



the word

December 2016 | Monthly News from Crown of Life Church

Holiday Worship Schedule

WEDNESDAYS

Nov. 30, Dec. 7, Dec. 14

4:00 and 6:30 pm | WSP

Light supper served between services
(No Services in Eagan)

NO MONDAY SERVICES

NOV. 28 – DEC. 26

Saturday, Dec. 17

5:00 pm Eagan (Communion)

Sunday, Dec. 18

Children's Christmas Services

8:00 and 10:30 am WSP

(No communion)

9:00 am Eagan – regular service
(Communion)

Christmas Eve, Saturday, Dec. 24

Candlelight Service – 7:00 pm WSP

Candlelight Service – 8:00 pm Eagan

Christmas Day, Sunday, Dec. 25

9:00 am Eagan | 10:00 am WSP

New Year's Eve, Saturday, Dec. 31

6:30 pm WSP (Communion)

New Year's Day, Sunday, Jan. 1

9:00 am Eagan (Communion)

10:00 am WSP (Communion)

The Dynamics of Gifts

BY PASTOR ZACHARY PUDLO

"God our Lord would have us look to the Giver and love Him more than His gift, keeping Him always before our eyes, in our hearts, and in our thoughts." - SAINT IGNATIUS

The Dynamic of Gift Giving

The season of gift giving and receiving is upon us. And that means it's time to start investigating. Before we buy gifts for others we have to investigate what it is they want. Parents are pretty good at this. Before getting their children gifts parents often ask a couple questions:

1) What do they want?

2) What do they need?

Because parents ask both those questions it makes sense that children's stockings are often filled with the unique pairing of candy and socks.

Our loving heavenly Father often operates in a similar way. Consider a gift God gave to Jacob. In Genesis 32 Jacob was on his way home after being absent for many years. He had to run away because he had deceived his brother, Esau, who plotted killing Jacob after the deception. As Jacob was returning home, he had time to think about what he wanted. He wanted to be safe. He wanted his wives, 11 sons, and possessions to be protected from any attacks from his brother. He wanted to be certain the Lord would

continued

protect him. He wanted God to follow through with his promise to bless and prosper his family. Jacob knew what he wanted, but God knew what he needed.

The night before he was going to face his brother Jacob literally wrestled with God. And while wrestling with him God gave him a gift... **“he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.”** (Ge 32:25) Right before he was going to face off with his brother, potentially even fight him, God disabled Jacob. Some gift. The gift God gave Jacob was something Jacob didn’t want, but it was exactly what he needed. At this moment Jacob needed to rely on God’s strength, not his own. And the only way he was going to do that is if God would weaken Jacob so much that the only hope he had was in God. God knew exactly what Jacob needed and He gave it to him.

The Dynamics of Gift Receiving

It seems as though God knows more about gift giving than we do, but he also knows more about gift receiving. Consider why it is Jacob received the gift of a “wrenched” hip. It’s because God had already given him a gift...the promise to bless Jacob, be with him, and even protect him from his brother. But Jacob didn’t do so well with that promise. He wasn’t sure God was going to follow through. So he wrestled with God, both in prayer and quite literally.

Compare how Jacob received the gift of that promise to a promise God gave to his grandfather, Abram, in Genesis 12. God told Abram to go to a land He would show him and promise to bless him more than he could possibly imagine. And how did Abram respond? With worrying, doubting, and wrestling with God? Not at

all. **“So Abram went, as the LORD had told him.”** (Ge 12:4)

Both Abram and Jacob had difficult tasks ahead of them. Both were undergoing huge life changes and trials that no doubt were difficult to handle. But unlike Jacob, Abram simply did what he was told. He packed up his family and went to a completely foreign land, no questions asked. The gift of going to a totally different place couldn’t have been easy, but it was a gift from God. Abram received this “gift” and went, no questions asked.

The Dynamic of the Giver

We can imagine neither of the gifts God gave to Abram or Jacob were easy to receive. For Abram it meant leaving all that he loved and knew. For Jacob it meant not relying on his own strength, being completely helpless while standing before a potentially vengeful brother. But in both cases, we know God gave them exactly what they needed.

When you are going through difficult times these lessons serve a great reminder for us. Sometimes it takes God giving us a wrenched hip before we finally trust in the Giver. Other times all it takes is a quick glance at the cross, knowing that the one who fulfilled his promise to save you always gives you what is best. Whatever the case may be, remember the only comfort we have is if we focus on the Giver and not the gift.

May every gift this season, given or received, enjoyable or painful, lead your eyes to the Giver. And may the fact that the Giver knows exactly what you need lead you to trust the Giver more than the gifts.

Pastor Kom Presents at WELS Mult-Site Conference

Pastors, members of congregational leadership teams, District Mission Board representatives and others from across the country met in Tucson, AZ for a Multi-Site Ministry Conference Nov. 14-16. Pastor Kom was asked to be one of the presenters for one of the workshops.

It was a wonderful opportunity to share ideas with others who have begun our type of ministry, as well as to give some helpful advice and insight to congregational leaders who are exploring the idea of starting a multi-site option at their church. Topics that were explored and discussed included “Communication,” “Maintaining Mission and Vision,” “Staffing and Administration,” “Budgets and Finances,” and much more.

Pastor Kom was grateful to go and be a part of the Conference and add some insight and guidance for other churches. (The warm weather didn’t hurt too much, either. ☺) Pray that the Lord would bless these and other ministry efforts across our Synod!

The Dying Horizontal Church

December 3, 2016 | PASTOR ZACHARY PUDLO



The Current Religious Situation

From what we see in pop culture, social media, and the news it might lead us to think that the world as we know it is becoming more and more secular. However, the statistics show otherwise. I am well aware that starting out an article stating a number of current statistics is not the best way to capture the reader's attention (the pictures and graphs will hopefully keep you interested). And if you can make it through the stats you might find some current trends in the world's religious state of affairs surprising.

In April of 2015, Pew Research Center published an article concerning the current and future World Religion populations. Summed up: many religions will grow overall, but not all of them will grow at a rate that keeps up with the growing population of the world. Perhaps the most surprising statistic was the projection that the percentage of the world's atheists, agnostics, and the religiously unaffiliated will slowly but steadily decline from 16.4 percent of the world's population today to 13.2 percent forty years from now. What does that mean? The world is projected to become more religious over the next 35 years.

While Christianity will remain static in its makeup of the world's population, there is some flux within its denominations. The membership of different denominations over the past fifty years reveals an interesting trend. If we look back 50 years we can see a clear and unequivocal trendline: liberal denominations have declined sharply while conservative denominations have increased or remained the same.

A Horizontal Problem

What is the reason for the decline in the liberal denominations? A closer look at the theology of the more liberal Christian denominations is telling. Using the United Church of Christ as a case study provides some telling information. The UCC is one of the fastest declining Christian denominations. In 1965, the UCC had 2,070,413 members. In 2016, there

BLOG CONTINUED... To view the entire article go to
church.crownoflifemn.org/pastors-blog/

Clear the Path Update & Opportunity

The Lord continues to bless our congregation in our capital fund campaign. As of the end of November, our total contributions toward the campaign are nearly \$638,000.00.

Did you know that there is still a matching gift in place for this calendar year? All contributions to the Clear the Path campaign will be matched - up to \$250,000. To date, \$124,670.00 has been received toward the fund. If you are looking for opportunities for special year-end charitable giving, please consider giving toward Clear the Path!

Time & Talent Update!

You can now update your Time and Talent profile online! It only takes 5 MINUTES, but it will help our Stewardship Committee match our communicant members with volunteer opportunities as we do ministry together. Please call the church office for more information. We can e-mail the link to you to help get you started!

Adopt-A-Highway (Fall)

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers as few as there were. Please consider helping out in the spring when we will have another opportunity to clean up the highway!

No Hunger November



Overjoyed by the Star – Stewardship Thought

In Matthew 2, we read about the Visit of the Magi. Following the star, inquiring at the king's palace, informed by the priests where to find the Child, they trudged with determination to Bethlehem, bringing with them the gifts they planned to present as they worshiped Him. "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh" (Matthew 2:10-11).

What did the Wise Men from the East know about this Baby or His family? Not much. Yet they came in faith, bringing gifts with them to honor Him. How far did they travel? How long was their trip? We can surmise, but what's important to know is that, for them, the trip with all its drudgery was worth it. "They were overjoyed."

How long a trip are we prepared to make this Christmas to worship the Christ Child? Are we willing to put up with inconvenience and sacrifice in order that we might come before Him with our gifts, offering them in faith, as the Wise Men did?

What causes our joy this Christmas season? Is it seeing the eyes of little children light up when they open their presents? That's good. Is it finding exactly the right gift for someone special? That's good, too. But are we "overjoyed" when we see the star? Contrary to the messages we hear in the commercials and even the seasonal songs, the only thing Christmas is about is the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Along with doing all the wonderful things that are good to do at this time of the year, including the visiting of sick and the shut-in, the baking of goodies for food banks, the sharing of financial resources with those in need, and all the shopping and caroling and everything else, let's find our joy in seeing the star. That star points us to Jesus and leads us to the Cross. Let us "open our treasures" and worship Him with our best and most precious gifts as the Wise Men did.

Source: *12 Months of Congregational Stewardship* (vol. 1) by Ronald J. Chewning, Stewardship Advisors

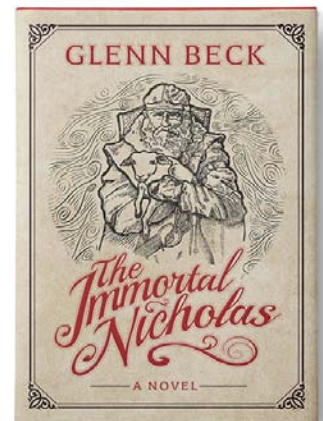


BOOK REVIEW

"The Immortal Nicholas"

BY GLENN BECK | A BOOK CLUB REVIEW

Glenn Beck's "The Immortal Nicholas" is a wonderful Christmas holiday book. The story takes the legend of Santa Claus and weaves it into a historical account of the life of Christ and His ministry. Along the way there are many hardships and sorrows that ultimately lead the character to seek the true meaning of forgiveness and Christian love. Beck does a wonderful job of taking a commercial Christmas theme and transforming it into one that focuses on the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Christ our Savior.



SCHOOL NEWS

4th Graders love their PreK Buddies!

Twice a month COL 4th graders get to head downstairs to partner with a PreK Buddy to read books, do a project, or play a game. They really look forward to this activity! What a fun way to connect these students, and how nice to see them greet each other at recess and throughout the school. This is just one way in which our older students have the opportunity to gain leadership skills at Crown of Life!



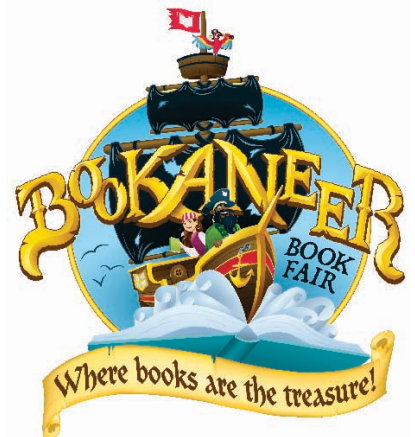
Along with leadership these talented 4th graders showed off their teamwork skills with their joint art projects. They were very proud of their accomplishments.

These are truly spectacular works of art! If you would like to see them they are on display outside the 4th grade classroom.



Thank You!

Because of your generosity, volunteering, and love of reading and butter burgers we received \$245 for Culver's Night and \$1,884.49 (\$3,426.35 total sales) for the Book Fair.



REPORTS

TREASURER – Fiscal Year 7/16 to 6/17

October ended the fiscal year to date (FYTD) with \$511,789 in total income with expected budget income to be \$712,850 (\$201,061 below budget). Clear the Path matching funds which we budgeted for is -\$168,666 lower than budget income. Envelope Offerings are -\$69,085 less than budgeted. We hope to balance both by the end of the year. Expenses (FYTD) were \$635,876 which gave us a FYTD of a negative \$124,087. We owe \$25,000 to our special funds account. Clear the Path contributions as of 10-31-16 totaled \$621,724 reducing our loan balance down to \$790,063. All bills are paid to date. Questions to Perry Able: treasurer@colwsp.org.

DEATHS

- Betty Danner died on 11/22/16, funeral with Pastor Kom on 11/25/16.

Welcome New Members!



Bill Mullenau – Is a long time resident of Eagan. He started coming to Crown of Life about a year ago and hasn't looked back. He enjoys attending Bible Studies and helping out with Crown of Life events. You might recognize him better in his Mickey Mouse Costume.

New Members not pictured

Rebecca Flad, Kathy and Arlan Sloan

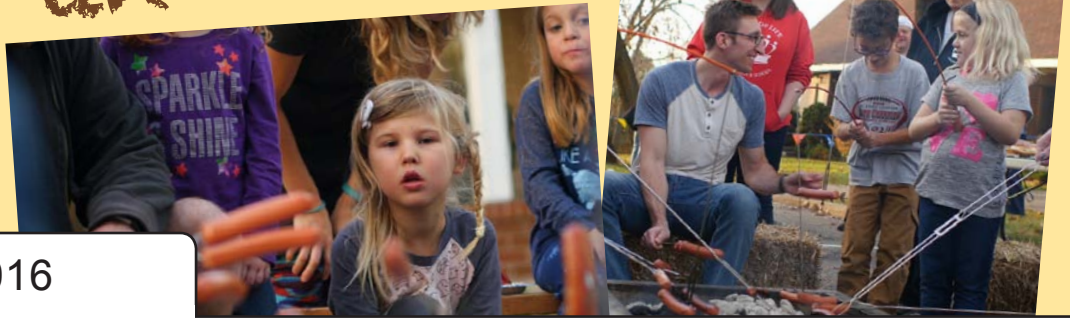
TRUNK OR TREAT 2016



How blessed we are to have such unique volunteers! Find them hiding throughout these pages.

S'MORE FUN

What a fun night to roast hotdogs, S'mores. The movie was good too!



DECEMBER 2016

Thursday, December 1

2:30 pm Southview Sr. Living Service
6:30 pm Pioneers Regular Meeting

Friday, December 2

8:20 am Matins
10:00 am Good Samaritan
5:30 pm Home Game vs. Christ Lutheran

Saturday, December 3

5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, December 4

8:00 am Worship WSP
9:00 am Worship EGN
9:15 am Education Hour-WSP
10:15 am Education Hour-EGN
10:30 am Worship WSP
11:30 am Pioneers Game w/Elderly

Monday, December 5

3:30 pm Lego Club
6:30 pm NO - Worship WSP
7:00 pm Mary/Martha - EGN

Tuesday, December 6

7:00 pm Evangelism
Technology Team

Wednesday, December 7

4:00 pm Worship WSP
6:30 pm Worship WSP
NO-Bible Class EGN
NO-Confirmation Class-EGN
8:00 pm Praise Band Reh

Thursday, December 8

2:30 pm Southview Sr. Living Service
4:00 pm Away Game @ Berea Lutheran
7:00 pm Elders-WSP

Friday, December 9

8:00 am Matins & Muffins and Panera
5:30 pm Away Game @ Mt. Olive

Saturday, December 10

5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, December 11

Praise Service
8:00 am Worship WSP
9:00 am Worship EGN
9:15 am Education Hour-WSP
10:15 am Education Hour-EGN
10:30 am Worship WSP

Monday, December 12

6:30 pm NO - Worship WSP
7:30 pm Worship Committee

Tuesday, December 13

9:00 am Mom's Time-EGN
6:30 pm Education Properties
Handbell rehearsal
7:00 pm Stewardship

Wednesday, December 14

4:00 pm Worship WSP
5:00 pm Piano Recital
6:30 pm Worship WSP
NO-Bible Class EGN
NO-Confirmation Class-EGN

Thursday, December 15

2:30 pm Southview Sr. Living Service
6:00 pm Pioneers Regular Meeting
7:00 pm Riverview Cemetery

Friday, December 16

8:20 am Matins
5:30 pm Home Game vs. Salem, Stillwater

Saturday, December 17

5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, December 18

8:00 am Worship WSP
Children's Pre-K-8
Christmas Service
9:00 am Worship EGN
9:15 am Education Hour-WSP
10:15 am Education Hour-EGN
10:30 am Worship WSP
Children's Grades 1-8
Christmas Service

Monday, December 19

6:30 pm NO - Worship WSP

Tuesday, December 20

7:00 pm Council

Wednesday, December 21

6:30 pm NO-Bible Class EGN
6:30 pm NO-Confirmation Class-EGN

Thursday, December 22

NO BUS SERVICE
11:30 am Early School Dismissal
2:30 pm Southview Sr. Living Service

Friday, December 23

Christmas Break - NO SCHOOL
School resumes Jan 4, 2017

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve
7:00 pm Worship WSP
8:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day
9:00 am Worship EGN
9:15 am No-Education Hour-WSP
10:00 am Worship WSP
10:15 am No-Education Hour-EGN

Monday, December 26

2:30 pm Lilydale Sr. Living Service
6:30 pm NO - Worship WSP

Tuesday, December 27

9:00 am Mom's Time-EGN
6:30 pm Handbell Rehearsal
7:00 pm Youth & Adult Education

Wednesday, December 28

6:30 pm NO-Bible Class EGN
6:30 pm NO-Confirmation Class-EGN

Thursday, December 29

2:30 pm Southview Sr. Living Service

Saturday, December 31

New Year's Eve
6:30 pm Worship WSP

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 John Castro | 11 Madylin Mielke | 17 Nicholas Burkhart | 25 Chad Otterstatter |
| Michele Marrier | Maren Steffen | Donna Winecke | 26 Joseph Myhre |
| 2 Laurie Doyle | 12 Connor Aumann | 18 Isaiah Steber | 27 Makayla Dennis |
| Mady Kapanke | Steve Peterson | 19 Isaac Leach | Carol Lemke |
| Lila Steber | Philip Steber | Amanda Lorenz | Sydney Seganek |
| Becky Stein | Robyn Swiderski | Diana Marzinske | Dave Taack |
| 3 Venita Warnke | 13 Harry Cannon | 20 Joyce E. Franz | 29 Lyle Danner |
| 4 Dominick Olson | David Kell | Sophia Rubio | Sara Keppers |
| Erika Rider | Landon Osland | 21 Christian Kneisl | Zachariah Schultz |
| Bernice Schaffer | 14 Melissa Dietrich | 22 Daniel Oberstadt | 30 David Doyle |
| 6 Jonathan Smith | Annie Gydesen | Michael Spott | Kirk Rall |
| 7 Kane Cadwallader | Mason Rowe | 23 Sean Lemmer | Kristopher Swanson |
| Katya Gurgel | 15 Lauren Kelm | Sheila Pottorff | 31 Micah Boehm |
| Tyler Kirchhamer | Briston McCall | 24 Allen Lorenz | Micah Koeppen |
| 9 Annalise Patton | Cadence McCall | Mya Paul | Aurora Lange |
| Cynthia Pieper | 16 Grant Johnson | Carol Thompson | Renee Paul |
| 10 Brett Gurgel | Merry Kreitz | 25 Sara Cenicerros | |
| Jacob Marzinske | Lori Oberstadt | James Haberkorn | |
| Charlyn Petermann | Sarah Waldhauser | Charlene Ohmann | |

TRUNK OR TREAT 2016

Thank you to everyone who made Crown of Life's 2016 Trunk or Treat a huge success!



JUST FOR FUN

QUOTE FALL

E	M	E	G	P	O	C	T	R	I	Y	S	W	E	F	D	R
M	S	E	R	F	A	W	O	R	I	S	S	S	M	A	O	N
C	S	S	N	T	E	C	E			N	O	U	U	F	K	E

GUESS THE BIBLE STORY



ANSWER: Jesus heals the paralyzed man
Come and see him being lowered through
the ceiling outside the 5th grade classroom.

CHRISTMAS RIDDLE

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?

ANSWER: It's Christmas, Eve!

NOVEMBER PUZZLE ANSWERS: QUOTE FALLS: So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do do it all for the glory of God. WORD SCRAMBLE: - Thanks, Election, Safety, November

Please direct ideas, questions or comments about this issue to ZacharyPudlo@crownoflifemn.org



CROWN OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

West St. Paul Campus – 115 Crusader Ave W, West St. Paul MN 55118

Eagan Campus – 4150 Pilot Knob Rd, Eagan MN 55122