

"What Will You Give Jesus This Christmas?"

Christmas is all about Jesus! And, since we celebrate His birthday at Christmas, I was wondering, "What does Jesus want us to give Him for His birthday?" Jesus has given us the greatest gift when he was born—salvation. So what does the greatest giver want to receive from us? What gifts could we give Him that would bring Him joy and happiness? Let's make a list of some of these gifts.

The first gift I believe we should give Jesus for His birthday this year is **OURSELVES**. We really haven't given Him anything until we give Him ourselves. Have you given yourself to Jesus? You may have prayed, and attended worship, and given monetary donations to the church, but have you done the most important thing? Do you think about Jesus when you get up and go to bed? Have you given yourself to Jesus?

Secondly, I believe that Jesus wants us to give Him **OUR HEARTS**. That means He wants to be first in our lives. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Thirdly, I believe that Christ wants us to give Him **OUR TRUST** and **OUR FAITH**. We need to lean in on Him, draw strength and nourishment from Him, and take Him at His word. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

I believe that **JESUS WANTS US TO GIVE HIM A COMMITTED LIFE**. "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33) If we put Him first in all things, and give Him glory, He will use us. He will bless us, and be with us always, even to the end of the age.

And yes, I believe **CHRIST WANTS US TO GIVE HIM OUR MONEY**, too! Why? Because it takes money to get Jesus' message out, to send out our missionaries, to feed hungry people, to minister to the needs of our members and the community.

Jesus had a great deal to say about stewardship, and the use of possessions, and it matters how we make our money, and how we spend it. Money is important. And if God blesses us with more than we need for our own needs, then we surely need to share some of it with others, and the ministry and mission of Christ our Savior.

Next, I believe we should **GIVE CHRIST OUR TIME**. Time is a precious commodity. We all are given the same amount of time each day, but what do we do with our time? Do we use our time to reach out to others, and minister to them in the name of Christ, and with the love of God?

Finally, I believe **CHRIST WANTS US TO GIVE HIM OUR TALENTS**. You have God-given talents and abilities that He has blessed you with to help others, and to reach this world for Jesus. Have you discovered your **PLACE** in God's kingdom work here? P.L.A.C.E. materials and PLACEment Session forms are still available in the Welcome Area.

Will you dedicate your voice to Him to speak or to sing, if you have that talent? Will you give Him your hands to build, your legs to run, your eyes to see and your mind to think for God?

What will you give Christ Jesus this Christmas?

God bless you and your family during this blessed and holy season!

Connecting People to Jesus,

Pastor Jon

OLIVE PRESSES

WELCOME

Compassionate Friends

By Marcy Weight

Members of Compassionate Friends meet monthly to offer Christian love, hope, strength and companionship to:

- ◆ Cope with a recent diagnosis of cancer
- ◆ Meet the daily challenges of a chronic disease or terminal illness
- ◆ Encourage a neighbor, family member or friend suffering from a diagnosis of an acute disease
- ◆ Offer hope to you as a survivor



The next meeting for Compassionate Friends will meet at Marcy Weight's home on December 10 at 12:30 PM. This support group is open to everyone who has gone through or is going through an illness. Call Marcy at 763.755.6368 for more information.

Stephen Ministry

By Dave Dawson

Happy holidays to all!

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. As we get into this holiday season and the year winds down, I thought I would give you all an update on our Stephen ministry. It has been a very busy year and most of our Stephen Ministers have been very busy with care receivers.

We just completed another training class, and have added three new Stephen ministers: Ann DeMarais, Carin Huizenga and Joyce Steele. When you see them, congratulate them!

We also will be posting pictures of our Stephen ministers up on the big screen through out the church. It's nice to know who they are if you need to ever contact one. Also we will be having a Stephen Ministry Sunday coming in early February of 2019. Watch for more details coming soon.

Just in case you're wondering what to get someone you know for Christmas, remember you can always give the gift of a Stephen Minister!

God Bless and Merry Christmas!

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

(Matthew 2:1-2)



Welcome - L.I.F.E. Groups

By Pastor Randy Stroming

Life is in the Word and is “Emmanuel” – God is with us. God’s name is a reminder of the close relationship that He wants to have with His people. He not only wants to be with us, He wants to be in us and around us. At this time of the year of Advent and Christmas we remember and celebrate and “the *WORD* became flesh”...(JESUS) for us. This is the wonder and awe that God wants to be so close to us and relate with us and save us that He became flesh and lived perfect with us and for us. That is called Grace. He then went to the cross to take on sin and to become sin and die for us to forgive us and give us new life in Jesus. He reminds us that He is with us to the end of the world and forever in Heaven after that.

We need to remember Jesus every day. Not just at Christmas but every day. We gather as people who need to be grounded in the Word. We believe our faith and practices must be grounded in the inspired *WORD* of God, that keeps us in touch with REAL reality of Life In Christ. It gives a secure feeling of being in touch with reality and personal feelings as we walk through experiences of life from the highs to the lows. God in His grace seeks to encourage His people in His Word as He wants us to be like Him and to encourage one another in His ways.

Every time we use the *WORD*, God meets us. We need to walk close to Jesus and remain committed to Him in faith. The Power of the *WORD* points us to His purpose for full Life

In the *WORD*, we find that we are sinful, we also find the truth and forgiveness in Jesus. The *WORD* comforts us, motivates us and encourages us. This happens when we live in the *WORD EVERY DAY*. When the *WORD* is lived the Spirit of God creates in us a new and right heart to follow after Jesus. May the *WORD* of God dwell richly in and through you.

May the spirit fill you in Christ to live your *LIFE* to the fullest in Jesus.

Pastor Randy



WELCOME

Word Ministry Focus - Life +

By Pastor Randy Stroming

Life+ Bible Study Opportunities

SUNDAY OFFERINGS:

The Purpose of Christmas

Christmas is one of the most celebrated holidays for many people. Many people have fond memories of Christmas past. To some it is a very busy stressful time of the year. The question is what is the real purpose of Christmas? What makes it so special? What distracts you from the real meaning of Christmas and takes away the Joy of Christmas?

Join us in Cana Hall at 9:15 AM beginning December 2, for three weeks to discover the true purpose of Christmas. Teachings from the Gospel of Luke in three sessions, Rick Warren leads us to see three purposes:

- Christmas is a time for Celebration
- Christmas is a time for Salvation
- Christmas is a time for Reconciliation

You will discover why Christmas is God's idea and why Jesus is the greatest gift God gave to the world. Once you discover or rediscover the purpose of Christmas, your life will never be the same !!!

Joy to the world The Lord has come!



Highlighted Verses Bible Study: This Bible study focuses on specific verses (from Genesis to Revelation) that people have highlighted (as having special significance) in their Bibles. The study meets in the second floor Meeting Room at 9:00 AM during the Sunday morning education period. Participation is required. The goal is to develop confidence in sharing one's faith with others. Participation has resulted in great discussions and sharing.

Small groups, such as LIFE groups, may want to add this type of study to their group's activities. Sharing the highlighted verses provides others to describe the impact God's word has on their lives. It can generate all kinds of emotions and feelings. The results are amazing. I would encourage each small group to try this type of study and sharing.

Also, as individuals you can go through your Bible and copy your highlighted verses in one document. It is very interesting to see in a few pages all that you have considered significant to highlight. You will be amazed at the consistency in the Bible and in what you have highlighted. It also provides an opportunity to reconnect with God and yourself.

If there are any questions, contact Jim Rootes at farmalldork@gmail.com.

Tuesday Women's Bible Study meets on Tuesdays at 10:30 AM in the Room 1115/Bookstore. The only December date is December 4. We are doing a study on the Old Testament prophetic book of Isaiah, "The Gospel of the Old Testament." We'd love for you to join us for prayer, fellowship and the study of God's Word. Contact Karen Albu at 763.432.7652 or karenalbu@comcast.net or Chris Schomburg at Chrisschomburg@gmail.com with any questions.

Wednesday Morning Men's Bible Study meets at 6:00 AM in the Coffee Shop. Contact Jeff Paschke at 763.427.5539.

Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study meets from 6:00 - 7:00 AM in the Room 1115 by the Coffee Shop. We will be doing a study on Christmas in December. Drop in and get some true Christmas spirit! Stop by on Wednesday morning or contact Paulette Lenz for more information at mp.lenz@gmail.com.

In the Word Bible Study: This Bible Study meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM until 8:00 PM. This Bible study continues in the Book of Isaiah. The method we are using for this study is to listen to a dramatization reading of Isaiah and then follow-up discussion. We completed the study through Chapter 24. Contact Jim Rootes at farmalldork@gmail.com.

"Sometimes we look at our lives or our world and wonder what good could possibly come out of it. That's exactly what we find in the book of Isaiah. Here you'll see how the prophet raises a cry for revival in the midst of a rotting society. And you'll find comfort for your own troubled times."

The Word - When Jesus Comes Knocking

By Pastor Jon Haakana

“She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7 (NIV)

The knock came at the door of the inn. It was late. We can imagine the innkeeper had been burning both ends of the candle. The census crowd had packed Bethlehem and he had finally locked the doors for the night.

Until the knock. He shuffled his feet through the dark and made his way to the door. Opening it with the slightest of cracks he peered out to see a young couple. Looking more closely, he saw a young woman who was about to give birth to a child.

Rooms were full. It was late. And they didn't look very special. He had to decide whether he would find room for them or not. (Luke 2:7b)

And you will too. John's rendition of the birth of Christ comes in a few short words: “The Word [logos] became flesh and tabernacled among us.” (John 1:14) Greek hearers understood the word “logos” as the representation of God. The essence of God was found in his Word.

Hebrew readers perked up to John's message too. John writes: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.” He book ends the first sentence of his book with the phrase “in the beginning.” They knew it as the words that began the first book of the Torah, or Genesis.

John writes about beginnings. John writes about God's very representation dwelling among us. And he writes to tell us that we have the same decision to make as the innkeeper. Will we find a place for Jesus in our lives or will we send him away?

Some send him away because he looks too plain. Nothing special about him. Don't make that mistake. He comes to common places like your home and common places like your heart.

Some send him away because life is crowded. Many demands and many deadlines. And you're not sure if you have room for him. But he only comes to give you what he has already done. He desires to give you forgiveness.

And some send him away because they think it's too late. They've already done too much that can't be forgiven. They've already gone too far away.

But it's never too late. Not with the one who comes and makes his dwelling among us. You need only to open the door.

May you keep the door to your heart and life open for the “Word made flesh” as he comes to you anew this holy season.



WORD

WORSHIP

CHRISTMAS TONIGHT!

*an Evening of Music & Readings
Celebrating the Birth of Jesus*

Saturday, December 15

Sunday, December 16

5:30 PM

Christmas Eve Worship

4:00 PM - Family Service w/Carols
& Praise Music

7:00 PM - Traditional Candlelight Worship
(Holy Communion celebrated at both services)

OUR COMING
SAVIOR

Christmas Day Worship

9:00 AM - Traditional Carol Worship
w/no Communion

(No Worship - Saturday, December 22)

Work Ministry Focus - Stewardship

By Jon Holtz

Update on Capital Campaign 2017-2018 & 2018-2019

Congratulations Mount Olive! We reached our principle and interest payments for the 2017-2018 Capital Campaign! We did it together with the blessings the Lord has given us! PTL!!

We didn't quite reach our goal of \$225,000 as of today it is:

2017-2018 Goal	\$225,000
2017-2018 December 2017—November 2018	\$210,163
REMAINING GOAL	\$14,837

This brings our Mortgage to \$2,461,408.81 with the possibility to pay it off in 15 years. As stated above we can reach our goal for this year if we can reach \$112,500 by June 2018.

In my November article I wrote:

"During November we will be start producing material for our 2018-2019 Capital Campaign."

However, after listening to the congregation's concerns of rolling the mortgage into the budget and after much discussion with the MMC, it was decided to take the first step by coordinating the **New** Capital Campaign with the budget for 2019-2020.

Why do we need to pledge? Reason one, it will help project budgeting issues and give us a better overall fiscal picture that is needed. Think of your own house, if you can make rent or house payment there is a roof over your head. Without payment...no roof over your head and without our capital campaign no roof over God's house. Reason two, the sooner we pay down this debt, the faster this money can go towards ministry. A few years ago we were making "extra" payments to pay off debt faster. Reason three, commitment is a spiritual issue. God talks about commitment and says he wishes we would be either hot or cold. If we are lukewarm we would be spit out of his mouth. Over and over in the Bible, disciples who could not FAITHFULLY follow him COMPLETELY were challenged by Jesus. Yes, we all sin and struggle at times for one reason or another, but in today's society that "doesn't like commitment" and wants freedom to change whenever and however. I believe Jesus is calling us to face commitment and not be afraid of it. For instance, in marriage, commitment is very important; even in a dating relationship commitment is important. How many times has it been ruined by cheating or dating someone else when the other didn't know? Biblical versions use words such as rob or cheat God. In His likeness giving to him in the same way in Malachi 3:8.

If you have never pledged, please pray about joining the efforts this year and pick up a pledge card at the information desk in the Welcome Center.

Hopefully, this year we can continue to use this tool as a way to encourage each other in how God can bless you PERSONALLY when we all give back to him.

Blessings!

Jon Holtz

GIVE+
By Vanco Payment Solutions

By Kristin Bradley

Due to hard economic times in Zimbabwe, we received the following letter from Pastor Togara:

Dear All Our Valued Supporters:

This serves to inform you that the DOCAS management and Board have taken the agonizing decision to temporarily shut down the Muscular Dystrophy Centre with effect from 30 November 2018 owing to serious operational issues.

Zimbabwe's economy has once again been hit by hyperinflation which has seen the cost of living rising by 400-500 percent since January 2018 yet incomes have remained frozen. We have tried to put in place all the necessary austerity measures, but the situation has gone beyond our control. The declining economic situation has hit hard on our voluntary care-givers and our local food donors to the extent that most of them have ceased reporting for duty and donating supplies.

The decision is heart-breaking on the 21 families who since 2014 have considered the centre home for their children. It's worse for the children themselves who have relied on the Centre for physical therapy, assistive respiratory devices (Bi-paps), education, improved nutrition and hospice care.

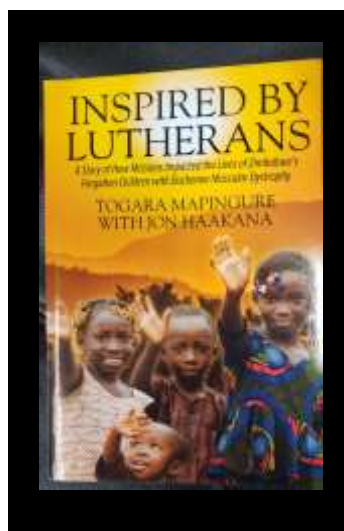
We all hope the economy will stabilize and/or God will raise men and women to help us resuscitate the institution, the earliest we hope will be February 2019. Meanwhile we call upon all of you to remember in your prayers the 29 children whom we surrender back to their rural homes so that God grants them the gift of life in such difficult times as these.

We also pray for all preparations for the June 2019 Mission Trip to Odzi and we hope the centre will be up and running again by the time of the trip.

Wishing you all a blessed festive season!

Rev. Togara Mapingure

Pray for godly men to rise up and lead this country into economic health and stability and to keep the children healthy while they wait to reopen the center.



Pastor Togara's Book is Published!

While Togara was on sabbatical in Minnesota last year, he wrote the book *"Inspired by Lutherans."* Pastor Jon wrote introductions to many of the chapters. With help from multiple donors, the book was published and we have received the first copies - just in time for Christmas! Taken from Togara's perspective, he chronicles how our mission team became involved with Odzi, DOCAS and the mission hospital.

Email mtolive@mtolive-anoka.org if you wish to purchase a copy. Each book sells for \$20 and all proceeds go to support the mission hospital. And in light of the above letter, we need to sell many copies!

Witness Ministry Focus - WOMO

By Jan Block



LWML ONLINE: National website is www.lwml.org. Many of you use your email, text and other tech items on a daily basis. Check on the www.mnslwml.org and see all the many things that come up. There are items for ministries, events and resources.



This is for the MN South District. Also, check our LWML table on the way to Cana Hall. It has several items for your use. There are Quarterlies, Mite Boxes and calendars that can be used to help fill your mite boxes. Encourage children to use them also.

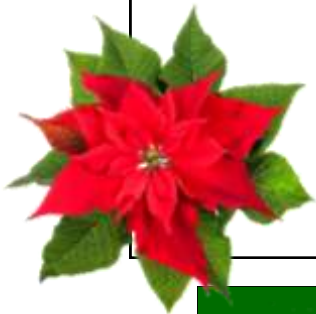
CHRISTMAS TEA: A special invitation for our Christmas Tea which is a wonderful way to begin the blessed Christmas season. It will be held on Tuesday, December 4 at 6:30 PM. Look for an invitation closer to the event. Watch for a sign-up table for cookies, ways to help and a chance to decorate a table. Hear the Christmas story, some good music, enjoy delicious treats and Christian fellowship. ***Ingathering for the Christmas Tea is Mount Olive Blessed Boutique: men's hats, gloves and socks.***

Attention: *The Women of Mount Olive will not meet until February.*

Christmas Decorations

Please help by donating \$25.00 to our beautiful Christmas displays:
Fellowship Poinsettia Tree, Christmas Advent Wreath,
Outside Winter Flower Pots and Altar Flowers

For your donations, please consider a donation of \$25 cash or a check written out to Mount Olive Lutheran Church. You may drop them off at the Welcome Center.



Youth Christmas Bake Sale



Saturday, Dec. 15
(5:00—8:00 PM)
Sunday, Dec. 16
(8:00 am—12:00 PM & 5:00—8:00 PM)

WITNESSES

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Youth & Family

By Carol Kietzman



Sunday School Christmas Event

One Starry Night A Savior is Born

Sunday, December 16 9:00-10:15 AM Family Center

At One Starry Night, kids and families head to Bethlehem, where they'll see, touch, smell, and taste what life was like when Jesus was born. Families will visit the inn, meet the shepherds, sign the official census, and decorate their own Starry Night craft.

Sunday School and Bible Study Nursery through Grade 12

In January we will begin our second volume of The Gospel Project. This next set of Bible Lessons is so exciting! We will be answering some very important questions. Is there anything God cannot do?

What is God like? and What is worship?

The Gospel Project always brings us to a Christ Connection.

To remind us that *"the Bible is not a collection of stories, it is one story, the story of God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ."*



PreK through Grade 4

Please sign your children in at the Sunday School Desk near Door A (the upper parking lot.)

Grades 1-4 meet in the Family Center

PreK—Kdgn ages 3-Kdgn meet in Room 209 near the Family Center.

Nursery ages 0-3 meet in the Nursery.

Even our youngest kids will have the opportunity to hear the Sunday School lesson and engage in the age appropriate activities!

Middle School Grades 5-6 Meet in the Junior Youth Room.

Grades 7-8 can choose the Middle School group or the Senior Youth Group.

Senior Youth Grades 7-12 Meet in the Senior Youth Room.

For more information
please contact:

Carol Kietzman

Youth and Family:

Sunday School

Confirmation

763-421-7156 x107

carol@mtolive-anoka.org

Senior Youth collected
over 45 boxes for Operation
Christmas Child this year!



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Nov 30-Dec 2: | Senior Youth Retreat |
| December 7: | Girls Only Bunko and Pajama Night with Jr/Sr Youth Girls |
| December 15-16: | Youth Bake Sale |
| December 16: | Christmas Event in Family Center 9:00 AM |
| Dec 23-Dec 30: | No Youth on Wednesdays or Sunday School |
| January 2: | Confirmation and Senior Youth resume at 6:30 PM |

Upcoming Events

November 30 - December 2:

Senior High Youth at Wilderness Fellowship

December 4: Christmas Tea

December 7: Youth Girls' Night

December 14: Senior Fellowship

December 15 & 16:

Christmas Tonight & Youth Bake Sale

December 16: Sunday School Christmas Event: (9:00 AM)

December 21: Manna Market

December 22: No Saturday Worship

December 24: Christmas Eve Worship Services: (4:00 & 7:00 PM)

December 25: Christmas Day Worship: (9:00 AM)

December 26 & January 1:

Church Office Closed



Saturday Night Service 5:30 PM
(contemporary service)

Sunday Worship Services:

Classic Grace: 8:00 AM
(traditional service)

Living Praise: 9:30 AM
(contemporary service)

Living Praise: 10:30 AM
(contemporary service)