



Just about everyone I know loves Spring. New life is popping up out of the ground. Barren branches begin to sport fresh decoration. Various shades of gray give way to greens and yellows. There is promise as seeds go in the ground, a new start.

Fast forward to October. The crops are coming out of the fields and the leaves are nearing their end. But the harvest is the promise come to reality. And those leaves might be about to drop, but they put on a show before they do.

Fast forward to December. The color has drained away. The wind bites and snarls. Nobody is planting anything and probably isn't harvesting anything either. At the beginning of Winter life seems to be back on its heels, just holding on.

And that is the moment that we Christians celebrate new life coming into the world. It might possibly strike us as very odd that we celebrate at this moment. It isn't because we know Jesus' actual birth date. We don't. Some say that Christians chose this date to co-opt the pagan winter solstice festival. I suppose that might be true, but I'm not aware that there is any evidence for the theory. So why do we celebrate Christmas at such a moment when life is at such a low ebb?

Here's my interpretation. The timing is perfectly appropriate. The Christ child does not arrive at a moment when he is merely a part of the renewal that is happening. No. He IS the renewal. Without him, all life has drained away, the creation has gone barren, sin has conquered us and the long Winter ahead would promise no Spring. Christ arrives where death reigns because he meets the enemy on his own turf, at the most hopeless spot.

December 2018

This past month I just finished reading the Lord of the Rings trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien. It tells the story of a great evil that has arisen in the land of Middle Earth, Sauron the Lord of Mordor. The powers of good have grown weak and weary. They continue to fight but defeat is almost certain. To make matters worse, there is a ring of great power, made by Sauron himself, and meant to corrupt and control any who use it, most particularly those who try to do good with it. After long years of remaining lost, Sauron has become aware of the ring's existence and has sent out his evil forces to capture it. The situation could not be bleaker.

The bearer of this horrible ring is a Hobbit, a little creature, a halfling named Frodo. They are of little account as a people, certainly not powerful. His quest is not to run away as far as might be, nor is it to hide the terrible ring. His quest is to carry the ring into the very jaws of evil, into the Land of Mordor, and throw it into Mount Doom. Only thus can it be destroyed. To bear this evil is death to him. Aside from the almost certain death from the evil forces seeking him, the ring itself saps his life every day.

Tolkien was a Christian and he told a Christian story. Jesus arrives in the weakest form imaginable – not a Hobbit, but a newborn baby. He arrives where sin is strong and life wanes. He arrives to where the danger is greatest and death is certain. And he does it so that others might have life.

Whether this location is Mordor, the middle of Winter, or the Cross, the reality is the same. Jesus is a life giver and a death destroyer. He comes to us, he comes to YOU, so that the sin, failure and destruction that is certain will be destroyed. He bears all the weight of evil so that you will have life. Bear this in mind always, but most particularly when the darkness is strongest in your life. The darkness doesn't win. Jesus does.

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Emanuel-St John Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes November 8, 2018

President Michelle Talbott called the meeting to order. Present were Cindy Souder, Kari Lantz, Rhonda Johnson, Brian Lantz, Pauline Lange, Dennis Booth, Karen Cerra, Harlan Meyer, and Pastor Ben. Pastor Ben gave devotions. Motion by Dennis Booth, second by Brian Lantz to approve the agenda. Motion passed. Motion by Dennis Booth, second by Harlan Meyer to approve the October minutes. Motion passed. Treasurer's report was given by Rhonda Johnson. Motion by Dennis Booth, second by Kari Lantz to approve the treasurer's report with a balance of \$2744.93. Motion passed. A written EPIC report was given to the Council.

Old Business: The Church of Damascus Road Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, Nov. 11th.

President's Report: Michelle Talbott gave a report on two meetings she attended this past month.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Ben reported on the Mission Festival plans. Thanksgiving Service will be November 18th at 6:00 p.m. A suggestion of making flyers and inviting people in the community was discussed.

Worship and Music Committee: Dennis Booth present. Communion will be given during the Mission Festival Sunday and at the Thanksgiving Service. The committee is working on the Advent season.

Parish Education: Kari Lantz present. The Sunday School is looking at doing a mission project. A Lytton Town Night may be done if one is still available. High School students are working on the children's Christmas Service.

Outreach Committee: Karen Cerra present. They are working on the Mission Festival potluck and the Good Gifts tree at Christmas.

Property and Management Committee: Harlan Meyer present. The outside cross on top of the church is not working. He will contact Meyers Electric. The bell rope is getting replaced. The furnaces are not working, but the committee is in

the process of finding solutions. Another bat removal bid was received from K-Bat in Storm Lake for \$1600.00 with a two year guarantee. Water fountain by kitchen is not draining. Harlan will look into it. Motion by Dennis Booth, second by Harlan Meyer to hire K-Bat from Storm Lake to remove the bats from the church next spring. Motion passed.

Stewardship and Finance Committee: Council discussed the offerings for Mission Festival and the Thanksgiving Service. Motion by Brian Lantz, second by Kari Lantz to split the offering for Mission Festival at 50% to the well project in Tanzania and 50% to the girls' school in Tanzania. Motion passed. Motion by Karen Cerra, second by Harlan Meyer to split the offering from the Thanksgiving service at 50% to the Sac County Outreach and 50% to the Calhoun County Outreach. Motion passed.

WELCA: none

New Business: none

Motion by Kari Lantz, second by Dennis Booth to adjourn. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.



ELCA Good Gifts

On Friday, November 30th willing volunteers will decorate the church for Christmas. We will once again have the ELCA Good Gifts Tree Ornaments on the tree in the entry. The ornaments are of a goat, pig, chicks, or honey bees with the cost of each on the ornaments.

A **goat** can provide fresh milk for daily nutrition for children and their families and can survive in the harshest environments-rocky terrain, drought-prone areas and on small plots of land. A **pig** in the pen is money in the bank. They quickly grow to 200 pounds and grab a great price at the market. **Chicks** are laying eggs within months supplying protein-rich meals and eggs to sell at the market for a family struggling with hunger and poverty. **Honey bees** provide beeswax which can be handcrafted into soaps, candles, honey and other products to create a small, sustainable business. And their presence on a farm means they are pollinating plants and boosting crop growth.

We encourage you to pick the ornament(s) of your choice and place your donation for each in the offering plate with it noted in the memo line if it is for a goat (\$50), a pig (\$30), chicks (\$10) or honey bees (\$20). Then you may take the ornament home as a reminder of your gift.

Last year over \$5.4 million was raised through ELCA Good Gifts. Help us to continue to fight hunger and transform lives in nearly 100 countries.

December Birthdays

- 2) Camie Clark, Deborah Sandquist
- 5) Matthew Hinrichs, Ava Taylor
- 6) Jenna Meyer
- 7) Randy Bartels
- 9) Woody Glasnapp, **Ronald Meyer**
- 10) Tony Diersen, Jane Loux
- 11) Arlyn Hillmer, Dawn Newman
- 12) Glenn Helberg
- 13) Teresa Scharn
- 16) Cassie Fjerstad, Laura Greene, Taylor Greene, Jacob Grodahl, Jim Hartling, Tim Kral
- 17) Darold Matter, Roger McKinney, Sarah VanHulzen
- 18) Jane Glasnapp, Cynthia Fischer
- 19) Kelsey Peterson
- 20) Heather Campbell, Darsi Huddleson, Jamie Kruckenberg, Linn Scharn
- 22) John Worley
- 24) **Glen Bartels, Edna Scherle**
- 25) Anthony Althiser, Ryan Wheelock
- 27) Kelsie Hejtmanek, Laura Hejtmanek
- 29) Chase Hejtmanek
- 31) Corey Campbell, Marlene Ramsey



- 12/9/00 Scott & Alison Greene
- 12/11/99 B.J. & Kari Musselman
- 12/18/66 **Dyle & Edna Rockafellow**
- 12/22/73 Alan & Isabelle Nuehring
- 12/23/65 **Everett & Joane Hinrichs**
- 12/30/17 Allen & Jenna Jensen

Happy Anniversary



What to give?

After complaining that I never knew what to give people for Christmas, my pastor sent me this list:

- To your enemy, forgiveness.
- To an opponent, tolerance.
- To a friend, your heart.
- To a customer, service.
- To all men, charity.
- To every child, a good example.
- To yourself, respect.



October Sunday School Attendance

Sunday School students present every Sunday in October were:

Nursery-Myla Albright, Lily Bartels and Johnny Worley;

Kindergarten & 1st Grade-Chase Hejtmanek, Sawyer Riley, Lille Greene and Abby Worley;

Grades 2 & 3-Benjamin Worley;

Grades 4 & 5-Kelsie Hejtmanek, Sadie Wheelock, Derek Greene and Charlie Nattress;

Grade 6-Adlen Wheelock;

Confirmation-Olivia Toms and Connor Scharn;

High School-Laura Greene and Taylor Greene.

Class winner for best attendance was Grade 6 taught by Faith Worley. Way to go students (and parents)!



Christmas Services:

The **Children's Christmas Service** will be held on **Sunday, December 16th** during the 10 a.m. service. We invite everyone to join us as we celebrate our Savior's birth.

The **Candlelight Christmas Eve Service** will begin at **6:30 p.m.** on **Monday, December 24th**. We will celebrate Holy Communion at this service.



Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him



To all officers or persons responsible for a report to be included in the Annual Report: These reports must be submitted by January 1, 2019 to allow time for the completion and mailing of the reports to our members in a timely fashion as required by the Constitution of our congregation. Any reports that can be submitted prior to that time would be most appreciated.

Greeter Guidelines –

You are asked to arrive around 9:30 a.m. to hand out bulletins.

You will be asked to do the offering for the main floor pews. Someone else will do the balcony -- most likely the Worship Attendant for the day.

Once the offering has been collected, combine all the offering plates into one.

Wait in the doorway at the back of the Sanctuary until the acolyte comes forward to receive the offering before going down the organ side aisle.

Smile, Smile, Smile.



With Sympathy

Sherry Helmbrecht

Sherry Ann Helmbrecht, age 60, originally from Lytton, IA, (formerly of Abilene, TX, and Spring Hill, TN) passed away peacefully on Thursday, October 25, 2018, in Sioux City, IA. Sherry was born on July 14, 1958, to parents Ronald and Elsie (Scheffler) Helmbrecht in Sac City, IA. She was baptized and confirmed at Emanuel-St. John Lutheran Church in Lytton, IA. Sherry grew up on the family farm with her parents and three siblings, Kim, Maryl and Tim and went to Lytton Community School, graduating with the class of 1976.

Sherry attended Morningside College in Sioux City, IA, obtaining her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. After graduation, she worked as a kidney transplant nurse at the University of Iowa Hospital. A few years later, Sherry moved to Abilene, TX, and worked for Hendrick Health System where she pioneered combining technology and nursing. After furthering her education with an MBA from Hardin-Simmons University, Sherry moved to Nashville, TN. She worked for Community Health Systems

improving patient care through the use of technology in hospitals across the United States.

Music and traveling were a big part of Sherry's life. She loved singing and performing with the Abilene Classical Chorus - singing at Carnegie Hall as well as in several castles in Scotland. She also sang with her church choir. Sherry's travels included places such as Scotland, Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Spain, Austria, Italy, Greece, Ethiopia, Puerto Rico and many sites across the United States. Her photos and stories of these adventures were amazing, but no place was more dear to her heart than the family farm.

The importance of family was foremost in Sherry's heart. Memories of Sunday dinners with her cousins, her attendance at baptisms, confirmations, graduations, weddings and holidays will remain near and dear to the hearts of all of her loved ones.

Sherry was a kind, caring, and compassionate person, making many friends during her lifetime. She was a great conversationalist. Her life was always an adventure, which of course meant she had some pretty great stories to tell. Her smile brightened the room and will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Those left to cherish her memory include her siblings: Kimberly (Kenneth) Lager of Bedford, IA, Maryl (Tom) Sponder of Sioux City, IA, and Timothy (Kim) Helmbrecht of Ankeny, IA; nieces and nephews: Kurt (Janae) Lager, Kyle Lager, Devyn Sponder, David Sponder, Sarah Sponder, Tiffany (Kevin) Voge and children Adam, Jason, and Kiah, Austin (Ashley) Helmbrecht, Gabrielle (Dillon Hauser) Helmbrecht and Arianna Helmbrecht; many extended family members and friends. Sherry was preceded in death by her parents, Ronald and Elsie Helmbrecht.

In Loving Memory

Condolences to the family of Walter Berry, who died Tuesday, November 6, 2018 at his home in Sac City. His funeral was held Thursday, November 8, 2018 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sac City. Mr. Berry was the father of **Keith Berry**.

Condolences to the family of Marsha Lloyd, who died Saturday, November 17, 2018 the day before her 71st birthday. Her funeral was Monday, November 26, 2018 at Bethany Evangelical and Reformed Church in Ledyard, IA. Marsha was the sister of **Carol Meyer**.

ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSlowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.



December 2018, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

Merry Christmas from LSI!

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” — John 1:5

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks to you! Every day, as a ministry partner of LSI, you help bring the light of Christ to others.

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little to no resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know teens who are aging out of the foster care system, who fear they will never have a family to love them.

The holidays can be an especially difficult time for our most vulnerable neighbors. In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at 563-676-2065 or Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org.

Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas from LSI!

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins,

Giving Back to Her Community

Two years ago, Sarah felt helpless. She struggled with her mental health, there was tension between family members at home, and she couldn't find support or resources that worked with her family's busy schedule.

Sarah connected with LSI's Early Childhood Services, and through a local program she received flexible in-home parenting education to help her family thrive. Her LSI parent educator worked with her to learn about money management, healthy communication, and skills for parenting her two young children.

Now Sarah feels confident raising her family. She has found a support system and is ready to give back to her community and help other young mothers in need. Whenever she can, she tells other moms about LSI and helps refer them for services.

Because she felt empowered by LSI's Early Childhood Services, Sarah is creating a ripple effect across her community. She is passionate about lifting up and strengthening other families in need of the hope and healing she received.

