

Ripples



Stillwater Free Lutheran Church

“Sharing Jesus Christ with Our Neighbors”

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DECEMBER

“For unto us a CHILD is born, unto 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

Peace on Earth -- REALLY??

As we prepare and get ready to celebrate Christmas this year, there is A LOT of uncertainty and even fear! The economy is in shambles. We are told that gifts and other supplies are going to be in short supply, because of a broken supply chain. There are terrible reports of violence and rioting from cities across the country.

And let's not forget the pandemic - as if the media would allow that! It seems there is talk of shutting the country down again because of the OMICRON variant.

That's all we need is more fear and uncertainty!

It almost feels like a physical oppression that is pushing us to our limits, and the joy that is usually associated with Christmas feels dampened, and actually even depressing!

With all this going on, I think we have allowed ourselves to be lured into having a sense of doom and gloom and thinking that the future is just going to get worse!

So, whatever seems to be going on, or the reasons you attach to it, it seems that this year has less joy displayed, and a lot more stress.

And with the headlines we read in the news today, it almost makes the Angels Announcement of "Peace on Earth and, goodwill toward men!" sound kind of hollow.

I mean there hasn't been peace on earth since the Great flood!

And, looking at those headlines again and it seems that we have completely misunderstood the idea of Goodwill Toward Men!

As I write this article, and contemplate having goodwill toward others, I think one of the reasons we are struggling is because we are more focused on our will, than the will of God!

So, what do we do to remedy this? How are we to have joy with all the turmoil going on around us?

Well, we take a moment and look at what the announcement really is all about!

The Angel said: **Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

First, notice that this news is for all people!

Too often we think that there are some who just don't deserve to hear about the Savior. And if we go down that road, we will very quickly see that we fall into that category ourselves, so we can help spread peace and Joy by spreading the Gospel message that Jesus came so we may have life and have it abundantly. And while we are doing it - we find that Peace and Joy have slipped in unannounced!

Secondly, we see that the news that brings us peace on earth is not the kind of peace that we think - it is more important, because the peace is between us and God. We have a Savior born to us! Someone to reconcile us with God!

And once we realize that we are reconciled to God, we soon stop seeking His approval and start sharing His Grace and Love! And again as we do this we find that Peace and Joy have arrived, usually without our notice - Again!

And finally, as we celebrate the season, and look ahead to the New Year - we can rest assured that God is in control!

He tells us through the Prophet Jeremiah: **For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give**

you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, declares the LORD.

So, in order to restore the Joy and wonder of the season let's take a moment and look at the announcement that the Angels gave us some 2021 years ago - and take it to Heart!

Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Merry Christmas All!

I pray we all will have a Blessed Season with Joy and comfort knowing that we celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior - a gift given to all peoples, and also that God is indeed in charge, so we can face the season and the New Year with confidence, and hope!

Feeding the Flathead

(October) Our ministry continues to serve a meal on the last Monday of the month. We had 53 recipients on the 25th.

They enjoyed a chicken casserole, buttered roll, salad and cut apples with caramel.

Thank you so much Early M. and my faithful husband for all your help.

I loved seeing Early interact with the guests! They all know Jesus is the King of her heart!

I'm thankful our church continues to support this ministry.

Hugs from

Lori

(November) We served chicken enchilada casserole, Spanish rice, homemade apple sauce, and cookies. Fifty meals were passed out to a grateful crowd. Thanks Stillwater, for this ministry that served your community.

Thanks to Pastor Craig, Sherri, Early, Lori, Suzanne, and her 4 H group for cooking and serving.

Missions

We are very sorry this is so belated. In the previous letter you received about 3 months ago, we mentioned raising funds (\$3,500) to hire an immigration lawyer to help us apply for a R Visa (religious visa). The checks have come in the earlier of this past July, and here is the final support raised for the R Visa - \$3,616. We want to express our sincere thanks to you – your generous support. And we want to praise our Lord with you for His faithful providing.

Residing in a foreign country, the extra cost like this can be one of the worrisome things for our family, but we are thankful God and all the generous donors He brought into our lives – thank you so much for praying for us, for loving us, for encouraging us – with your generous support, we can focus on establishing the Chinese Church – Living Stone and the mission of reaching out Chinese scholars at University of Minnesota. It is one of the biggest joys for our family to witness some of Chinese scholars professed their faith to Jesus our Lord.

We don't know what the future holds, but we know that God is mighty. Thank you for standing with us side by side: May God's Blessings be with you all as you serve Him!

In Christ – Holmes Zhao, Jia Liang, Ann Zhao, Joshua Zhao (AFLC Missionaries to the Chinese Church in Minnesota)

After-School Program

This has been a sad month for us here at Stillwater, as our After School coordinator has resigned. But we are so thankful for Karla and all she has done for these children and this program. She has truly been an answer to prayer. We are still in need of snacks. Whatever you can bring is a huge blessing! Please continue to pray for this program and for all the children we have the opportunity to witness to: Ashton, Augustus, Bentley, Ella, Ellie, Gavin, Grey, Jack, Jackson, Kensley, Layla, Liam, Lexi, and Mitchell.

*Cookbooks are still available!
See Rachel T to get yours
\$10.00 each and all proceeds go to the
Activity Center*

December Featured Recipe:

OLIVE GARDEN ZUPPA TOSCANA II

- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>1 lb. Italian Sausage</i> | <i>2 Cloves Minced Garlic</i> |
| <i>1 Large Onion, Chopped</i> | <i>½ Can Oscar Meyer Real Bacon Bits (less fatty than real bacon)</i> |
| <i>2 Large Russet Baking Potatoes, sliced in half, then into ¼ inch slices</i> | <i>Salt & Pepper to Taste</i> |
| <i>2 Cans Chicken Broth</i> | <i>2 Cups Chopped Kale or Swiss Chard</i> |
| <i>1 qt. Water</i> | <i>1 Cup Heavy Whipping Cream</i> |
| <i>½ tsp Fennel (optional)</i> | |

Cook sausage in a 300° oven. Bake approximately ½ hour. Drain on paper towels and cut into slices. Place onions, potatoes, chicken broth, water, fennel and garlic in pot; cook on medium heat until potatoes are done. Add sausage, bacon, salt & pepper; simmer for another 10 minutes. Turn to low heat; add kale and cream. Heat through and serve.

Sherri Scavo

Stillwater Youth Groupies

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

I would be writing this in swim trunks and sunscreen due to how crazy nice it's been outside recently, but Craig says "that's not work attire", so instead I'm typing this newsletter in my khakis and red tee looking like Jake from State Farm, but happy December! The Lord has truly blessed us with such beautiful weather, and though the weather out here changes its mind more than I do picking out candy, our omniscient God never changes, another absolute blessing! If I'm being honest, these last two months (this is your Nov-cember newsletter, since we didn't get one out last month) have been full of ups and downs, which makes me even more thankful that we serve a never-changing Savior. No matter what is going on, our God is always the same, He will not let us down or leave us, it is not possible in His nature. The Lord gives us different people in our lives to walk with us, help us, council us (sometime make fun of us if we need it), and just simply be there for us. In Proverbs we are reminded of the gift that God has bestowed upon us in the form of other people, 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." I encourage us to work together as the body of Christ and God's children and be there for one another, not just when it's convenient, but keeping spiritual vulnerability with those you feel God has placed in your life for teaching and correction. The only one problem we run into when we depend and rely on other people.....is that they're other people, I know, plot twist. Other than youth pastors, ok maybe them too, nobody is even close to perfection or complete dependability. Other people are a gift from God, but unfortunately people will let us down, our Father and true hope never will! Hebrews 13:8 puts it perfectly, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." In the book of Jeremiah, God's love is described as "everlasting" many times, the book of Isaiah talks about the earth and all that is in it fading, but God never will. I hope you're mind reading this in a loud voice (unless you're in the middle of church service, keep it down a little), but this so exciting to talk about! WE CAN ALWAYS HAVE GOD IN OUR LIVES! In this life and the next one, if we let Him take over our lives and live under His perfect law, He is with us. I encourage you, if you haven't already, to find someone who can be an accountability partner, and a true brother/sister in Christ, but also never forget who you're truly serving and that HE is always in our lives if we let Him! I try to instill this same idea into the youth kids, and, since somebody just brought up the youth group, I guess we better talk about them, here's what's been happening!

The months of October and November contained many events and special gatherings for the youth, and from those activities, came many blessings as well! On October 9th, we loaded up seven youth kids into a vehicle that already had the keys in it and headed down to Missoula to herd cars into a parking lot for the Griz game. At first we were only charging the cars

\$.01 a spot, but then I had the kids turn the sign right side up, and we were able to get \$10 per spot. The parking lot was supposed to hold sixty cars, but I've last minute packed a Walmart sack full of all my clothes for a week-long trip many times before, so we said challenge accepted and parked 73 cars in that lot, hallelujah they all fit, and we didn't even have to stack that many on top of each other! It was a wonderful time of fellowship and fundraising for the youth group, and we'd once again very much like to thank Sharon Wilhelm for putting in our name for this opportunity, it was an absolutely blessed time! The next Wednesday, October 13th, a friend of mine, Drew Buckner, who is the executive director of Braveheart Chaplain ministries, came and gave a presentation about the sanctity of life, and talked about suicide prevention/awareness. The adults from Bible study joined our twelve youth in attendance to listen in and, though, as I've mentioned before, it can be a very difficult and uncomfortable conversation, it is so important to remember God's love for us and the treasures He has in store for us. Drew did a great job of relating to the youth, and really let the Lord use him for that presentation, so a big thanks to Drew in this newsletter as well! To round out the month that was busier than a vacuum cleaner in a youth room, we had our annual reformation party on Wednesday, the 27th! Everyone was encouraged to come learn about the history of the reformation and Protestantism, as well as dress up for a costume competition we hosted (they weren't allowed to dress like Craig or myself though, would've been too scary). They bobbed for apples, maybe a few onions as well that the youth leader accidentally threw in there, learned about who Martin Luther is and how the Lord used him to help start the Protestant church. Nine kids were able to join in on the fun, some dressed as hunters, cheerleaders, electric workers, etc, some ate so much candy I think they started a new disease, but it really was great fellowship and I'm beyond thankful that our youth group community is growing in Christ and together!

Congratulations, you just got through the October part of my newsletter, now for the month we're on! We had solid attendance in November, and we got to welcome three new faces in three weeks, hallelujah! On Saturday, November 20th, Rachel and I hosted the youth at our house for our annual Youthsgiving gathering! I made sure to clarify to the parents already, but also to whoever's reading this, youthsgiving does not mean giving them away, that would be a big no-no, they're too awesome, it just means we cook a big, ol' thanksgiving meal with them! We purposely cook a lot, so we have leftovers, package them up, and hand them out to different members of the congregation. It's definitely a blessing to see all the youth work together and simply help other people, it's quite the testimony and very needed in today's society. The youth also served pie to the congregation after our Thanksgiving Eve service on, you guessed it, Thanksgiving Eve. Thank you to the congregation for fellowshiping with the youth so well, it may not seem like it, but it's a big deal when you interact and socialize with our great teens,

makes them feel welcome and loved! In terms of lessons, we have been diving into the gospel of John, using a curriculum called *Studies on the Go*, and I can really see some spiritual maturing from when I first started here those many, many moons ago (two years), but what a blessing to see young believers start to blossom! Also please keep them in your prayers as they continue to encounter growing pains and different obstacles in life.

December holds a few adventures for our teens, even during the busy times, including selling cookies, which, if you're reading this in church right now, turn around and come grab some (or wait until Craig's done preaching first, whatever you want to do). We will be selling Christmas cookies from the 5th-19th every Sunday after church, so if you would like to purchase a tray or donate some cookies, either one is A-ok with me, just let me know! Our last youth group will be on December 15th before we head into Christmas break, and we'll celebrate the birth of our perfect Savior with our annual Christmas party! I put this in every newsletter, but I really mean it, if you know someone youth group aged (6th-12th grade), that you think would like to come or might really need it, let me know and I would love to talk with either you or that person, new faces are awesome!

Confirmation is going as strong as Charlotte when she's hungry, she'll climb mountains if she smells food, but we're in year two and a special shoutout to John and Matti Hartle for staying caught up during such a busy time. We're on track to finish a little early at the moment, and are enjoying great conversation about the intricacies of the Lord's Prayer! However, confirmation is on a brief hold due to Christmas play practice after service every Sunday! We are performing *Chris-myth Busters* this year on Sunday, December 12th during normal service hours, but that's as much as I'm going to reveal, now you have to come and watch it to find out the rest (now that's marketing). The kids are very excited to show off for everybody, so come on out, cheer them on, and most importantly, celebrate the birth of Jesus with us!

Thank you to the congregation for your never-wavering support, we couldn't do anything without you, well quite literally, but realistically talking about your constant encouragement and prayers. Please continue to pray for all of our ministries here at Stillwater, that the teachers and leaders would always be instruments, just simply spreading God's Word and message, and allowing Him to do the rest! Rachel and I will continue to pray for you all as well, and have a great Christmas, never stop growing with Him!

God Bless,
Bryce Timmerman



Women's Missionary Federation

Sherri opened with devotions. She also did Bible Study. Thank you, Sherri, for filling in. Linda gave the treasurer's report. We have \$449.54 in the bank. We went over upcoming events. The youth will be selling cookies on the 5th, 12th, and 19th of December. They need people to bring cookies for this. This is a big fundraiser for the youth, so please help where you can. We will have our Christmas party at Suzanne Tutvedt's on December 10th at 6:00.

We will reveal our secret prayer partners and will have a white elephant. Please bring a small gift if you would like to participate. We will be having a fun night on December 15th playing Bingo with the Kids club. Come have fun with our children! Friday, the 19th, we will have 2 candlelight services. One at 7 and one at 9. We hope to see you there. New books will be out soon with monthly hosts and cohosts and the different work groups, Bible Study, and devotions. They will be available at the Christmas Party. There are a few changes. Please refer to your booklet to find out where our January Meeting will be. Have an amazing New Year!

Judy Hogan and Elaine served a very delicious lunch of soups and salad. Thank you for all your hard work.

Submitted by,
Elaine Lessor: Secretary

CALLING ALL!!

Our children and youth invite you to attend their Christmas play "Chris-myth Busters" on Sunday, December 12th at 9:30 am. What a wonderful way to prepare for the coming of the Christ child.



This is a perfect opportunity to invite your family, friends, and neighbors.

A time for fellowship will follow the service with coffee and cake!

Building Committee Report

Matt did not include appliances in his \$ 50,000. estimate for the kitchen. With Gayle Lantto's leadership and the help of other kitchen ladies the appliances were identified and ordered. These have been purchased through Advanced Restaurant Supply except for the two ranges which were purchased at Home Depot. Advanced Restaurant will be delivering their equipment next Thursday December 9 after Ken West has completed laying the floor. The ranges have already been delivered.

If anyone would like to donate toward the cost of kitchen appliances following is a list of these. Please mark your gift "For Kitchen Appliances." It will go into the building fund but will help to offset what will be spent for these items.

Dishwasher \$ 14,646.20

Two Frigidaire Gallery 30 in. induction electric ranges with pigtails \$ 3,655.96

Note: One has been donated.

Two 27" Atosa refrigerators with two additional shelves @ \$ 2,352.55 ea. = \$ 4,705.10

One Atosa freezer with additional shelf \$ 2,773.75

One Bunn Airpot coffee brewer (Model No. 23001.0017CWTF15-APS) \$ 665.00

Airpot Winco Model No. APSP-925 4ea. @ \$ 52.10 = \$ 210.00 + \$ 13.60 surcharge = \$ 223.60

One Sharp commercial dial microwave (Model 100WR-21CFS) \$ 325.00

Note: A stainless steel triple sink has also been donated.

Total \$ 25,194.61

The drive-thru pad has been concreted and Matt plans to build the roof structure in the months ahead as he has time and material becomes available. The storm water ponds were recently sodded, and the shed has been moved to allow better access beside the Northeast pond. Also, a water bottle filler has been installed above the water fountain outside the restrooms. *Good News looking ahead!* Both Matt and Josh (cabinetmaker) have committed to having the kitchen ready for use by Christmas. Thanks to Early McWhorter for arranging to get the rocks set at the East entryway. This is the beginning of her landscaping plan for around our new building, including the church. A list of project expenses to date will be presented at the annual meeting in January! As of this writing the total is over 1 million dollars! As always, thank you for your continued prayers and support. Please contact me with questions or concerns regarding our building project.

Respectfully submitted, Ed Van Scoten

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
Church Leaders, Staff & Worship Team
Stillwater Youth Group
Stillwater & National WMF
Feeding the Flathead
After School Program
Intersivity Christian Fellowship
Child Bridge Ministry & Foster Families



General Prayers

Marriages and Families
Our Country and Leaders
Workers in the Harvest Field
Military and First Responders

- Andrew West
- Isaac Saenz

Health Concerns

Sylvan Herset
Joyce Banzet
Jeremy Hartle
Deb & Jonny (Timmerman)
Leo Gallis
Mike Horn
Stan Stroisch
J.J. (Mike Hirtes' supervisor)
Stephanie Reynolds: cancer (WGM Engineer)
Tammy Lucas: cancer (Elaine Lessor)
Elaine: cancer (Meyer's neighbor)