



Teen Scene Newsletter

Faith Lutheran Church
935 S. Crystal Glen Drive
Lecanto, FL 34461
Office Phone: 352-527-3325
cfaithlutheran@gmail.com
<http://www.faithlecano.com>

2nd Edition

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Prepared by: Marcia Pridgen

The Church Year

Last month we talked about Advent. Now we will complete Advent with Christmas Eve as we then begin the 12 days. The colors in the church will change from green to white symbolizing the divinity, purity and holiness of baby Jesus. The white candle will be lit on Christmas Eve we will celebrate with a candle light service in anticipation of His birth. The Gloria Excelsis will be added back into our divine worship service as we sing "Glory to God on high; and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" just as the Angels sang that first Christmas.

Then beginning December 25th and continuing through January 5th, we will celebrate the 12 days of Christmas.

Dec. 25th is the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Dec. 27th is recognition of St. John, an apostle and evangelist.

He wrote the book of John that is in our Bible. John 1:1, 14 says "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Jesus is the Word. He became flesh and was born on Christmas.

Dec. 28th is the day we recognize the Holy Innocents, Martyrs.

Do you remember the story of when King Herod asked the wise men from the east to report back to him where the new born king was so he could worship Him? Yea, well, God directed the wise men not to do this and appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him to leave Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Egypt. King Herod sent his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the Jewish males age 2 and under in an attempt to rid the world of the new born king, Jesus. These young children were martyred for the faith and on this day we remember them and other Martyrs who also died for the faith.

Jan 1st is the remembrance of the circumcision and naming of Jesus.

The Old Testament law required infant males go to the temple at 8 days old and be given the covenant of the circumcision and named. Mary and Joseph honored this with baby Jesus. The name of Jesus means “the Lord saves”.

In our next newsletter we will cover the season of Epiphany which begins on January 6th.

- (A Simple Explanation of the Church Year, Copyright 2020 Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

Instead of a “Hot Topic for Today”, I will cover the Christmas story. It only seems appropriate.

Share this with your family as you celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus, the Christ.

So What about Christmas?

Although marketing, movies, stores, and most of society equate Christmas with Santa Claus, this is not why we celebrate Christmas. All the candy, gifts, decorations, and the jolly old St. Nick himself are all fun. But it is NOT the true Christmas. These can offer temporary happiness but they cannot offer forgiveness of sins or eternal life. Jesus does.

The Christmas story begins in a humble stable, being both God and Man, but Jesus actually existed before creation. Remember He is God and became God and Man to redeem a fallen world. A world where people, ever since the first sin in the Garden of Eden, continue to sin and fall short of the glory of God....That’s why Jesus came to earth and humbled himself to become man, born in a lowly manger, so He could die for and pay for our sins. His first clothes were merely strips of cloth wrapped around Him and instead of being laid in a crib, he was laid in a trough where the animals were fed.

As we state in the Creeds, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a Virgin. This was so that this Christmas child was prevented from being contaminated with our sinful nature...He is the Son of God. When Mary was told she would have a baby, the Son of God, the angel told

her, “behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:31-32).

Now we will discuss Joseph. He was engaged to Mary, but they had not been intimate. In that time, he could have shunned Mary and broken the engagement. Single women who became pregnant could have been stoned to death. When Joseph first found out about the impending birth of Jesus, he had a tough decision to make. An Angel appeared to him in a dream and told Joseph “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20-21)

Why Bethlehem? After all, Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth...roughly 70 miles north of Bethlehem. Well, while Mary was expecting Jesus’ arrival, the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, decided everyone must be counted and declared a census. His edict required that citizens must be counted in the birthplace of his ancestors. For Joseph, the head of this family, that was Bethlehem and so Mary and Joseph proceeded to travel to Bethlehem.

Now in those days there were no hotels, there were no phones or computers to use to set a reservation. Many houses were built with upper rooms for their guests to stay in, and during the census that’s where those who arrived first were able to stay. But by the time Joseph and Mary got there all these were full. Thus the term, there was no room in the Inn. Finally, seeing Mary was about to deliver her baby a man offered them a place to stay in his stable, and that is where Jesus was born. “And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger.” (Luke 2:7) Notice He was wrapped in strips of cloth, not baby clothes.

In the Story of Christmas we also hear about shepherds, angels, a star, and wise men. So where do they come in?

Shepherds were the very first people to hear that Jesus was born. God sent angels to announce the Good News. “Fear not, for behold I bring you good news of 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. And this will be a sign unto you: you will find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:10-12). Think about this. How would you feel had you been one of the shepherds? Wow! The shepherds were in awe and according to Luke 2:26 “went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.”

The Angels are God’s creation and are spirits. God created them to be protectors of and to serve us. Often they are God’s messengers as on that glorious Christmas morning. First one angel came and announced the birth of Jesus, and then a multitude of angels appeared glorifying God saying “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!” (Luke 2:14)

God placed the star, a special sign to announce our Saviors birth. This was a very bright star that stood out from all the rest so all could note the importance of this event.

Wise men dressed in very expensive outfits came to visit the babe and they brought expensive gifts. They were well educated men probably advisers to Kings in their countries and when they saw the extraordinary star they knew something special had happened. They went to King Herold asking “Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.” (Matthew 2:2). When King Herold asked his advisors about the wise men’s inquiry they responded by quoting the Old Testament prophet Micah (see Matthew 2:5-6). Herold then sent them on to Bethlehem, as foretold by the prophet Micah centuries before, telling them to report back to him after they had found the baby. Which as we noted in the section on the Church year, they did not do. But we do know that these men fell down and worshiped baby Jesus. “And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11) The wise men were warned in a dream not to go back to tell Herold, and they went home a different way.

Joseph was also warned and moved his family to Egypt thus saving Jesus from Herold’s cruel killing of all male children 2 years of age and younger in an attempt to kill the new born King so that He could not take Herold’s place, which was never God’s plan for Jesus. Later, before His crucifixion, Pilot asks if Jesus is a king. Jesus answers that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).

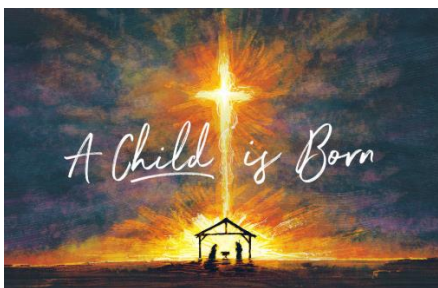
An interesting note here. By the time the wise men had traveled and found Jesus, he was no longer in a manger, but in a house.

Also, another interesting fact, two more people we know saw Jesus before the wise men, but are not depicted in our version of the manger scene. They were Simeon and Anna who saw him at the temple when he was presented at 8 days old for circumcision and naming.

(A Simple Explanation of Christmas, Copyright 2021, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mrs. Pridgen



December Church Schedule

- Regular worship services every Saturday at 6:00 pm and every Sunday at 9:30 am
- Bible Study led by Pastor Griffin Sundays at 11:00 am. There is no Bible Study on Christmas day.
- Mondays, December 5th, 12th and 19th Bible Study with Pastor Griffin
- Monday, December 12th, 9:00 am Men's Prayer Breakfast
- Wednesdays December 7th, 14th, and 21st 3:00 pm Confirmation Class
- Wednesdays, December 7th, 14th are Advent Services at 4:30 pm followed by a potluck dinner.
- Thursdays at 7:30 am are work days at church. If you can help out during your Christmas break from school, please do so.

You are all welcome to come and join in on these activities.

Pastor Griffin's Sermon Topics for December

Weekends in Advent - "Getting Christmas Right"

- December 3 and 4 - "Repenting Sincerely"
- December 10 and 11 - "Rejoicing Greatly"
- December 17 and 18 - "Magnifying Jesus"
- Christmas Day - "Getting Christmas Right"

Advent Midweek Services

- December 7 - "Christmas Love"
- December 14 - "Christmas Joy"
- Christmas Eve - "Christmas Peace"

If you miss any of these you can get them through Faith Lutheran's web site.