



Advent is a four Sunday church season that precedes Christmas in much the same way as Lent is a six Sunday church season that precedes Easter. Both Advent and Lent serve the same purpose: they are a time of preparation for a season of joy. But what kind of preparation?

Traditionally, we Christians have prepared ourselves by penitence, a focus on our own sins and shortcomings. Scripturally this takes two forms. First, Advent features at least a Sunday of John the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord by preaching repentance in the wilderness and baptizing in the Jordan. John doesn't pull punches. When the Pharisees and scribes come to him, he doesn't treat them with respect like everybody else does. He says, "You bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment?" His message, more than anything, is clarity. He tells us to not think better of ourselves than we ought.

Penitence also shows up in Advent's particular focus on Christ's Second Coming. One or more gospel lessons will admonish us to "Keep awake!" or "Be ready!" We don't know when Jesus is going to show up, so it's best to be ready. The experience of Christians always involves waiting, but that waiting can lead to spiritual laziness, "Doing the right thing can wait too." The message here is a warning to live with urgency.

Preparation isn't all penitence, though. On one Sunday in Advent we also hear the back story of Jesus' birth. This year, for example, we will read about Joseph's dream in which an angel tells him not to divorce Mary because she is bearing a child

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from God. The angel promises him that this child will save his people from their sins. Joseph's preparation is to believe the incredible, knowing that others will not believe it and will think him pathetic for marrying the woman who **obviously** cheated on him while they were betrothed. The message for us is that salvation comes at a cost.

All of these Advent messages are worth our time and reflection because we ourselves are in a story. Some of us do pretty well, still enjoying what is beautiful, delighting in our children and grandchildren, and happily absorbing a season which our hearts know to be special. Preparation takes the form of participation

For many of us, though, the hubbub of life makes it difficult to focus on much of anything, certainly not on something which demands more than usual; rather, life becomes an ongoing attempt to keep our head above water; if we get our presents wrapped before Christmas Eve, then we're doing well. Preparation takes the form of an imperfect flurry of activity.

For others, the season happens because others make it happen and we're just along for the ride. There is no preparation.

For some, we've grown overly familiar with this season and its trappings. Songs, treats, and decorations which once delighted now, duly commercialized, seem shallow. Preparation takes the form of resignation.

Wherever we are, however well we prepare, Christ comes. Whether we struggle or think better of ourselves than we ought, Christ comes. Whether we pay the cost of preparation or ride along on the coattails of others, Christ comes. May he break into your life with good news of great joy.

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## Emanuel-St John Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes November 14, 2019

President Brian Lantz called the meeting to order. Present were Pastor Ben, Cindy Souder, Jeff Ellerbrock, Rhonda Johnson, Colleen Arndt, Pauline Lange, Jo Grodahl, Karen Cerra, Harlan Meyer, Dar Lake, Randy Souder, and Sara Nattress. Pastor Ben gave devotions. Motion by Jo Grodahl, second by Dar Lake to approve the agenda. Motion passed. Motion by Jo Grodahl, second by Dar Lake to approve the October minutes with correction. Motion passed. Rhonda Johnson presented the October Treasurer's report with a balance of \$3645.11. Motion Jeff Ellerbrock, second Colleen Arndt to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

**Old Business:** none.

**President's Report:** Brian Lantz went over some letters he had received. He has talked to Amy Hammen about setting up a meeting for the youth in January.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Ben reported on visitations he had done the past month. Confirmation students attended Recharge camp with Pastor Ben. Melissa, Aubrie and Haden Stell have transferred their membership to Hope Church in Spencer, Ia.

**Worship and Music Committee:** Dar Lake present. Council discussed where to give the Thanksgiving service offering. Motion by Dar Lake, second by Jo Grodahl to split the offering 50/50 between the Sac County Outreach and the Calhoun County Outreach. Christmas Eve services will be at 6:30 p.m. with communion.

**Parish Ed Committee:** Sara Nattress showed council the backpack bags made by church members. 20 bags were made. Sunday School will begin at 8:45 a.m. until the Sunday School Program on December 15. There will be no Sunday School on December 22. Sunday School children will be collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald house in December.

**Outreach Committee:** Colleen Arndt and Karen Cerra present. They are working on boxing up the shoes that were collected for Soles 4 Souls. The Christmas Tree in the entry will be for people to buy and donate gloves, hats, and socks for East Sac Schools and the South Central Calhoun Schools.

**Property and Management Committee:** Harlan Meyer present. The new furnace will start being installed next week. Council discussed sidewalk snow removal for the winter season. An ad will be put in the paper and in the church newsletter advertising for help.

**Stewardship and Finance Committee:** Jeff Ellerbrock gave information about the November Endowment Committee meeting. There will be funds for the pastor's office remodeling project. The project needs to be paid for before end of December. He wanted to thank LeRoy Johnson for his work on calling church members to see if they still wanted subscription to the Living Lutheran magazine. Jeff passed out a 2020 Project Wish List of different projects that could be done at the church.

**WELCA:** No reports

**New Business:** Brian is working on a calling tree in case of church cancellation. It was suggested that a sign-up sheet be put up so that people could put their name and number down if they wished to be called.

Motion by Jo Grodahl, second by Colleen Arndt to adjourned. Motion passed. Lord's Prayer.



### Thrivent Information

A very brief meeting for Thrivent members who have given their Choice Dollars to Emanuel St John will be held following the 10 AM church service on Sunday, Dec. 1. We will discuss the possibility of using accumulated Thrivent Choice funds toward the furnace replacement project.

A reminder as groups begin planning for Town Nights: Thrivent Action Teams can be formed to help in the funding of their project. Upon submission of a very simple on-line application and consequent approval, Thrivent will provide "seed money" in the amount of a \$250 debit card to help jump start your project. If you have any questions, please contact Ron or Cheryl Haden.

## December Birthdays

- 1) Nash Riley
- 2) Camie Clark, Deborah Sandquist
- 5) Matthew Hinrichs, Ava Taylor
- 6) Jenna Meyer
- 7) Randy Bartels
- 8) Austin Aden
- 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**
- 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*



### Weather Related Announcements:

If it is necessary to cancel worship services, this information will be put on Facebook. We will also telephone those members that have signed up with name and phone number to call. You may also call or text the President of the Congregation, Brian Lantz or Pastor Ben.



### October Sunday School Attendance

Sunday School students present every Sunday in October were:

Nursery-Pre-Kindergarten-Canon Albright, Jack Bartels, Myla Albright, Elin Albright, Lily Bartels and Adelaide Worley;

Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade-Baylee Ellerbrock, Johnny Worley and Sawyer Riley;

Grades 2 & 3-Lille Greene and Abby Worley;

Grades 4-Aidan Albright, Danika Meyer, Cooper Nattress and Benjamin Worley;

Grades 5 & 6-Derek Greene, Charlie Nattress and Sadie Wheelock;

Confirmation-Brock Nattress, Jewel Talbott and Adlen Wheelock;

High School-Eli Wheelock, Laura Greene, Taylor Greene and Kort Riley.

Class winner for best attendance was Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten. Teachers for this class are: Alison Greene, Kari, Sam and Sally Musselman. All of the children were present each Sunday in October. **Awesome!!!**



We will have a "Giving Tree" in the entry this year. Donations of gloves, mittens, hats, caps and socks will be appreciated. These will be given to East Sac County School and Southern Calhoun County School. For the children that these will help keep warm this winter, we thank you!!!

## 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.



## Annual Reports

To all officers or persons responsible for a report to be included in the Annual Report: These reports must be submitted by January 1, 2020 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.



## December 2019, 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! Whether you have lifted up our organization through a financial or in-kind gift, volunteered your time to our programming, or supported us as a ministry partner this year, you have helped bring the light of Christ to others.

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little 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 foster care, 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](mailto: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, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [www.LSIowa.org](http://www.LSIowa.org) and [www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).*

## With You Every Step of the Way

When Lexi found out she was pregnant, she felt scared. She didn't have a job or an apartment, and she was overwhelmed as she tried to prepare for her baby. She knew she needed guidance and support, and she knew where to turn. In high school, Lexi utilized LSI's Behavioral Health Intervention Services, where she developed skills like anger management and healthy communication through regular meetings with her LSI worker. LSI had been in her corner before, and she needed help again now. She enrolled in LSI's Early Childhood Services.

The services provide in-home parenting education for families of young children or parents who are expecting. Each week, Lexi's LSI worker, Gretchen, brings resources and helpful tips and tricks to help Lexi feel confident as she starts her new family.

Now, Lexi is thriving. She found a job she loves and she moved into her apartment earlier this spring. On May 14, she welcomed baby Javeah into the world.

“LSI has always pointed me in the right direction and given me support, and they've really pushed me to where I need to be,” Lexi says. “I always have someone to call when I need help.”