing out of many that I am definitely thankful for is the youth group, and since we're still kind of cooped up in the youth room, also thankful my sense of smell still hasn't completely come back, here is what these wonderful kids have been up to.

The end of October and first three weeks of November for the youth were more filled up than my jeans after grandmas stuffing at Thanksgiving dinner. We finished off October with pumpkin carving/butchering at our sister church Faith Free Lutheran in town, and our reformation party here at the church with numbers of 6 and 10, respectively. Through the first three weeks of November we had numbers of 4, 9, and 8, so after 45 minutes on the calculator, I solved that the average attendance for youth group was 7. We finished off November with our second annual "youthsgiving", where all the youth, Rachel, and I go to our house and cook a Thanksgiving meal together. After we've all eaten ourselves into a new clothes size, we package up the leftover food on plates (we purposely buy extra), and hand them

out to many members of the congregation. This year we were able to have eight youth and package ten full plates. A huge thank you to Ed and Marie Harris for the free turkey! And all the youth and their parents for helping us show Christ's love through this event.

We continue to Journey Through the New Testament for our curriculum and will be studying Jesus' ministry on earth until our break for Christmas, December 16th. Speaking of Christmas, we have begun our Christmas program practice, hooray! The program this year is called Back to the Manger and if you are 12th grade or under or an immature adult, we'd love for you to join us, and help us retell the birth of our precious Savior! Through this play we will look at all the tough times people back then still had to face and will hopefully give us more perspective of how much Jesus is truly in control of. Confirmation and Sunday School have been put on hold until the second week of January, but if there's anything any of you want to be involved in or any information on anything such as youth group, confirmation, the Christmas program, or anything else, just let me know, I'd love to help you all!

I am keeping the whole body of Christ, including this amazing church family this Thanksgiving as I am so thankful for all of you, and your awesome personalities, have a great Thanksgiving and December!

God Bless,
Bryce Timmerman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!
ED & MARIE HARRIS
SEAN SOHO
SAMARA WISNER



Women's Missionary Federation

We met on November 19 at 10:00 at Nicole's house. There were 10 women present. Gayle gave devotions from Psalm 27 and Thessalonians 5:18. Nicole read the minutes from September as there was no meeting in October.

Linda McGrew gave the treasurers report. She ordered the study books for 2021, prayerfully they will be available at the Christmas party that will take place December 18th at 5:30 at the church. Each book is \$12 so please get Linda your money when you pick up your book. The topic for next years study is "Why is what you believe important?" focusing on text from 1Timothy. We also decided to send the 2020 missionary birthday money to Famke Berger.

Neila will present on a missionary at the January meeting.

Nicole talked about the upcoming events in the church for December. We will decorate the church on November 28th at 10:00 and go caroling on December 6th. This year will be different than the past because we are not able to enter the facilities that we have in the past, so we created a list from our congregation. We will contact each person to make sure that they would like us to come sing for them and make a schedule. Lori is also putting together some goodie baskets with some help from some of the ladies. The Christmas program will be December 20 during the 9:30 service. Susan Shea will make a Happy Birthday Jesus cake again for us to share after the program. Our youth group will be selling cookies again after service this year. They plan to bake some themselves, but they are requesting that the congregation still make some to bring so they can keep the plates full and looking nice. It was mentioned that we had volunteered to put up the garland in Kalispell this year, Nicole checked into it, and the city had another group already scheduled to decorate. She was told that if the need arose again that we would be contacted to see if we were still interested. The annual reports are due to Nicole by December 15th. We will have two services for Christmas Eve. One at 7:00 pm and one at 9:00 pm.

Nicole led the bible study and many prayer requests were talked about. Sherri led our prayer and we fellowshiped over lunch that was provided by Nicole and Elaine. For the Christmas party on the 18th we will have a potluck so be sure to bring your favorite dish to share! We also will do a gift exchange game as well as reveal our prayer sisters, so don't forget to bring a special gift for your sister and something for the game. If you are not able to make it to the party you can bring your gift to the church for your prayer sister, but make sure you reveal yourself!

Submitted by Nicole

Prayers for December

Please take this home and use it all week long.

"Whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive." Matt 21:22

Church Work & Ministry

Sharing Jesus Christ with our Neighbors
Building Project and Committee
Church Leaders, Staff & Worship Tea
Stillwater Men's Group & Youth Gro
Stillwater & National WMF
Feeding the Flathead & After School Prog
Intervarsity Christian Fellowship

General Prayers

Marriages and Families
Our Country and Leaders
Workers in the Harvest Field

Military

David Askvig (Bruyer)
Issac Saenz
Katherine Elgin
Aaron Burns
Andrew West
Gauge Triplett
Johnathan Gelormino
James Gelormino



Health Concerns

Sylvan Herset
Justin Latta (Herset)
Joyce Banzet
Maverick Bench (Jorgenson)
Jeremy Hartle
Cindy Houtonen (Jorgenson)
John Cluba (Shea)
Kelly (Stahlberg)
Bob Cartwright
Steve Seinknecht (Elgin)
Chris Trost (Shea)
Charina Haynes' Dad
Cindy (Askvigs)
Luke Heupel (Tutvedt)
Jenny Stupack
David Reed (Stahlberg)
Deb & Johnny (Timmerman)
Eric (Cartwright)



*Christmas Eve
Candlelight Services
December 24th @ 7:00
pm & 9:00 pm*

After-School Program

Children are our future; they will be Lawyers, Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, Farmers and Ranchers, Parents and maybe even Pastors. We, here at Stillwater Church, are providing a place for children to come to after school while their parents are still at work. In fact, we built the activity center for that purpose, a place where our after-school youth and others in this area can utilize it for their activities. Pastor Craig calls the after-school program a ministry here at Stillwater. We are in our 4th year, and I believe it is because we are to teach the children about God and his Son Jesus. We are insistent on spending a short amount of time each day helping them learn some fundamentals about the Bible. Can we count on your support as a congregation and pray for each of these children so they will want to hear about Jesus and welcome Him into their lives? The children of the future need us.

Here is a list of the kids who attend the after-school program this year: Addison, Alec, Ashton, Augustus, Autumn, Efa, Ellie, Evenelle, Gavin, Gracie, Jack, Jackson, Jameson, Layla, Lexi and Mitchell.

Feeding the Flathead

We served 68 to go meals on October 26th. We had 3 huge pots of Chicken soup, hot grilled sandwiches, carrot and celery sticks, and a wonderful treat made by Judy Hogan.

I want to thank Susan Shea, Haylee Meyer, and Judy Hogan for helping to serve that evening. Thank you to Sherri for helping to ask for donations.

We do make coffee and Kalispell Creamery still is donating 2 gallons of their delicious milk for us to serve.

The guests were very appreciative for a hot meal, we even received thanks via Barbara the next day!

Our next service date is December 28. (Stillwater serves on the last Monday of the month.) Their meal is ready from 5-6:30 pm or so. We will continue to serve at Central Christian Church in Kalispell until we maybe, someday, can go back to the indoor dining area served on real plates! We load the to-go containers in the kitchen there.

On Monday, November 30th we served 97 to go meals!! I made 4 huge trays of Shepard's Pie, carrot and celery sticks with dressing, a roll and a dessert.

Every recipient was kind, thankful and joyful!

Much thanks go to those who made mashed potatoes: Vicki W., Lavonne W., Judy K., and Suzanne T. It was so helpful to have those made beforehand. Thank you also to Lusha and Kim T. for your homemade baked treats. They were a nice addition to the meal. Thank you to Darryl for sharing his ground beef, we used this in our 'pie'!

We cannot prepare the meals without help at the Central Christian Church.

Susan Shea and Shelby Switzer worked hard to get the containers filled, make coffee and clean up. You were awesome!!

Thank you to our Church family for continuing to support this ministry. If you can help serve let me know! Since we plan our menu, please ask Susan or I what is needed if you wish to donate items.

Christmas hugs,
from Lori

Building Committee Report

The bathroom construction is progressing nicely! Matt Lee and his crew have completed the framing and the plumber Shay Evanoff (Phil's Plumbing) has completed most of his work. Matt requests we choose our colors for the walls and partitions so he can coordinate with the subcontractors. After surveying some of our members the response I got was to make it cost effective! Leave the esthetics until later! Jeff Timlick (Kalispell Electric crew) is presently working on the rough-in electrical installation. (i.e. outlets, lights, switches etc.) for the interior walls before insulation.

Rick Martinez is evaluating our need for roof snow breaks, size, how many and locations. With recent snowfall we have had a bit of snow and ice buildup on the roof. Ken West has presented us with floor samples to be reviewed and decided upon for the entryways, bathrooms, and kitchen. Trent Neumann has begun construction of our sand mound septic system. Our civil engineer Stephanie Reynolds is coordinating with Trent and her T&M charges are estimated to be between \$ 2,500. and \$ 3,500. She will be working with a representative from the Health Department to observe construction and for final inspection.

As you probably know we recently reached our \$ 100,000. Fundraising Goal. However, expenses continue to come in and thus far we have been very blessed to keep the Building Fund balance well ahead of expenses. That separation is beginning to tighten though as we complete WIP tasks. Be assured Nicole and I closely monitor this fund! As we work through the *present estimates*, \$ 25K for the septic system, \$ 75K for the bathrooms, and \$ 19K+ for the rough-in electrical we will quickly exhaust the building fund balance. At the

time of this writing the balance in the fund is approximately \$ 135K. Our latest fundraising effort is the sale of the cookbooks. We hope to sell all 200 of them. They make excellent Christmas gifts so buy yours soon.

Please keep this matter in prayer and we ask for your continued financial support. If you have ideas for fundraising please contact me. God has richly blessed us through the donors He has provided thus far, and I am confident He will continue to do so. We are grateful for your support and prayers!

We wish you a very blessed joyful, peaceful and Merry Christmas filled with the love of the Christ Child!

In His Service, Ed Van Scoten



Sunday School & Wednesday Evening



Children and youth Christmas program practice continue on Sundays, November 29, December 6 & 13 at 10:45 am with presentation on Sunday, December 20 during worship at 9:30. Wednesday Evenings will continue for December 2,9 & 16 with dinner at 5:30 and class until 7:30. We will take a Christmas break for the 23 & 30, and resume on January 6.