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Merry Christmas Church Family,

Perhaps you have heard the expression, Jesus is the reason for the season? It's Christmas time friends. I want to encourage you to take every opportunity to share the true Christmas story.

Over Thanksgiving, I traveled to Chicago and went with my family on a walk through a park that was called Winter Lights. It followed a paved pathway that wove through the trees with music playing and multiple light displays. It featured mostly snowflakes and spotlights flashing in the tree branches, and there were rainbow-lit words that read peace, kindness, and love. It was very well done; the audio was loud and clear, and the spectacle of lights was engaging.

After a few minutes, I realized what was notably not there. Anywhere. Any sign whatsoever of Christmas. Not a single Christmas song. No Christmas tree, no Santa Claus, no nativity scene. Nothing that had anything to do with Christmas. It truly lived up to its name: Winter Lights.

I have to admit when I realized that Christmas was not a part of this experience at all, my heart sank. I have been through other winter light displays that would have a Christmas tree or a Santa Claus but never one that has been totally scrubbed free of any Christmas tradition.

Unfortunately, I believe this is the direction our country is moving. So, it's up to us. We who believe that Jesus was born on Christmas day of a virgin named Mary. We who believe that the shepherds were told by angels and that wisemen came to worship. We who believe that the Son of God arrived in a humble setting and came to be our Savior. We are the ones who must take every opportunity to share the truth about Christmas. I want to encourage you to remind everyone that Jesus is the reason for the season.

Steve



Steve Allison, Minister

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

1 Cor. 15:58

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHT

December 18th
10:45am

The Miracle of Christmas

Come hear the
Christmas Story from
the children at CCC

CHILDREN'S
MINISTRY
&
VOLUNTEERS

2023 is right around the corner and with it....a NEW CALENDAR that needs to be filled with volunteers for Children's Church and Nursery Workers!!

Please prayerfully consider taking a few weeks this next year. The lessons for Children's Church are already planned and two people share the 20-30 minute time with the kids during the sermon time. Thank you!!

ANGEL TREE



An Angel Tree is set up in the church foyer to support IAG (Individual Advocacy Group), a nonprofit organization that helps those with special needs.

Thank you everyone who chose an angel from the tree and will be purchasing some Christmas gifts for those in need. All donations will be due to the church on December 18th. It is your choice whether you wrap them or not. Any questions, please see Amber Ramos or Georgia Cullison.

Thank you!



Thank you so much to everyone who donated to the Thanksgiving food baskets. With your help, we were able to bless seven families!

Don Vickroy
Evangelism Dept. Head

YOU ARE NEEDED



GIVE BLOOD

*Countryside is sponsoring a blood drive with ImpactLife (formerly Mississippi Blood Center) on **Saturday January 7, 2023**. It will be held from 7:30-11:00 A.M. in Countryside gym. Appointments can be made by contacting Connie Curry at 309-523-2504 or online at www.bloodcenter.org. Use Group Sponsor code 288 to schedule online. Appointments are required, bring a photo ID and please eat before donation. The last date to donate elsewhere is **November 12, 2022**. Blood is always in short supply, but the need is greater during the holidays.*

One of our own, Jerry Dufur, needed several blood transfusions during his recent hospitalization. Someone was willing to be a donor and make the blood available in Jerry's time of need. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, DONATE.

Connie Curry



ImpactLife

KIDS CLUB & IMPACT

December 2022

Did you start your weekly videos and activities last week?

I hope you are enjoying them as much as did putting them together.



Our CELEBRATION event will be Dec 18th at our Christmas Program!

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our End of the Year Christmas Party will be Wednesday, December 14th after school - 5pm. We hope each of you has a wonderful and blessed Christmas! (We will see you on the 18th for our Christmas Program and then not until January 11th when classes resume!)

December 7 - Weekly Meeting

December 14 - Weekly Meeting

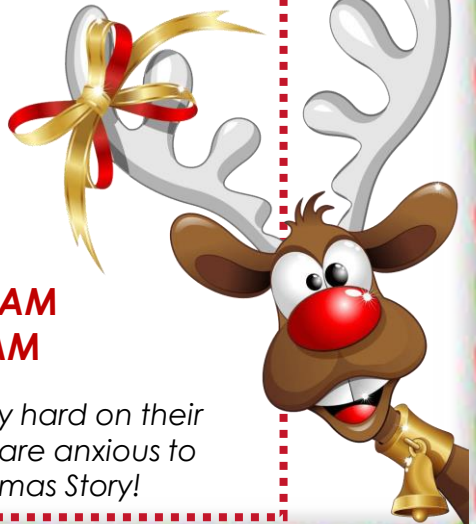
& Christmas Party!

December 18 - Christmas Program (10:45am)

December 21 - NO KIDS CLUB

December 28 - NO KIDS CLUB

The Miracle of Christmas



**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
DEC 18TH at 10:45AM**

Your children have been working very hard on their part in the Christmas Program. They are anxious to present their version of the Christmas Story!

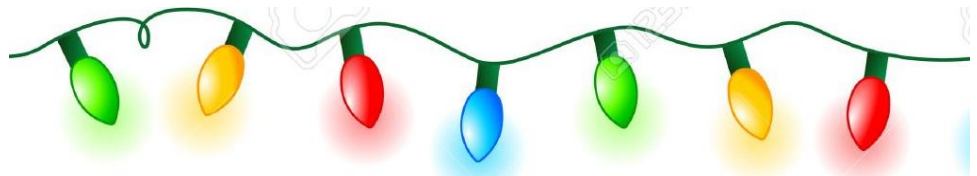
SERVING OTHERS IN LOVE



The Prayer Shawl Ministry of Countryside Church is made up of two very hard-working and kind women: Nancy Dufur and Joanne Wiklund (although I'm sure they would welcome anyone who would like to join them!) This month alone, they have given out many prayer shawls, lap quilts, crocheted hats and mittens, and dishcloths.



This year, they made 190 items for sick people in our congregation and to area shelters for battered women, foster children, veterans, and homeless. God sees your efforts, ladies, and you should be honored for the work you are doing for others. God bless you!



All is Bright

Holiday Lights Tour

December 16th

5pm

If you are interested in joining others for a relaxing evening viewing Christmas lights in the neighborhood, please sign up in the lobby.

We may plan on getting dinner together that evening too if there is interest.



"That the Creator himself comes to us and becomes our ransom — this is the reason for our rejoicing."

—Martin Luther

FELLOWSHIP HIGHLIGHT

MISSION HIGHLIGHT: Food Pantry

Countryside supports our local food pantry located at Messiah Lutheran Church, 302 11th Street, Port Byron. The food pantry serves residents located in the Riverdale School district. It is open on Wed. from noon until 2:00 P.M. Families are eligible to obtain food once a month.

Some of the specific needs include:

- All paper products
- Tooth brushes and toothpaste
- Soup (not chicken noodle)
- Spaghetti sauce
- Canned vegetables and canned pastas
- Syrup
- Canned meats or hamburger helper
- Money donations
- Cleaning products are also needed as they cannot be purchased with the SNAP cards.
- Ground beef has been donated so grocery items that can be used with the ground beef are helpful.

Many groups are giving out Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas baskets, but hunger is an ongoing issue.

Grocery prices and other living expenses are increasing for families so money for food items is shrinking. The food pantry recently had a large freezer/refrigerator donated so food can be stored longer. Non-perishable food items are stored in the pantry space provided by the church. The food pantry is one way for Countryside to support the needs of our local community. The last Sunday off each month is designated Food Pantry Day. The boxes for the items are located in the church foyer.

**Food Drop Off
Location:**
Messiah Lutheran
Church
302 11th Street
Port Byron, IL



“Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.” 1 Chronicles 16:11

MISSION HIGHLIGHT

CELEBRATING HIS BIRTH



Christmas
Eve

CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE
5 PM

Please join us on Christmas Eve as we celebrate our Savior's birth with traditional Christmas carols and a candlelight service.

Christmas Services 2022

Dec 18th

Children's Christmas Program
(10:45am)

Dec 24th

Christmas Eve (5pm)

Dec 25th

Christmas Day Service
(10:45am)

There will be no Sunday School this day



"Bless us, Lord, this Christmas, with quietness of mind; teach us to be patient and always to be kind."

—Helen Steiner Rice

WORSHIP HIGHLIGHT

OUR GIVING



God's Gifts to Us

Here's the way Christmas is described in the most famous verse: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Then there's the simple, short, spectacular exultation of 2 Corinthians 9:15: "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" The very essence of Christmas includes a divine overflow of generosity, kindness, grace, giving — doing for us, giving to us, what we could never do for ourselves or get on our own.

The ultimate gift is God. God gives God, like it says in 1 Peter 3:18: "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God." This was all so that we might have God as our supreme, all-satisfying gift or treasure. At the heart of Christmas is God giving God for the enjoyment of his people, whom he saves by giving his Son to suffer. That's breathtaking. It is the heart of Christmas.

Our Response

Hebrews 13:16 says, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices" — that is, worship — "are pleasing to God." Even our giving to others is viewed as a sacrifice of worship to God.

Here's the sum of the matter. I think all of our gift giving should seek to form a mindset about giving at Christmas that helps the children and the adults to (1) rejoice in God as the great and first giver of the greatest gift, (2) seek the mindset that offers back to Christ the gift of trust, hope, admiration, joy, and affection, and then, finally, (3) seek the mindset that overflows with joy in giving to others — not primarily the mindset of getting, but the mindset of joyful overflow: giving.

MY FAITH PROMISE TO WORLD MISSIONS

After a period of much prayer and discernment, I/WE promise to support the worldwide missionary program of the Countryside Christian Church over the next year. In total dependence upon God for HIS provision, it is our promise that "As God Gives, So Shall We Give." By faith, I/We promise the following amount of money:

\$ _____ **Annual Total**

Note: This is a faith promise, a covenant between myself and God. It is my voluntary offering for the evangelization of the world.



Point your smartphone camera at the QR code to the right to be taken to the online giving site. From here you can choose to give online or via text




FINANCE HIGHLIGHT

December BIRTHDAYS

- 2 – Curt Knapp
- 5 – Mary Green
- 10 – Dorothy Newton
- 14 – Brandon Simms
- 23 – Kathy Kohrt
- 23 – Grant Rutledge
- 24 – Islay Miller
- 24 – Ben White
- 31 – Brock Coverdill

December ANNIVERSARIES

- 26 – Bill & JoAnn Courter

CONGRATULATIONS!!! If you kept up with the Bible bookmarks all year, you just finished reading through the Bible in a year!! 



“The teacher said this will be a true test of my acting ability. What did she mean by that?”

December

- 1. Galatians 1-3
- 2. Galatians 4-6
- 3. Ephesians 1-3
- 4. Ephesians 4-6
- 5. Philippians 1-4
- 6. Colossians 1-4
- 7. 1 Thessalonians 1-5
- 8. 2 Thessalonians 1-3
- 9. 1 Timothy 1-3
- 10. 1 Timothy 4-6
- 11. 2 Timothy 1-4
- 12. Titus Philemon
- 13. Hebrews 1-4
- 14. Hebrews 5-7
- 15. Hebrews 8-10
- 16. Hebrews 11-13
- 17. James 1-2
- 18. James 3-5
- 19. 1 Peter 1-2
- 20. 1 Peter 3-5
- 21. 2 Peter 1-3
- 22. 1 John 1-2
- 23. 1 John 3-5
- 24. 2 John, 3 John, Jude
- 25. Revelation 1-3
- 25. Revelation 4-5
- 27. Revelation 6-9
- 28. Revelation 10-13
- 29. Revelation 14-16
- 30. Revelation 17-18
- 31. Revelation 19-22



THANK YOU FOR HELPING!

Childrens Ministry

NURSERY

Sunday School (9:30 – 10:15am)
Worship Team (10:45 – 12:00pm)

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Teacher/Helpers are dismissed at the start of
the sermon

| | During Sunday School | During Worship Service | | Teacher | Helper |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| Dec 4 | Sarah Denekas | Addi Tiesman Cathy Lotz | Dec 4 | Karen Allison | Cheryl Gipson |
| Dec 11 | Becki Winger | Becki Winger Judy Millies | Dec 11 | Karen Allison | Sarah Denekas |
| Dec 18 | Cathy Lotz | Mikah Mikles Sarah Denekas | Dec 18 | Karen Allison | Donna Vickroy |
| Dec 25 | Kathy Kohrt | Georgia Cullison Cathy Lotz | Dec 25 | Karen Allison | Kathy Kohrt |

Worship Ministry

COMMUNION MEDITATION

December 4 – Jim Kaecker
December 11 – Ryan Schmidt
December 18 – Wayne Lotz
December 25 – Teresa Garcia

GREETERS



Please sign up for a Sunday that works for your family! Welcome people, direct them to the sanctuary, nursery, or restrooms if needed, and hand out bulletins.

Church BUILDING CLEANERS



Wayne & Cathy Lotz
Kathy Kohrt & Lisa Jones
Don & Donna Vickroy and Georgia Cullison

Breakfast VOLUNTEERS



New sign-up sheets are in the lobby. Please sign up for a Sunday that works best for you! Provide breakfast treats and help serve coffee and clean-up between Sunday School and Worship.

“Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Matthew 9:37-38

VOLUNTEERS THIS MONTH

December

2022

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p><i>"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21</i></p> | | | | <p>☆ 1</p> | <p>2 Stamping Club (Bev Skelton) 9am-12pm</p> | <p>3 Men's Breakfast 9:00am </p> |
| <p>4 SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM COFFEE TIME 10:15AM WORSHIP 10:45AM</p> | <p>5 Evangelism/ Missions 6:30pm All Depts. 7pm U of I Home Extension 7-9pm</p> | <p>6 Men's Study 9am "The Chosen" 9am Worship Team 6:30pm</p> | <p>7 Kids Club 3-5pm Impact 4-5pm Small Groups Port Byron -6pm Geneseo - 6pm</p> | <p>8</p> | <p>9</p> | <p>10 Women's Coffee 9:30am </p> |
| <p>11 SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM COFFEE TIME 10:15AM WORSHIP 10:45AM</p> | <p>12 Church in use Zuma Township Meeting</p> | <p>13 Men's Study 9am "The Chosen" 9am Worship Team 6:30pm</p> | <p>14 Kids Club 3-5pm Impact 4-5pm  Small Groups Port Byron -6pm Geneseo - 6pm</p> | <p>15 Zuma Home Extension 1:00-4:00pm Elder Meeting</p> | <p>16</p> | <p>17</p> |
| <p>18 CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS PROGRAM  ANGEL TREE GIFTS DUE TODAY  SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM COFFEE TIME 10:15AM WORSHIP 10:45AM</p> | <p>19</p> | <p>20 Men's Study 9am "The Chosen" 9am Worship Team 6:30pm</p> | <p>21 <i>No Kids Club/Impact this week</i> Small Groups Port Byron -6pm Geneseo - 6pm</p> | <p>22</p> | <p>23</p> | <p>24 Christmas Eve Service 5pm </p> |
| <p>25 <i>No Sunday School</i> COFFEE TIME 10:15AM WORSHIP 10:45AM CHRISTMAS DAY </p> | <p>26 </p> | <p>27 Men's Study 9am "The Chosen" 9am Worship Team 6:30pm</p> | <p>28 <i>No Kids Club/Impact this week</i> Small Groups Port Byron -6pm Geneseo - 6pm</p> | <p>29</p> | <p>30</p> | <p>31 New Year's Eve </p> |