

Pilgrim's Progress

A monthly publication.

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December 2017

Savior of the Nations, Come!

In this anniversary year of Martin Luther and the Reformation, we might as well ride the celebratory and commemorative wave into Advent. In 1523, Martin Luther translated St. Ambrose of Milan's fourth century AD Latin hymn into German. We now have an English translation in our hymnal, *Savior of the Nations, Come!* This hymn will provide the theme for our Advent Midweek Services this year; December 6, 13, and 20 at 11am and 7pm. The first stanza goes like this (LSB 332): "Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make here Your home! Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth."

It is a marvel that the Creator chose to be born into His creation. So much so that many have challenged it. For example, Ambrose wrote against the Arians, followers of the heretic Arius, who taught that Jesus was not truly God. They believed that "there was a time when he was not," that he had a beginning, and that God is not triune. The Arians were the primary reason for the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. So, St. Ambrose, and therefore Martin Luther, reflect the Nicene Creed in our Advent hymn.

We confess that Jesus is "the only-begotten Son of God" in verse four: "Then stepped forth the Lord of all From His pure and kingly hall; God of God, yet fully man, His heroic course began."

We confess that Jesus is "Light of Light" in verse seven: "From the manger newborn light Shines in glory through the night. Darkness there no more resides; In this light faith now abides."

We confess that Jesus was "incarnate by the Holy Spirit" in verse two: "Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God, Was the Word of God made flesh—Woman's offspring, pure and fresh."

We confess that Jesus was born "of the Virgin Mary" in verse three: "Here a maid was found with child, Yet remained a virgin mild. In her womb this truth was shown: God was there upon His throne."

We confess that Jesus was crucified, buried, risen, and ascended in verse five: "God the Father was His source, Back to God He ran His course. Into hell His road went down, Back then to His throne and crown."

We confess that all of this is "for us men and for our salvation" in verse six: "For You are the Father's Son Who in flesh the vict'ry won. By Your mighty pow'r make whole All our ills of flesh and soul."

This hymn echoes the truths of Scripture, as well. St. John writes, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*" (John 1.1–3). Jesus Christ is truly God, without beginning or creation, and "of one substance with the Father." From His person flows His work for us. So, St. John writes in his first epistle of the eternal life we have in Jesus Christ (1 John 1.1–3).

In addition to *Savior of the Nations, Come*, which we will sing each Advent Midweek Service, our midweek services will each focus on a portion of Isaiah 40.1–11. Each portion of that text will correlate to an additional Advent hymn. The Sundays in Advent will, likewise, focus on the Old Testament lessons, which are all from the Prophet Isaiah. So, it will be an Isaianic Advent! That is appropriate, since, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, over seven-hundred years before Christ, Isaiah wrote, "*Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 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 40.10–11).

What a marvel that God chose to come to us! What a marvel that "God of God" would take on human flesh and blood. What a marvel that God would come to be our Savior! Therefore, we sing praise to our God in the last verse of our hymn: "Glory to the Father sing, Glory to the Son, our king, Glory to the Spirit be Now and through eternity."

Com soon, Lord Jesus!

Pastor Rusnak

Anniversaries
to
Celebrate



Roger and Coralie Pierson 12/26

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Nicole Moritz	12/1
Joanne Bogner	12/2
Evie Rusnak	12/3
Win Hensel 92 years old	12/5
Melissa Janowski	12/7
Karen Bremer	12/8
Carol Moore	12/19
Shirley Amport	12/21
Robert Kickbusch	12/21
Jennifer Booth	12/22
Sue Jensen	12/22
Diane Kosbab	12/22
Jayden Meyer	12/24
Todd Mahnke	12/25
Pam Wilkiewicz	12/25
Scott Christensen	12/29



Order Time

Please fill out the form and include your payment (clearly mark in the memo made out to Pilgrim Lutheran Church/Poinsettias). Put it in the **offering plate or mail it** to Pilgrim Lutheran Church, 2664 N. 68th Street, Wauwatosa, WI 53213. **Deadline December 10, 2017.** Any questions, you may contact **Mrs. Helen Meyer at (414) 445-2775.**

Name _____

Telephone _____

___ Red ___ White ___ Marble ___ jingle bell at **\$10.50 each.**

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Remembrance line: In memory of; In honor of; In celebration of:


Sunday School

Along with their lessons, the students have been preparing songs and beautiful table decorations for the Birthday Party for Jesus on December 3rd after Church.

All are welcome to attend. Concordia Mequon will be providing a puppet show, and helping with games and crafts. The Sunday school children will sing, there will be food, crafts, games and birthday cake for everyone.

It is important to mention that the free will offering for lunch, provided by daycare families, will benefit the PCDC.

A Birthday Party for Jesus



Sunday, December 3rd, 10:30 - 2:00

Sponsored by the Board of Education for all the Pilgrim Congregation and Guests

Brunch served by the PCDC Parents
(No tickets needed, but a Freewill Donation is requested to benefit PCDC)

Presentation by our Sunday School Children

Puppet Show by The God's Production Company of Concordia University

Games and Crafts

And of course, Birthday Cake

The children of the **PCDC** are gearing up to celebrate the birth of Christ! **The 3k went down to decorate a tree at Cathedral Square honoring His Birth and will be doing our Christmas program on Saturday, December 16 at 3pm in the church.** The children are excited to present the true meaning of Christmas for all. Hope you can be there!

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!





MID-WEEK ADVENT WORSHIP
11:00a.m and 7:00p.m.
December 6 and 20th also with Holy Communion



Pilgrim LWML news for December

December is the month to prepare for Christ’s coming. We all do this in various ways. The Pilgrim LWML meeting this month will be held on **Friday, Dec. 8th at 1:00pm.** **Julie Rusnak** will share her **Nativity Scene collection** as we meditate on **“Immanuel Our HOPE”**. There will also be opportunity to **help pack the fruit baskets** for our Shut-In members. We’d love to have many join us.

As we prepare our hearts this Advent season, we also remember opportunities to share God’s love with others. This can be done in many ways, but right here at Pilgrim the large mite box in the narthex is available. This month’s emphases for our Mite Grants are the LWML grant #4 **Tanzanian Sewing Center for \$25,000**, and the SWD grant #7 **Free at Last Ministry to Women for #25,000**. Information about these two grants can be seen on the LWML bulletin board at the foot of the stairs.

January 2018 is creeping closer. Now is the time to consider an overnight (or Saturday only) **retreat** at the **LWML-SWD Winter Getaway on January 19-20** at the **Holiday Inn in Fond du Lac**. There will be women from Pilgrim going and it is always fun to have a group go together. The **theme** is **“Finding Faith in Films.”** See a poster with more information on the bulletin board by the kitchen in the church parlor or check out **lwml-swd.org/events/retreats**.

As we live as missionaries right where God has planted us, we pray that those around us will seek to know Jesus more nearly and love Him more dearly.

The **holidays** are fast approaching. If you are not sure what gift to get, consider buying **SCRIP**, the gift everyone can use. We have a **variety of cards that can be ordered. Stop down and get the list of available vendors.** Place your order and **presto**, your holiday shopping is done. This is a **great fundraiser** for our PCDC...Scrip is available on Sundays and at the PCDC during the week. Questions? Call Sue Jensen at 476-7612.or Joan at 454-0888.



CHRISTMAS SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Pilgrim Church, Sunday School and PCDC
Christmas Celebration Sunday Dec. 3rd.
10:15am – Church Parlor

Pilgrim Child Development Center
Christmas Recital Saturday December 16th
3:00pm - Church

LUMIN School Pilgrim Lutheran
Christmas Program Tuesday Dec. 19th
2:45pm - Church

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

December 24 – 6:00 p.m.
“A Service of Lessons and Carols”
December 25 – 10:00 a.m.
“The Nativity of Our Lord”
w/Lord’s Supper

NEW YEAR EVE’S SERVICE
6:00p.m.w/Lord’s Supper

December Voters Meeting
The final Voters Meeting in 2017, will be
held Sunday,
December 10th (10:15 a.m)
after the worship service.

2018 Contribution Envelopes Will Be Available for Pick-Up in the Church Parlor the Weekend of December 17th. Do not use them until January 2018. If for any reason you do not find an envelope box assigned to you, please inform the church office and we will correct that omission.



LUMIN Schools Pilgrim Lutheran, will be displaying a Giving Tree. You can take an ornament off of the tree and purchase it for the school/scholars. Items may be dropped off at the school or placed in the tote beneath the tree in the Narthex. Items do not need to be wrapped and the collection will last through the end of the December. Here are some of the items they will be looking for: Markers, Crayons, Pencils, Legos for intentional play (K4-K5), Bingo Daubers, Playdough, Magnetic letters, Royal blue polos sizes 6-10, Cap and Gown for graduation \$20 and monetary donation towards graduation and graduation dinner.

HATING THE HOLIDAYS? IT’S NOT JUST GRINCHERY.

Dr. Seuss’s “How the Grinch Stole Christmas!” followed the tradition of casting holiday-dreaders as Scrooge-like, sour-souled sad sacks who became downers and “buzz-kills” for every Cindy Lou and Tiny Tim with eager and innocent holiday aspirations.

But a quiet group of holiday-dreaders dwells quietly behind the scenes. You may be one of them. You try not to be noticed, but you wince as Thanksgiving and Christmas draw near. Your heart is not two sizes too small; your heart is broken.

When the time for family and mirth and joy-to-the-world draws near, you brace yourself for an onslaught of tears, anxiety, and anguish of the soul. For you, the holidays bring the grim reminder that someone loved and precious is missing. Everyone’s gain of gifts and lights and feasts seems to highlight your loss. The hand you once held is now gone. The hopes you carried in your heart have disappeared. Your ability to be casually delighted in carefree moments has been taken captive by oppressive and ever-present heartbreak

But, hear this, dear holiday-dreader: the surprising reality and well-kept secret is that the holidays are more for you than anyone else.

The word “holiday” is derived from the sacred expression: holy day. It is a day set apart. It is a sacred time. It is a time when God meets you where you’re at—not to see how much fun you’re capable of having, but to bring His grace, strength and consolation to life as it really is. The holidays celebrate the presence of God—closer to you than you can imagine. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

As we take a serious look at this struggle called “life,” we learn that our deepest need is for God to draw near. Jesus quoted Isaiah 61 when He declared the answer to this yearning of the soul: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted” (Isaiah 61:1 ESV).

This is what happened at Christmas. This is why we express gratitude during Thanksgiving. God has heard our cries and He has come down to save us (Exodus 3:7-8).

I know what it’s like to sit in the darkness, to try to catch your breath of grief and loss, and to feel the tears well up while people laugh with friends and join in the chorus of “Fa-la-la-la-la.” But it is into those dark and lonely places that God whispers His soul embracing promises and lets you know that the Word, His Son Jesus, became present for you. His outstretched arm of salvation reaches you and holds you fast. The Reason for the season allows you to step into the holidays with a sweet comfort in the midst of sour circumstances. Peel back the holiday hubbub and you’ll see Jesus. He gives you a deeper delight of what the holiness of the season is really all about.

If you’re dreading the holidays, take heart. These days are meant to wrap you in hope. The Gift you need is closer than ever.

By Michael Newman November 21, 2017. The CPH blog.

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