

# ST. JOHN'S NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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**BUILT ON CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE**

**Vol. 127, No. 12**  
**December 2024**

*From the Pastor:*

## **“Why December 25<sup>th</sup>?”**

Have you ever wondered why Christmas is celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>? For some of you the thought may have never really crossed your minds. But there are many people who have pondered it. So, without further ado, let's see what we can learn.

Historically, the first annual Christian holiday and the primary festival was Easter, but our Savior's birth comes in second. So how was December 25<sup>th</sup> chosen? For quite a while it was assumed that Christians took a pagan celebration on that day, *Sol Invictus*, or “Unconquered Sun,” and “baptized” it, making it about the birth of Christ Jesus, the “Unconquered Son.” This would certainly match well with biblical references to Jesus being “the light of the world” and “the sun of righteousness.”<sup>1</sup>

While there was a potential danger of people misunderstanding, if this truly was a part of Christian mission work, working to give a Christian meaning to a regularly celebrated holiday, would that be all bad as they tried to reach out to unbelievers as well as instruct their own within the Church who would be tempted to celebrate the pagan holiday? Even if one determines it to not be the best idea, I honestly don't think you could condemn them for doing that. Yet, getting to the core of the matter, since God is the creator of *time* as well as matter and energy, it was the pagans who, in their rebellion and unbelief, dedicated a part of *HIS creation* to their idolatrous practice. In that sense, Christians were simply reclaiming for God *what was already His!*

Yet while the above offers plenty of defense to the Christian practice of Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup>, new evidence has come to light. It is now known that Christians in Rome were celebrating Christ's birth on that date as early as AD c. 202. Now that's pretty early, but the key point is that Emperor Aurelian proclaimed December 25<sup>th</sup> *Sol Invictus* in AD 274. This means the first confirmed Christian celebration *predates the pagan celebration by 72 years!*<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, contrary to what was commonly thought, it was actually the unbelievers who were taking the winter solstice, not only for a political statement, but also to give a pagan understanding to a date already important to Roman Christians. So while Christians did use the “Unconquered Son” to redirect away from the “Unconquered Sun,” it was only *after* the pagans appropriated the Christian celebration! Perhaps this is a good indicator to not take the assumptions of modern scholarship, often unbelieving or at least Bible-questioning, with too much certainty, but to instead remember those early Christians were much closer to the events.

And that last point, that those early believers were closer to the events, might have even more weight than what I already have written. How? Because December 25 may be a more accurate date than previously supposed!

<sup>1</sup> John 8:12 (also 9:5) and Malachi 4:2, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> This assumes that the first extant record we have listing this date is also the first celebration of that date. While that might be true, it at least possible that this writing records a celebration that was already happening before then.

It seems likely that Zechariah's priestly group, the sons of Abijah, served in the eighth month of the Jewish year which falls between mid-October and mid-November in our calendar. So just consider, Elizabeth conceives John the Baptist around October 25<sup>th</sup>. Mary conceives Jesus six months later (Luke 1:36) putting us around March 25<sup>th</sup>. Nine months later, December 25<sup>th</sup>, and *voilà*, Jesus is born!

Of course, we cannot dogmatically claim that December 25<sup>th</sup> is the exact date of our Lord's birth. But I do think it is interesting, even valuable, to recognize the historical facts behind the date which then disperse the claims that unbelieving "experts" (and the devil!) have manufactured to sow seeds of doubt. Doubt that affects believers, making us less sure in our witnessing. Doubts which keep non-Christians in the darkness of unbelief instead of entering the light of Christ, the Unconquerable Son!

Ultimately, it is not the actual date of our Lord's birth that is critical, but the fact that the Eternal Son by whom light was first made on the first day, entered this world, in time, being born as a true, flesh and blood human infant. He did that in order to live up to His name, *Jesus*, by saving us from our sins and the eternal torment they deserve.<sup>3</sup> The birth of a Savior, *that* is the glorious truth that we gladly celebrate *every* December 25<sup>th</sup> and through the whole Christmas season.

*God grant you a most blessed and joyful Christmas!*  
*Pastor Nerud*

#### **Apologetics: How could Adam have named all the animals in a single day?<sup>4</sup>**

How could Adam have named millions of different species on Day 6 if it was only 24 hours? This is a common objection to a straightforward view of [Genesis 1](#).

One important point is that we cannot be dogmatic on the actual number of species on Earth. Oxford University zoologist Robert May writes:

“At the purely factual level, we do not know to within an order of magnitude how many species of *plants and animals* we share the globe with: *fewer than 2 million are currently classified*, and estimates of the total number range from *under 5 million to more than 50 million*.” [Emphasis added]<sup>a</sup>

There are several factors, which may not be immediately obvious to the casual reader, that need to be considered. Firstly, Adam did not have to go out and round up or track any of these animals. [Genesis 2:19](#) clearly states that *God brought the animals to Adam*. Secondly, although many objectors have claimed that the species Adam had to observe and name would have numbered in the millions, the actual number would almost certainly have been only a small fraction of this.

Note that Scripture explicitly states that Adam named all the 'livestock' (Heb. *behemah*), the 'birds of the air' (Heb. *oph hassamayim*) and all the 'beasts of the field' (Heb. *chayyah hassadeh*). There is no indication that Adam named the fish in the sea, or any other marine organisms, nor any of the insects, beetles or arachnids. In fact, of the two million known species, 98% are invertebrates, which include a variety of animals from sponges, worms and jellyfish, to mollusks and insects. The remaining 2% are vertebrates and number approximately 40,000 species.<sup>b</sup> This number is further reduced when the 25,000 marine vertebrates<sup>c</sup> and four thousand amphibians<sup>d</sup> are discounted, since they clearly do not fit into any of the categories of animals listed in [Genesis 2:20](#).

In addition, assuming that speciation has been an on-going occurrence since Creation, the eleven thousand vertebrate species in question would have most likely descended from a much smaller number of proto-species. Each would be the ancestors of animals in the group that taxonomists call a *genus*<sup>e</sup> (or possibly the higher taxonomic order known as a *family*<sup>f</sup>) and what the Genesis account calls a 'kind'.<sup>g</sup> Since many *genera* contain dozens, even hundreds, of species, it is far more likely that Adam had to name only a couple of thousand of these proto-species—a task which could easily have been achieved in a few hours. (Assuming Adam had to name 2,500 proto-species (*genera*), and he named a single proto-species every five seconds, it would have taken him approximately three hours and forty-five minutes to complete the task if we include a five-minute break every hour.)

It is important to note that God's purpose in parading all the animals before Adam was not merely so that he would give them names. It was also to reinforce the fact that he was different in kind from the rest of creation, so

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 1:21. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, which means "Yahweh saves."

<sup>4</sup> By Andrew Kulikovsky; <https://creation.com/how-could-adam-have-named-all-the-animals-in-a-single-day>

that none of these animals could ever serve as a physical, emotional, intellectual or spiritual companion. So God made from Adam's rib a companion who *was* suitable ([Genesis 2:21–24](#)).

### References

- a. May, R.M., How many species are there on Earth?, *Science* **241**(4872):1441–1449, 1988 | doi: 10.1126/science.241.4872.1441.
- b. Burnie, D., 'Animal', Microsoft® Encarta® *Online Encyclopedia* 2002, encarta.msn.com.
- c. Orr, J.W., 'Fish', Microsoft® Encarta® *Online Encyclopedia* 2002, encarta.msn.com.
- d. Burnie, D., 'Vertebrate', Microsoft® Encarta® *Online Encyclopedia* 2002, encarta.msn.com.
- e. Woodmorappe, J., [Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study](#), ICR, El Cajon, CA, USA, 1996. This tabulates all the creatures on the Ark by assuming that the kind corresponded to today's genera. But this is to be as generous to the skeptics as possible, and even then there would be only 16,000 animals on the Ark as obligate passengers.
- f. Batten, D., [Ligers and Wholphins? What next?](#), *Creation* **22**(3):28–33, 2000; creation.com/liger. This points out several examples of fertile hybrids between members of different genera with a family. This means that they are really a single polytypic species, and supports identification of the kind with today's families.
- g. Williams, P.J., [What does min mean?](#), *J. Creation* **11**(3):344–352, 1997.

### A Look at the Lutheran Confessions

*This month we continue our reading of XXVIII, Church Authority, explaining the right use of traditions/rites/ceremonies and warning against the error that doing them is required by the Law and necessary for forgiveness and salvation, for that is an attack on Christ and the freedom He has won for His people.*

*Augsburg Confession Article XXVIII: Church Authority, 50-60<sup>5</sup>*

Therefore, ordinances instituted as though they are necessary, or with the view that they merit grace, are contrary to the Gospel. Therefore, it follows that it is not lawful for any bishop to institute and require such services. It is necessary that the doctrine of Christian freedom be preserved in the churches. In other words, the bondage of the Law is not necessary in order to be justified, as it is written in the Epistle to the Galatians, “do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1). It is necessary for the chief article of the Gospel to be preserved, namely that we obtain grace freely by faith in Christ, and not by certain observances or acts of worship devised by people.

What then are we to think of Sunday rites, and similar things, in God's house? We answer that it is lawful for bishops, or pastors, to make ordinances so that things will be done orderly in the Church, but not to teach that we merit grace or make satisfaction for sins. Consciences are not bound to regard them as necessary services and to think that it is a sin to break them without offense to others. So in 1 Corinthians 11:5, Paul concludes that women should cover their heads in the congregation and in 1 Corinthians 14:30, that interpreters be heard in the church, and so on.

It is proper that the churches keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquility, to avoid giving offenses to another, so that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion (1 Corinthians 14:40; comp. Philippians 2:14). It is proper to keep such ordinances just so long as consciences are not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to regard it as sin if they are changed without offending others. For instance, no one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head uncovered, as long as no offense is given.<sup>6</sup>

This kind of ordinance in the Church is observing the Lord's Day, Easter, Pentecost, and similar holy days and rites. It is a great error for anyone to think that it is by the authority of the Church that we observe the Lord's Day as something necessary, instead of the Sabbath Day [Colossians 2:16-17]. It teaches that since the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted. Yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain

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<sup>5</sup> From *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, Paul McCain, Ed. CPH, 2006. Due to the length of this Article, it is being broken into smaller sections.

<sup>6</sup> Women covering their head is an example of how a Scriptural principle, which is universal in scope, may not need to be followed in exactly the same way in all times, places and cultures. In this case, the universal principle is the headship of the man. In Paul's day, women refusing to cover their head was a sign of rebellion against male headship and so could not be done by Christian women in good conscience. In our current culture, such is not the case and so a Christian woman may have her head uncovered *even as* she carefully avoids those things that in today's culture rebel against that Scriptural principle of male headship.

day for the people to know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church designated the Lord's Day [Revelation 1:10] for this purpose. This day seems to have been chosen all the more for this additional reason: so people might have an example of Christian freedom and might know that keeping neither Sabbath nor any other day is necessary.

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### SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE

You are invited to prepare your hearts and minds for the birth of our dear Savior, Jesus. Join us in worship Wednesday evenings at 7 pm December 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>. The focus of our worship will be centered on "His Name Shall be Called..."



The Christmas Eve service will be at 6:30 pm. This service will include the children's program, "The Signs of Christmas". The offering from this service will be given to our Lutheran church camp CILCA.

Christmas Day Worship will begin at 10am on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

Concordia Lutheran Church, Geneseo will host the New Years' Eve service at 6 pm. All members from St. John's are encouraged to attend.

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### DECK THE HALLS



Your help is needed to decorate the sanctuary and church building for the season of Advent and Christmas. We will meet together on Saturday, November 30 at 9 am. Many hands working together makes the work lighter and quicker. We also have a lot of fun. We look forward to seeing you.

Stewardship/Evangelism

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### OFFICE INFORMATIONS

Please call the office or Pastor when someone is ill, hospitalized, or homebound or you desire private communion.



- Please use this email to contact the office: [churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org)
  - Website address – [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org)
  - Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/>
  - All Sunday services are 'Live' streamed at 10am and posted to our church website the following day.
  - **All newsletter articles need to be into the office no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.**
  - **Bulletin announcements must be to Terri by Wednesday morning each week.**
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### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

23 Jaimie/Kirsten Jorgensen (1995) - 29 yrs  
28 Rev Tim/Heidi Nerud (1996) – 28 yrs



30 Dale/Linda Aper (1970) - 54 yrs  
31 Peter/Janice Neeld (1995) - 29 yrs

### DECEMBER BAPTISMS

4 Joyce DeFauw  
7 Heidi Nerud  
9 Kaleb Rahn  
9 Stacie Rahn  
10 Olivia Loenser  
10 Autumn Raschke  
11 Dakota Grant

12 Jaelyn Lambin  
13 Teresa Firch  
13 Rollin Miller  
18 Stephanie Andre  
22 Drew Schillinger  
23 Lynne Daniels  
23 Don Hickenbottom



23 Jerry Hickenbottom  
24 Kathy Curry  
26 Zane Roberts  
27 Trey Blank  
27 Jonathan Barry



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Jack Magerkurth  
2 Trey Blank  
5 Cathy Schillinger  
5 Marilyn Woods  
9 Alan Magerkurth



17 Jaime Werling  
19 Janet Bertso  
24 Faye Piepho  
24 Lucas Thompson  
24 John Wickwire

27 Alex Miller  
30 Conner Helke  
31 Heidi McKibbon  
31 Carolyn Wildermuth



## A DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS

**DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS** contributions are now being devoted to necessary infrastructure at University Lutheran Church in Champaign (UniLu). New toilets will be installed in a men's room, and a new water heater installed for the building.

"Items like these seem far from glamorous," said CID Mission Executive Ken Schurb. "They do not capture our senses until problems arise in connection with them. Then their importance stands out." He added that plumbing as well as painting and many other such "background" elements help UniLu offer Christ in Word and Sacrament to University of Illinois students, faculty, and staff.

On October 24, CID President Michael Mohr declared complete the previous DFM project, which had been furnace replacements at Immanuel Lutheran Student Center in Macomb. This project ended up requiring only about half of the \$25,000 originally set aside for it.

The Macomb furnace project was the last on the list approved by CID Board of Directors for this year. Under discretionary authority within guidelines that this board adopted for DFM, Pres. Mohr opened the current project to address known needs at UniLu.

For the third consecutive year, CID mission stations have been assembling a list of their projected repair and upgrades for the next 10 years. "The list makes it easy to look up needs at CID mission properties," Pres. Mohr said. District congregations will see the total updated list prior to next summer's CID convention. **Amount to be funded: \$5,000.**  
**Project:** Replace toilets in basement men's restroom and replace water heater at University Lutheran Church, Champaign

## THE GIVING TREE

Christmas is a wonderful time to think of others and show the love of Christ. Check out the 'Giving Tree' just outside the Office (This will be up Dec. 1). You will find several missions that are in need. Grab a decoration or two and follow the directions on the back of each. Your loving gifts will bring not only a bit of joy but also the message of Jesus our Savior to those in need.



## CHRISTIAN LIVING

### *Repenting of "Yours" and "Mine"*

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, "Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness" (*LSB* 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

*Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,  
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost*

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God's Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn't consider "equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself" for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn't bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

*That knows no barrier of "yours" and "mine,"  
assured that only what's withheld is lost.*

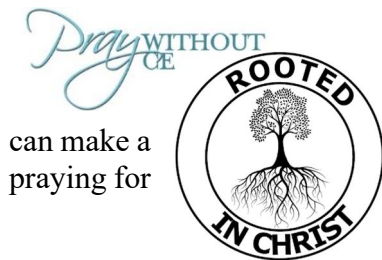
Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is "mine!" But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." There isn't anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the "yours" and "mine" and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord's house.

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### PRAYER GROUP (CHAIN)

All are invited to participate either by becoming an email prayer warrior or asking for prayers. Prayer warriors receive requested prayers from the Pastor via email which then can be used as they pray throughout the day. Those desiring prayers request to the Pastor. This is a blessing to those requesting prayers and those our brothers/sisters in need of prayers.



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praying for

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### PRAYER REQUESTS

**Our Infrequent Attendees** –pray the Holy Spirit bring them to understand their need to be in regular worship in church and we as brothers and sisters in Christ would reach out to them.

**Our LWML Chapter**– that God would continue to bless their work.

**Sunday school** – pray the Holy Spirit would direct and guide the students to a better understanding of God's love and mercy in Jesus Christ and that all parents would be diligent in bringing their children each Sunday.

**Youth** – pray the Holy Spirit would provide the means to work with our youth to keep them faithful to their confirmation promises. Bless and increase their numbers.

**Elderly/Homebound** - pray that this congregation would continually remember our Elderly and Shut-ins and minister to their special needs.



**Confirmation Students** – pray that they will be eager to study, learn and grow in the teachings of the Lutheran church and their faith. May they see this is the beginning of a life lived for Jesus.

### REMEMBERING THOSE IN NEED!

**ST. JOHN’S FAMILY**—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy these members of St. John’s:

<b>Elizabeth Bjork</b>	<b>Betty Firch</b>	<b>Jessica Johnson</b>	<b>Linda Lundquist</b>
<b>Paula Chapa</b>	<b>Arlyn Helke</b>	<b>Aaron Raschke</b>	<b>Marilyn Woods</b>
<b>Joyce DeFauw</b>	<b>Lynne Johnson</b>	<b>Drew Schillinger</b>	<b>Carolyn Wildermuth</b>
<b>Dawn Daebelliehn</b>			
<b>Brandon &amp; Shaeli Streeks &amp; family</b> (Adopted Seminarian)		<b>Jon/Anita Clausing</b> (missionaries in Kenya)	
<b>Don Eggers</b> (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)		<b>Marty Cavato</b> (cousin of Mary Jo Gehn)	
<b>Jodie Martin</b> (daughter of Gary/Darla Johns)		<b>Ron Powell</b> (friend of Brad Gehn)	
<b>Shandel Loenser</b>		<b>Ellen Bauer</b> (grandmother of Joel Werling)	
<b>Don Lutz</b> (husband of an LWML friend of Liz Neumann)		<b>Gary Kilstom</b> (friend of Brad Gehn)	
<b>Justin Rittenhouse</b> (grandson of John/Nancy Wickwire)		<b>Paul Werner</b> (brother of Dan Werner)	
<b>Shirley Nerud</b> (mother of Pastor Nerud)			

*Please remember to call the church office if you are needing prayer. Also let us know when we can remove your name because your health has improved and you are living a regular life. We love to give thanks to God for His healing just as we send Him our requests.)*

**MILITARY** – We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

<b>Mandy/Richard Davila</b> (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)	<b>Casey Powers Jr.</b> (step son of Lisa Powers)
<b>Luke/Nicole Thompson</b> (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)	<b>Brittany Loenser</b> (daughter of Gabe Loenser)
<b>Karl Flynn</b> (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)	<b>Rylie Hallendorff</b> (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)



**NEWS YOU CAN USE!**  
**December 2024**

**Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions supported by your church’s Mission Dollars to the District.** *Please remember in your prayers all our CID campus ministries, especially Rev. William Jensen and Wittenberg Lutheran Center in Normal, which serve students, faculty, and staff of Illinois State University and other institutions. Also, pray for the “Keeping Christ on Campus” campaign, which is building endowments to help CID support our campus ministries.*

### *Items of Interest to Share*

**MISSION EDUCATION TOOLKIT:** By mid-October, a modest Mission Education Toolkit will be available at [www.cidlcms.org](http://www.cidlcms.org) (main page bottom corner box) . Its first two elements will be a video interview with Pastor Aaron Uphoff of Calvary, Watseka, an alumnus of CID’s campus ministry at Western Illinois University in Macomb, and suggested text for a pastor to consider incorporating into a church newsletter article this fall. Check it out.

### **Witnessing HELPS**

The Central Illinois District is pleased to announce the availability of a set of Witnessing Helps on our website. These take their cue from the four areas identified in LCMS 2023 Res. 1-01A: 1.) beginning an evangelistic conversation, 2.) listening discerningly to a non-churched person, 3.) making a simple statement of the Gospel, and 4.) defending the resurrection.

There are four sheets of helps, one for each of the above. These sheets, developed in consultation with South Wisconsin District executive Nathan Meador and Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ Director Martin Herzberg, each offer three relatively simple suggestions to help with one of those skills as mentioned by the Synod. The sheets are intended to supplement, not supplant, the core *Every One His Witness* module made available by the Synod.

For the Witnessing Helps sheets, as well as short videos that introduce each, visit <https://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-witness-ministry.html>

### **New Dollar for Mission Project**

We have been able to fund four of our current DFM projects. We are moving our subsequent approved DFM project. **Restroom and water heater at University Lutheran Church, Champaign**

Dollar for Missions (DFM) contributions are now being devoted to necessary infrastructure at the University Lutheran Church in Champaign (UniLu). New toilets will be installed in the men's room, and a new water heater will be installed for the building.

“Items like these seem far from glamorous,” said CID Mission Executive Ken Schurb. “They do not capture our senses until problems arise in connection with them. Then their importance stands out.”

### **SAVE THE DATE: "Illinois Pro-Life March"**

**Tuesday, March 25, 2025**

As last year, Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Springfield (across the street from the State Capitol building) will host a Matins service before the rally and march in the morning. A light lunch will be provided at a nominal cost. Precise times are being determined. Again, this year, parking will be available downtown at the State House Inn, a block north of the capitol and near Trinity. However, please make plans now to carpool whenever possible.

### **2025 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING**

Looking for information: Ways to Connect

- CID Lutheran Youth Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/249327678480252>) – Find the latest district updates and information LCMS Youth Ministry Facebook Group
- End Goals: LCMS Youth Ministry Podcast <https://www.kfuo.org/category/lcms-youth-ministry-end-goals/> All things youth ministry and some great episodes on the Gathering! Be sure to check out [www.lcmsgathering.com](http://www.lcmsgathering.com) under the Resources tab for tons of information, worksheets, budgeting sheets, etc

From our Seminarian: Brandon Streeks

His letter to follow.





11/5/2024

Dear, St. John's Lutheran

We wanted to give you all a brief update on our first quarter here at CTSFW!

First of all, thank you very much for your continued support financially! It has been a blessing to us, and a great help! We also want to thank you for your continued prayers as well! We appreciate it all very much!

Things are going great! Ella is in her second year of Preschool, and is in the swing of things. She attends New Hope Lutheran Preschool, and she loves it! She has made great friends there, and has enjoyed learning there and preparing for Kindergarten.

Nathaniel and Beckett both spend their day at a babysitters home. Her name is Lillian, and she just graduated high school, and plans to attend Concordia Chicago in the Fall of 2025. She has been a blessing to our family, and we appreciate her greatly being with our 2 boys all day!

Shaeli is still teaching 1st and 2nd grade at Bethlehem, and is back in her routine as well. She had midterms this last week, already! Times Flies!

I also have adjusted to my routine well, and I am enjoying my classes! I am in Liturgics 1, which is a very practical class which studies our liturgy, worship, and the church year as a whole. We also practice things like the public reading of Scripture, and chanting.

I am also in Greek Readings. In this class, we take a look at the Gospel lesson for the upcoming Sunday from Series B, in the 3 Year Lectionary, in Greek. We translate

it, fill out a worksheet pertaining to the translation, and then have discussion about it in this class. This has been my favorite class so far!

My third class is Dogmatics 1. This is where we learn the doctrine of our church body. This class is an intense one, full of reading. In this class we thoroughly study the Lutheran Confessions, Pieper's Dogmatics, and post Reformation Lutheran theology as a whole.

Gospel's 1 has also been very interesting. We are making our way through Matthew in this class, and I had 2 Exegetical papers to write. One on Matthew 10, and the other on Matthew 27. With these papers, you dig into the assigned text and read commentaries, look at the Greek, and explain the theological significance found throughout your research and study of the text. They are a lot of fun to do, but also very time consuming!

I am assigned to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Ossian Indiana for my field work for the next 2 years. There I help with the readings, and distribution. After I take Homiletics 1 next quarter, I can also start preaching! I'm looking forward to it!

That about sums up our start to this academic year so far. We are all very busy, but are also very grateful to be here at CTSFW. We have been blessed by God in each of our vocations here, and are grateful to be living them out.

In Christ, The Streeks Family



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
 GENESEO IL  
 815-989-2025

# December 2024

ELDER: Mike Dahl

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 SS Practice 8:30 am Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Elders' 11:30 am	2 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	3	4 Advent service 7 pm	5	6	7
8 SS Practice 8:30 am Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	9 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	10 Council 6 pm	11 Advent service 7 pm	12	13	14
15 SS Practice 8:30 am Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Youth 11:30 am	16 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	17 LWML 1:00 pm Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm	18 Advent service 7 pm	19	20	21
22 SS Practice 8:30 am Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	23 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	24 Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm 	25 Christmas Day Service/Comm 10am	26	27	28
29 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am	30 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>  <i>Pastor on Vacation—</i>	31 New Year's Eve @ Concordia 6 pm	<i>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 9:8</i>			



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
8948 N 1900 AVE  
GENESEO IL 61254-8941

**Sunday school/Adult & Youth Bible Class 8:45am**

**WORSHIP SERVICES 10 am**  
**(Holy Communion 1st, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays)**

**Live Streaming each week on Facebook**

**Advent Services – Dec. 4, 11, 18 @ 7pm**

**Christmas Eve – 6:30 pm**

**Christmas Day – 10 am**

