

Pastor's Message

"I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me." Proverbs 8:17 **December is a time to focus on the Lord our God.**

During October when I was beginning to look for things to use during Trunk or Treat on Halloween evening I noticed stores were already stocking Christmas decorations, trees and other items. I believe I remember seeing some things begin to appear in September. Now I love Christmas as much as anyone and I like to decorate for the season and will put up a tree, but not until at least after Thanksgiving.

It seems that each year the commercialization of Christmas gets earlier and earlier. People are so focused on the act of preparing for the holiday and the act of putting on the biggest show they forget the reason we celebrate that day.

I wish people would consider exploring Advent first before they even begin to think about Christmas. Jesus was sent to us by God the Father and was born to a virgin woman and her betrothed husband. He went on to minister to the people about kingdom of God and how they could bring a piece of that kingdom to the world through following him. Jesus showed all the glory and power of the Father through miracles of caring, feeding, healing, and even raising the dead.

Jesus birth, miracles, and work on the cross then resurrection from the rocky tomb are well worth remembering and celebrating. But that isn't the end of the story, it is not only an event that happened two thousand years ago and is over only to be remembered and celebrated.

God's promise is that Jesus will come again and that is the story of Advent. We are to be prepared by living as righteous as we are able and follow in the path that Jesus laid down for us so long ago. We are to prepare by focusing on Jesus examples and his word of truth and justice for all peoples no matter who they are or where they come from.

Most importantly, we are to focus our energy on keeping our heads up and our eyes open to Jesus return, and be ready to greet him with humility, honor and the glory he deserves.

Look for the Advent, the coming of Christ. It is wonderful to celebrate what he has done for us, but it is imperative we are watching and ready for what Christ will do for us when he returns.



Blessings to you in Christ Jesus, Pastor David

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Alan Scheperle
- 4 Kent Nelson
- 8 Bill Wyss
- 10 Thea Fischer
- 11 Miranda England
- 11 Madison Williams
- 12 Natalie Kalaf
- 12 Gage Ferrell
- 16 Elda Pistel
- 16 Leroy Plochberger
- 19 Adam Grunden
- 24 Mark Meller
- 25 Jana Thompson
- 28 Larry Koestner
- 30 Julie Carel
- 31 Tony Miller



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

13	Jim & Cynthia Loesch	1975	
	Bill & Sharon Wyss	1996	25 Years
16	Brian & Leann Hager	1989	
27	Tony & Connie Miller	1997	
28	Dave & Debbie Boyce	2011	10 Years
29	Wilfred & Jennifer Plochberger	1990	
29	Don & Becky Weber	1973	



St. Paul's plans to sing Christmas Carols throughout the area on December 19th at 5:00 p.m. We will meet at the Church and proceed from there. Afterward everyone is welcome to go to Mark and Kathy Meller's house for a gathering of food and fellowship. Please bring a snack to share with the group.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Month/Day	Attendance Phys./Virtual	Offering
NOVEMBER 07	85 / 94	\$3,773.98
NOVEMBER 14	78 / 98	\$2,166.50
NOVEMBER 21	77 / 114	\$4,896.00
NOVEMBER 28	77 / 78	\$2,599.00

In Addition:

Sunday School - \$26.25 Mission Envelope - \$572.80 Reformation Envelope - \$325.00 Thanksgiving Envelope - \$517.00

Blessings and Greetings to Christine Dottie

Daughter of Chase and Riley Pistel. Christine was born on November 10, 2021 Weighing 6 pounds 7 ounces and 20 inches long. Congratulations and thanks be to our Lord and Savior for this beautiful child of God. Grandparents: Kevin and Tracy Pistel Great Grandparents: Leon and Elda Pistel



Continued prayers for healing and comfort. Bob Collins, Tyler Soell, Vanessa Pyatt, Julie Carel, Donna Viles, Jahanna Koestner, Family of Esther Strobel, Family of Dale Johnson, and Family of Tom Sperling

Ask the Pastor

Question: Why do we do we make the sign of the cross and where did it come from?

Answer: The sign of the cross is exactly that, a sign or a signature. Just as some people make an (**X**) on a document to show their name, Christians use the sign of the cross (**†**) to say, "I belong to God". God has used signs with his people for a very long time, even back to the beginning when he created us in the Garden of Eden.

In the fourth chapter of Genesis, Cain kills his brother Abel and God punishes Cain by sending him away and out of his presence. Cain tells God the punishment is greater than he can bear! Cain worries that anyone he meets will kill him. "Then the Lord said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him." God put a mark of protection or salvation upon Cain. This mark was a sign showing Cain belonged to the LORD.

In the twelfth chapter of Exodus, God is about to place the tenth and final plague on Egypt to free his people. It will be a plague of death for the first born of all men and livestock. But God would save the Israelites by using a sign. He commanded them to kill a lamb for the night in which he would strike this final plague. They were to use the blood of the lamb to mark the top and sides of their doors. When the Angel of death saw this sign they would be safe as the Angel passed over their family. This mark of blood on the doorways was a sign showing the people of the household belonged to the LORD.

In the eighth and ninth chapters of Ezekiel, the Prophet is given a vision and a command by the LORD. God shows him the abominations being committed in his Holy Temple. There are idols being worshiped and all kinds of creeping things and loathsome animals portrayed on the walls. At the north gate of the temple sat women weeping for Tammuz, an ancient Mesopotamian god associated with shepherds. Twenty-five men with their back to the temple worshipped the sun as it rose in the east and the land was filled with violence. Then God called out to the executioners of the city to come with their weapons. A man came with them clothed in linen, with a writing case at his side. God said to the man in linen, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of those who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." To the others God said, "Pass through the city after him, and kill; your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Cut down old men, young men and young women, little children and women, but touch no one who has the mark. This mark on the foreheads was a sign showing the people who were upset by the abominations belonged to the LORD.

In the seventh chapter of Revelation we hear this part of John's vision. "I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, saying, "Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads." During the final days the earth and the evil people will be destroyed, but first God will protect the innocent with the mark of his seal on their foreheads. This mark of God's seal on the foreheads will be a sign showing the people who are innocent are to be protected and saved as they too belong to the LORD.

When we are baptized in the Lutheran church, we are marked with the sign of the cross upon our foreheads with the words, "child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." This mark of the cross on the foreheads is a sign showing the baptized belong to the LORD.

For these reasons when we enter the church or at various times during worship we are to make the sign of the cross upon our self to proclaim, we are a child of God and belong to him.

Grace and Peace to you, Pastor David

Congregational Council Meeting, November 8, 2021 Respectfully submitted by Becky Weber, Council Secretary

A Congregational Council meeting was called to order by President Zola Finch at 6:00pm on Monday, November 8, 2021 in the youth education room. Present were council members Kathy Meller, Mitch Plochberger, Delores Vlach, Laurie Koestner, Paula Linsenbardt, Stacy Bubach, Jana Thompson and Becky Weber. Absent was Dan Tschirgi. Also present were Pastor David Viles and Council Treasurer Kay Pascoe.

Pastor David opened the meeting with a prayer, followed by a devotion. "Consider [Jesus] who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart." Hebrews 12:3

"The struggle is real" is a saying that describes everyday problems or just life in general. It is often said after several attempts to do a particular task before getting it finished. We all have those days, weeks or even months when it seems like life is so hard or at least a particular part of it that we are struggling with at the moment. The verse from Hebrews 12:3 is a wonderful word that speaks volumes in our struggles. When we consider what Jesus went through during his three years of ministry, it helps us to see that we are not alone. Even God incarnate found the struggle to be real. Jesus' goal was to lead the people in repentance and to teach them that love is the answer to all of our hostile ways. But Jesus struggled everyday to get the message out and understood. Instead the people wanted free food, healing, and the association of being with the miracle worker. Even his close knit and hand chosen twelve disciples fought over who was the greatest and should sit at the left and right hand of Jesus. Jesus provides us with a model to follow, a model to emulate, a model to show to others in our daily lives. Through all the struggles in Jesus life, even being tortured and crucified, he won the prize and overcame the struggles. When you struggle against the trials the world throws at you in your life, be like Jesus; do not grow weary or lose heart, do not give up but persevere and overcome the struggles. Pastor David then said a prayer.

President Finch called for approval of the previous council meeting minutes. A motion to approve the October 11, 2021 council meeting minutes was offered by Laurie Koestner, seconded by Kathy Meller, and passed via voice vote.

President Finch called on Council Treasurer Kay Pascoe to give the treasurers report, and copies of said report were distributed to council members. Following the report, President Finch called for a motion to approve the treasurers report. A motion to approve the report was offered by Jana Thompson, seconded by Delores Vlach, and passed via voice vote.

President Finch then called on Pastor David for his report. Per activity report, Pastor David reports no mileage for the month of October 2021.

Pastor David reported the following activities for October 2021: Worship and Music meeting, Lohman City Council meeting, Church Council, S.T.A.R.S., Lions Club, Freundschaft Gruppe, Mutual Ministry and Ministerial Alliance. Pastor performed one office counseling visit, one emergency room visit, and one office visit with Laurie Koestner for Christmas Play discussion.

Pastor held five services for October, two communion Sunday worship services in person and online with Facebook Live, and three non-communion services in person and online with Facebook Live. Pastor emailed worship bulletins, updated website with bulletin and video services, posted a daily photo with Bible verse and message on Church Facebook, created, and emailed the November Epistle. He created a list of hymn choices for Worship and Music, participated in S.T.A.R.S. gathering to help with flu shots (copy medical cards), one wedding rehearsal, performed the wedding for Makayla Stubinger and Harley Enowski, attended Kyle Freiner's Eagle Scout ceremony, and participated in Trunk or Treat.

President Finch then called for the committee reports.

Evangelism: Delores Vlach wishes to thank Debbie Boyce for her wonderful baked oatmeal, fruit, donuts and drinks for the November Fellowship hour. She also offered a big thank you to all who participated in and provided and served food for the Fellowship hours in 2021. Council discussed improved signage to announce Trunk or Treat. A suggestion was made by Jana Thompson that we consider starting and ending Trunk or Treat a little earlier so as to allow children to get home earlier on a school night. There were 14 cars and about 50 children in attendance for this event. Kathy Meller reported the chili supper donations were approximately \$4,000.00.

Technology: Dan Tschirgi, absent. President Finch reports Dan is working on improved audio at the podium near the altar.

Worship and Music: Kathy Meller reports the hymns for worship were selected for December. Kathy offered a thank you to President Finch for ordering more communion cups. She reports we will continue using Setting 10 until the end of the year. Kathy reports we will be having special music during Advent. She reports all the women will be invited to sing during our annual ingathering service to be held November 21, 2021. She reports Thanksgiving service will be November 24, 2021 at 6:30 pm, Advent begins November 28,2021 with the lighting of the Advent candle. Kathy reports our Advent dinner is set for December 12, 2021. There will be a sign up sheet in the narthex. Kathy reports Christmas Eve service will be December 24, 2021 at 6:30 pm with Holy Communion.

Parish Education: Laurie Koestner reports we have been having between two and four children in Sunday School, and we have received two volunteers to help with Sunday school. She reports our Christmas Program in entitled "Once Upon a Christmas Cheery" with rehearsals set for November 14th and 21st, December 5th, and 12th. The program will be December 19, 2021 as part of our Sunday Worship.

Church Improvement: Mitch Plochberger reports he repaired a light in our Sanctuary, and that Ameren replaced the light by the parsonage. He attended the basement remodeling meeting on October 2021. Mitch reported on the basement remodel ideas that are currently being discussed.

Stewardship and Finance: Paula Linsenbardt and Stacy Bubach. Paula presented the budget for 2022, and copies of said budget were distributed to all. Paula offered a thank you to Stacy for her help with the budget. Paula and Stacy presented items for council discussion. After much discussion, President Finch called for a motion to table the budget pending additional information on a few items. Motion was made by Paula, seconded by Laurie and passed via voice vote.

Mutual Ministry: Jana Thompson distributed copies of paid staff performance reviews /evaluations. Pastor David will email Time and Talent sheets and paper copies will be provided on Sunday, November 14, 2021. Her committee discussed the Safety and Security committee, and it was decided that this group needs to be reorganized. Jana opened the floor for discussion on ways to advertise the Blessing Box. She also reported on suggestions on ways to use our church parsonage after Pastor and Donna move to their new home.

Old Business: President Finch opened the floor for discussion on what we need to do to get our Blessing Box noticed. Several suggestions were offered, one being additional signs added below existing church signs on Route C and Route D to advertise the Blessing Box, special church events such as Trunk or Treat, and our various church suppers and events. A motion was made by Laurie Koestner to further explore ideas to improve our signs, seconded by Jana and passed via voice vote.

New Business: President Finch announced the annual reports are due December 17, 2021. She reports the Annual Meeting will be January 16, 2022.

President Finch called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Kathy Meller, and passed via voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm. Pastor closed the meeting with The Lord's Prayer.

Margaret Circle: Erika Gerth

Margaret Circle will hold its December meeting on Tuesday, December 7th, 6:00 PM, at the Church. We will enjoy a light supper, provided by Erika, and for dessert, share cookies brought by those attending. We'll sing some Christmas carols and learn about their origins. In addition we will make decisions about which organizations will be the recipients of the evening's offering and set meeting dates for the coming year. All women of the church are invited to attend. Please RSVP to Erika Gerth at 573-635-6681 or <u>erikagerth@embarqmail.com</u>.

Freundschaft Gruppe: Jeannette Fischer

Our Gruppe met on Monday, November 29, to celebrate the Hanging of the Greens. Donita and Glen served us a delicious smoked pork chop dinner with all the trimmings followed by pie and ice cream. There were 14 in attendance. Our work load was made much lighter because Les and Kathryn came earlier in the day to get all the supplies set up and in place. The previous week they trimmed the outdoor railing. Thank you Les and Kathryn. After we finished decorating the church, Donita gifted each of us with an apple pie to take home. Gus and Sherman will assemble the luminary bags next week. The Christmas Tree will be set up and trimmed on Saturday, December 18, at 1 o'clock. If you would like to help with this project, we welcome you to do so. On Wednesday, January 5, at 3 o'clock we will remove all decorations, store them safely away and reward ourselves with a wine, cheese and soup supper. Please mark your calendars with these dates. Thanks.

WELCA: Donita Stubinger

St. Paul's WELCA met on Monday, November 8, 2021 at 6:30 pm in the church basement. Those attending were Marie Scheperle, Jeannette Fischer, Marlene Carlson, Audrey Bunch, Rosemary Heidbreder, Erika Gerth, Makayla Enowski, and Donita Stubinger. Minutes were read and approved. Treasurer reported a balance of \$44,146.27 with 41 donations including \$3,925.00 being from the Chili Supper. It was decided to purchase a Nativity scene for the front of the church outside. Marlene and Kathy Meller were thanked for all the nice hand written thankyou's that were sent out for donations in place of the Chili Supper. Buddy Packs were discussed for Russellville Cole R-1 school with deodorants being sent to the school counselors to be distributed. November 21, 2021 will be our Thankoffering Service led by Erika Gerth and the women of the ELCA. The theme is Right the Way for Justice, Light the Way for Love. We are excited to have the Reverend Kimberly Knowles-Zeller doing the children's sermon and the congregational sermon.

Progress is being held on the kitchen and remodeling of the church basement. A meeting was held on October 20, 2021 with Mitchell Plochberger. Our annual meeting will be on January 16, 2022. Elda Pistel will be contacted to audit our books for the year. Audrey paid for the desserts we donated for Herb Strobel's funeral. Our next meeting will be Monday, December 13, 2021 at 6:30 pm in the church basement. At that time we will discuss dividing money we have collected for various organizations. Please feel free to attend the WELCA meeting. All are Welcome.

STARS: Jeannette Fischer

On Wednesday, November 3 our group enjoyed a Soup Day consisting of 5 different kinds of soup along with a wide variety of salads and desserts. Thanks to all who provided the wonderful food, served and cleaned up afterward. Following lunch Ron and Shirley Loesch shared experiences about their volunteer work at the Calvary Gift Shop. Ron gave us the "nuts and bolts" about the operation of the store as well as sharing some humorous stories about donations. Thank you Ron and Shirley. Our offering basket totaled \$188 which was given to Operation Christmas Child. This is a wonderful project operated by Samaritan's Purse as part of the Franklin Graham ministry. Thanks to all who donated to

help bring joy to a child somewhere in the world. As usual, we will not meet in December or January because of the busy holiday season. Our next meeting will be February 2 and we look forward to another year of good food, fellowship and interesting programs.

Our Newest Acolyte

On Thanksgiving Eve Oliver Stoermer had his first opportunity to Acolyte. Oliver did a fantastic job with every part of the service. I am very thankful to add Oliver to the rest of the group of Acolytes who wonderful about are volunteering to bring a joyful worship experience to St. Paul's church.





Jr. Lutherans

Wow! What a remarkable delightful show the Jr. Lutherans and their families attended at the "Christmas on Main Street Opry" this past Sunday afternoon, November 28. We had 47 seats reserved for the 3:00 show. Roger and Nancy Thompson greeted us with another 14 people in their family group. Stacy Bubach and Landin Thompson were there as a part of the Jr. Lutherans. The first half of the show was dedicated to the children with a train, Anna, Elsa and Olaf – then came the Grinch and most surprisingly came Santa. The kids were then invited up on stage to sing with Santa and have their picture taken with him. The next half of the show was listening to oldies from the past then onto religious Christmas music. A great show was enjoyed by all. Our next outing will be in January to the ice skating rink. Watch the bulletins for more details.

As Christmas rolls around during December, we will fill our mitten tree in front of church with socks, gloves, scarves and hats. These items will be given to the nurse at Cole R-1 Russellville School. We welcome any donations. Please feel free to join our group anytime.



Mobile Food Pantry: Audrey Bunch

The November 9th Mobile Food Pantry went well with a beautiful fall day. Some volunteers worked on the replacement of wheels on the shopping carts used for this project, before the mobile food pantry

truck arrived. We served 128 families with 376 people starting a little before 1:00 P.M.. Some of the items given out were produce boxes, cereal, macaroni, assorted corn nuts, tomatoes, chicken nuggets and hams. We had several volunteers helping with this community project on such a nice afternoon. From the Lohman Lions Club were Alberta and Gary Zumwalt, from St. Paul's were Rosemary Heidbreder, Dan Tschirgi, Becky Weber, Gary and Audrey Bunch. Next food pantry will be December 14th.

Advent Dinner News

Please save the date of December 12th. The evening will begin at 5:30 p.m. with sparkling juice followed by the meal at 6:00 p.m. catered by Reinhardt Circle. We encourage you to come and invite friends and family. Reservations are required. A sign up sheet is posted in the Narthex and we ask that you sign up by Dec. 5th so we can let Misty know how much food to prepare. You may also call Carol Elliott (782-4741) or Kathy Meller (782-4788) by the 5th. We will be asking for a free will offering to defray the cost of the meal. The evening will conclude with a program of scriptures and singing. We hope you can join us.

December Giving Opportunities: There are two special enveolpes in your offering box for December. The special offering for Christmas treats is dated December 5th and will be used to purchase gift bags of goodies for the kids. The Christmas Day offering dated December 25th is desgnated for Heisinger Bluffs Benevolence Fund. In addition, offerings collected on Christmas Eve will be distributed equally between Oaks Indian Center, River City Habitat for Humanity, and the Samaritan Center. Thank you for serving God in helping others in need.

Christ in Our Home: devotional books are available in the Narthex for you to take home and enjoy each day.

Thankoffering Service: A special thanks to Erika Gerth for putting together a wonderful Thankoffering service. Thanks also to all the women who participated and to the Rev. Kimberly Knowle-Zeller who came up from St. Paul's in Cole Camp and did an amazing job preaching the gospel and teaching the Children's sermon.



2022 Church Offering Envelops: are available to pick up in the Narthex.

Thanksgivng Eve Service: We had 39 attending the Thanksgiving Eve service. This year we gave thanks for all the blessings God has poured out upon us during the past year, as well as all of our lives while he has watched over us and taken care of our needs.



Operation Christmas Child Thanks to all who donated, shopped and packed for the Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child shoebox program!! St. Paul's was able to send 18 boxes and a monetary donation of \$114.00 to children around the world. These children will now have the opportunity to learn about Jesus! A special thanks to STARS for their donation of \$188, Marie Scheperle and Richard and Rosemary Heidbreder for their kind donations of items to pack in the boxes, and monetary donations so items could be purchased to pack the boxes and help defray costs of shipping the boxes. Again, many thanks to all that made this Christmas special for so many!!!—Laurie

Nativity Scene: WELCA has provided a new Nativity scene which as been set up in front of the church beside the stairs. A special thanks to Dan and Jayce Tschirgi who created a wonderful stable for the Holy Family to be placed. One interesting item is a lantern that Joseph is holding that is solar

powered and lights up at night.









Thursday, December 9th Lohman community Bldg.

7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.





Sponsored by the Lohman Lions Club

Calendar of Events and Schedules

December 5th, Sunday: Christmas Cookie sale & Ham & Bean dinner after worship, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

December 7th, Monday: Music and Worship meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the basement.

December 7th, Monday: Margaret Circle at 6:00 p.m. in Church basement.

December 12th, Sunday: Advent Dinner with drinks at 5:30 p.m. and Dinner at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

December 13th, Monday: Church Council Meeting in Church at 6:00 p.m. upstairs in Youth Room. **December 13th**, Monday: WELCA meeting at 6:30 pm in the church basement.

December 14th, Tuesday: Food Pantry Volunteers at Trinity Lutheran in Russellville at 1:15 p.m.

December 18th, Saturday: Set up and trim the Christmas tree.

December 19th, Sunday: We will enjoy the Christmas play during worship time.

December 20th, Monday: Epistle Deadline for News and Articles.

December 21st, Tuesday: Basement reserved for Lohman City Council meeting at 5:30 p.m.

December 24th, Friday: Christmas Eve Service at 6:30 p.m.

Bulletins are normally printed on Wednesdays.

Pastor David normally plans Fridays as his day off.

Usher Schedule

Dec-05	Mitchell Plochberger	Delores Vlach
Dec-12	Zola Finch	Laurie Koestner
Dec-19	Kathy Meller	Paula Linsenbardt
Dec-24	Jana Thompson	Mitchell Plochberger
Dec-26	Delores Vlach	Dan Tschirgi

Acolyte Schedule

Dec-05	Kiefer Freiner
Dec-12	Mackenzie Linnenbrink
Dec-19	Kara Freiner
Dec-24	Madison Linnenbrink
Dec-26	Kiefer Freiner

Frank Pascoe

Trish Russell

Play: No Readers

Marie Scheperle

Michelle Collins

Greeter Schedule

Dec-05	Gary Elliott	Richard Heidbreder
Dec-12	Laurie Koestner	Jerry Koestner
Dec-19	Frank Pascoe	Donald Weber
Dec-24	Stacy Bubach	Abby Bubach
Dec-26	Gary Elliott	Richard Heidbreder

Song Leader

Dec-05	Dan Tschirgi
Dec-12	Kathy Meller
Dec-19	Cameron Freiner
Dec-24	Kathy Meller
Dec-26	Dan Tschirgi

Audio / Video Technician

Dec-05	Roger Pennell
Dec-12	Dan Tschirgi
Dec-19	Dan Tschirgi
Dec-24	Roger Pennell
Dec-26	Roger Pennell

Communion Assistants

Readers Schedule

Dec-05

Dec-12

Dec-19

Dec-24

Dec-26

Dec-12	Marie Scheperle
Dec-24	Need Volunteer
Dec-26	Audrey Bunch

Altar Flowers for the Month

Kathryn Linsenbardt

* Communion Days noted in Yellow