**The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**January and February 2020**

**In the Bleak Midwinter**

***“[Simeon] was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.”***

* **Luke 2:25 RSV**

As I am writing this, I am listening to one of my Christmas gifts from Theresa: the great German Lutheran musician Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*. Just like Bach wrote musical “passions,” narrating the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, Bach wrote this Christmas piece to express the joy of Christmas, the good news that the Son of God, the eternal Word of God, became flesh and dwelt among us.

It is Christmas, after all. Christmas lasts for twelve days, just like in that children’s call and response song, *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Today, December 30, is the sixth day of Christmas. While many people are putting away their Christmas decorations and lights, at least in our home the tree is still lit, and we are singing Christmas hymns to the kids at bedtime.

This is something of a counter-cultural practice. After December 25, it is understandable in our part of the world that people want to put the Christmas decorations away. For the most part, when people think of the “Christmas season,” they think of the day after Thanksgiving to December 25. We hear Christmas music all throughout that time, and when the big day arrives, it is easy to feel “Christmassed-out.” We’re ready to stow it all away until next year.

There are some purists out there who feel that any mention of Christmas in the church before the evening of December 24 is a terrible thing, and I would never count myself among them. Having a certain amount of “Christmas spirit” in the days leading up to Christmas day can be a good thing. At the same time, I do think that remembering that Christmas lasts for twelve days *starting* on December 25 is a helpful thing.

Even after the excitement of the Christmas story about Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, and of course the infant named Jesus, the story goes on. If you keep reading in Luke chapter two, there is more to the story of Christmas, and the twelve days of Christmas remind us of that.

According to Israelite law in the Old Testament of our Bible, which the Jewish people of the time adhered to, male children were circumcised on the eighth day, and women needed to wait for around forty days to be purified after childbirth (Leviticus 12:2-8). The Scripture of Luke chapter two recounts this journey of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem.

While they are there, they encounter a man named Simeon, who is described as “righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” In other words, this Simeon was waiting expectantly for the coming of the Christ, or Messiah, of God, when God would fulfill his purpose for the world. We might infer that Simeon was an old man, though it doesn’t directly say that. In one of the most moving stories in the Bible, Simeon took the infant Jesus in his arms. God had revealed to him that he would not die before he had the chance to see the Lord’s Christ (Messiah). And he spoke the words that we often recite after we receive our Lord’s Supper, known as the Nunc Dimittis:

*Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people: A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.*

Right now, in these days after Christmas, we are in a “bleak midwinter” of sorts. That is also the title of a Christmas song by Christina Rosetti. In it, she talks about Jesus coming into our world in a time of hopelessness: “Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.” What a wonderful image of Christmas.

As we continue on into our own bleak midwinter of this time of year, it is important to remember that the story of our faith goes on, and in that sense, the man Simeon in the Temple of Jerusalem is an important role model. All throughout the year, after major celebrations, into the mundane seasons of the year, God calls us to be “righteous and devout,” with “the Holy Spirit upon us.”

Even as we take down the Christmas lights and put away the decorations, let us remain focused on where God has promised to meet us: in his Word and in his sacraments in the fellowship of the church. Let those gracious gifts of God in Jesus Christ strengthen us, uphold us, and inspire us in our daily lives of service to God and neighbor. We rejoice in the great message of Christmas even in this bleak midwinter.

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Commemoration of the Saints**

Lutherans do not venerate (pray to) special people called “saints.” Our Lutheran confessional documents speak against that practice. However, those same documents that prohibit the veneration of saints encourage Christian people to look to the lives of significant Christians of the past as a source of encouragement for our lives in the present.

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We remember in January and February the life of the English missionary to Finland **Henry (Henrik)**, who is commemorated on January 19. He is said to have lived from around 1100 to 1156 AD.

Little is concretely known about Henry, and, in fact, his actual existence is even disputed by historians! Nevertheless, a number of legends about him have been preserved in Finland, making it likely that Henry did exist, even if some of the stories about him are nothing but legend.

It is said that Henry came to Sweden from England in order to become the bishop of Uppsala, Sweden. However, he soon undertook the call to spread the Christian faith in nearby Finland. At the time, Finland was mostly a non-Christian land, with most people following pagan religion. According to legend, when attempting to impose church discipline on a man guilty of murder, this murderer attacked Henry and killed him. Henry is therefore considered a martyr, someone who gave witness to his faith by his death. To what was at the time a society hostile to the Christian faith, Henry gave a faithful witness. The painting of Henry above shows him standing in triumph over his murderer, a reminder that faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4).

**Featured Hymn for Jan. and Feb.**

***At the Name of Jesus***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 127*

1. At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee shall bow, ev'ry tongue confess him King of glory now. 'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord, who from the beginning was the mighty Word.
2. At his voice creation sprang at once to sight, all the angel faces, all the hosts of light, thrones and dominations, stars upon their way, all the heav'nly orders in their great array.
3. Humbled for a season to receive a name from the lips of sinners unto whom he came, faithfully he bore it spotless to the last, brought it back victorious, when from death he passed.
4. In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue all that is not holy, all that is not true; crown him as your Captain in temptation's hour: let his will enfold you in its light and pow'r.
* Caroline M. Noel, 1817-1877
* Trans. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

Note: Noel’s hymn is based on Philippians 2:10-11. The tune made it one of the great processional hymns of its time.

**Monthly Watchword for January**

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

* 1 Corinthians 1:9

**Ushers for January and February:**

* Head Ushers (January):
	+ Scott and Christine Eisenhauer
* Ushers:
	+ Loren and Jane Yule
	+ Ralph and Theresa Jessen
	+ Jim Sage
	+ Mike and Danielle Sage
	+ Jerome and Venita Sage
	+ Mariah Sage
* Head Ushers (February)
	+ Not yet announced
* Ushers:
	+ Not yet announced

**Website:** The web address is as follows:

* **www.gselclindy.weebly.com**

**Martin Luther’s Morning Prayer**

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I ask you to protect me this day also from sin and every evil, that in all I do today I may please you. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all that is mine. Let you holy angel watch over me, that the wicked foe have no power over me. Amen.

**From Martin Luther’s Small Catechism:**

**The Sacrament of Baptism**

***What is the significance of such baptizing with water?***

*It signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil desires should be drowned by daily repentance and sorrow for sin and be put to death, and that the new person should come forth every day and rise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.*

**Birthdays for January and February**

*Note: This list of birthdays is a work in progress, as we are currently trying to gather membership information from the old congregational record into an electronic form. If your name is not listed in the appropriate month, please let pastor know your birthday so that it can be added in the future. If you would not like your name to be listed, simply let pastor know. The birthdays are provided here as a way of giving thanks for the lives of members of the congregation. Happy birthday to all!*

* January 2: Pr. Tom Jacobson
* January 5: Jamie Guenther
* January 6: Jerry Ziegler
* January 10: Jeff Hanson
* January 13: Reed Eckmann
* January 19: Michael Beckmann
* January 21: Cassandra Barger
* January 29: Carsten Barger
* February 2: Ernest Eckmann
* February 5: Cecilia Eckmann
* February 7: Beth Barger
* February 14: Don Paulsen
* February 18: Chris Braunsroth
* February 19: Stella Branstiter
* February 20: Gene Eckmann
* February 23: Larry Barnes

**Baptismal Anniversaries for January and February**

*Note: Just as it is important to acknowledge the beginning of our earthly lives with our birthdays, it is even more important for us as Christians to remember the day when God has given us a new birthday, a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Lutherans confess that baptism is the means by which God gives us as a part of sinful humanity a new relationship with him, a promise that our faith can look to all our lives. In turn, we are called to a life of repentance and faith that trusts in Christ as our salvation. As with the birthdays, this list is a work in progress. Blessed baptismal anniversaries to everyone!*

* January 4: Margo Poppe
* January 8: Vicky Jensen
* January 14: Ernest Eckmann
* January 23: Jamie Guenther
* January 25: Edward Sage
* February 8: Tyler Guenther
* February 9: Tatum Olson
* February 10: Callie Olson

**Worship Schedule**

* January 5: Second Sunday after Christmas with Holy Communion (altar rail), 10:30 AM (White)
* January 12: The Baptism of our Lord, 10:30 AM (White)
* January 19: Second Sunday after Epiphany with Holy Communion (continuous), 10:30 AM (Green)
* January 26: Third Sunday after Epiphany, 10:30 AM (Green)
* February 2: The Presentation of our Lord with Holy Communion (altar rail), 10:30 AM (White)
* February 9: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, 10:30 AM (Green)
* February 16: Sixth Sunday after Epiphany with Holy Communion (continuous), 10:30 AM (Green)
* February 23: The Transfiguration of our Lord, 10:30 AM (White)
* February 26: Ash Wednesday, 7:00 PM (Purple)

**Calling Sunday School Teachers!**

Since September, a number of people, including many youth members, have signed up to lead Sunday school at Good Shepherd. Many thanks to those who have volunteered to help with this important part of congregational life!

There are still a number of open Sundays after the turn of the year and into the spring season that need Sunday school leaders. Leading Sunday school doesn’t have to be difficult, and if only responsible for one or a couple of Sundays a year, the preparation is minimal. Curriculum is provided through Sola Publishing online. You will need the username and password to access it, however. Please consider assisting with this important part of congregational life. There is a signup sheet in the fellowship hall by the guest book. Contact Pr. Tom for more information.

**Important Announcements**

* We will continue, once a month on the fourth Sunday of the month, having a time of adult education during the Sunday school hour, starting at 9:30 AM. For January, it will be on January 26, and for February, it will be on February 23.
* The Church council meetings will be held on Wednesday, January 8 at 7:00 PM and February 12 at 7:00 PM.
* The Women of the Word/Women of the North American Lutheran Church will meet on January 15 and February 19 at 10:00 AM.
* The annual meeting for the congregation will be held on January 19 after worship with a potluck afterwards.
* Please send annual report information to Beth Barger at bargers@gpcom.net by January 12.
* Physical copies of the NALC News newsletter will be made available for pickup after worship when they become available. They may also be accessed online at thenalc.org.
* Books, especially children’s books, are needed for the church library, so if anyone has old children’s books to donate, they would be most welcome.
* The season of Lent will begin with Ash Wednesday on February 26 at 7:00 PM.
* During the season of Lent, there will be no confirmation class held, but there will be Lenten evening vespers (evening worship) each Wednesday at 7:00 PM; as in the past, Pr. Tom and Pr. Theresa will alternate churches each week.
* Information about evening suppers prior to Lenten evening vespers will be forthcoming.
* Please note the announcement on the next page about the joint North American Lutheran Church convocation for the Eastern South Dakota and Minnkota mission districts, held January 17-18 at the Institute of Lutheran Theology in Brookings, South Dakota. We can send as many members from the congregation as we choose. The new bishop of the NALC, Dan Selbo, will be in attendance. Please consider attending this event, which is an excellent opportunity to meet members of other congregations from our area!
* Youth meetings will be on January 15 and February 12 at 7:00 PM; Youth Sundays are January 19 and February 16.

***[Luther writes]: “If I am to examine the spirit I must have the Word of God; this must be the rule, the touchstone, the lapis lydius, the light by means of which I can see what is black and what white.” … “ is is decisive; it does not matter what name he [the preacher] has, if he only teaches faithfully … has the Word of God as a plumb line.” …***



**Joint Mission District Convocation**

**of the**

**Minnkota & Eastern South Dakota Districts (NALC) January 17-18, 2020**

(Interested LCMC Pastors and Congregants are also most welcome!)

**Keynote Speakers – Bishop Dan Selbo & Dr. Steve Paulson**

Hosted by: The Institute of Lutheran Theology

910 4th St., Brookings, SD

**Friday, January 17th Saturday, January 18th**

**Friday:**

3:00 – Pastors with Bishop Selbo

4:30 – Registration at ILT

5:30 – Welcome & Intros by ILT

5:45 – Supper, included in registration

7:00 – Worship, with Holy Communion

Preacher: Bishop Selbo (Life to Life Discipleship)

8:00 -- Dessert & Q&A with Bishop Selbo

**Saturday:**

8:30 – Registration and Coffee

9:00 – Morning Devotions

9:15 – Keynote - Dr. Steve Paulson

10:00 – Coffee Break

10:15 – Keynote - Bishop Selbo

11:00 – Mission District Meetings

11:45 – Installation of Officers & Sending Prayers

Registration Fee: $15.00 payable at the Convocation.

Please contact the Convocation Registrar:

Pastor Tom Christenson – ESD Mission District Dean pastortlc@gmail.com or (605) 554-1002.

**Registration Deadline is Tuesday, January 14th**, so we can plan for the meal, breaks & materials. Please note any food allergies when registering.

Lodging: Our gracious host, the Institute of Lutheran Theology, is near the center of Brookings, so any hotel is within a 10 minute drive.

**January 2020**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  1 New Year’s DayThe Name of Jesus,The Circumcision of our Lord | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5Sunday School, 9:30 Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30(altar rail)White | 6The Epiphany of our Lord | 7 | 8Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class, 5:15-6:45Church council, 7:00 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12Sunday School, 9:30Worship, 10:30, The Baptism of our LordWhite | 13 | 14 | 15Pr. Tom in LindyWomen’s meeting, 10:00Confirmation class, 5:15-6:45Youth meeting, 7:00 | 16 | 17NALC convocation,Brookings, SD | 18NALC convocation,Brookings, SD |
| 19Sunday School, 9:30Worship with Holy Communion, 10:30(continuous)Annual meeting after worshipGreen | 20 | 21 | 22Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmation class, 5:15-6:45 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26Sunday School, 9:30Adult education, 9:30Worship, 10:30Green | 27 | 28 | 29 30 31 Pr. Tom in LindyConfirmationClass, 5:15-6:45 |
|  |  |  |  |

**February 2020**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
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| 23Sunday School, 9:30Worship, 10:30, The Transfiguration of our LordWhite | 24 | 25 | 26 27 28 Pr. Tom in LindyAsh WednesdayWorship, 7:00  |
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Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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Bloomfield, Nebraska 68718



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