

ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

43 N 3rd St., Hilbert, WI 54129

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January 2022

From the desk of Pastor Peterson

I sincerely hope that your Christmas was enjoyable, and the time spent with family and friends created a wonderful memory for you to cherish. We are now heading into 2022. 2021 was a time of change, a time of uncertainty with all the Covid issues that seem to never end. A time of change for me and for Saint Peter and Saint Luke, as I began my services as your pastor at the end of May. Upon reflection of my first 6 months, I was and am truly blessed to serve you as your pastor. I also look forward to serving both churches through 2022 and beyond. To face the New Year, we must remember that we have a solid foundation, Jesus Christ.

In a new year, we are not sure what will happen. We will have the sudden and unexpected illnesses, death, financial challenges, family issues. Yet we have a sure and certain foundation that has been given to us through Jesus Christ. He is the foundation of our faith and in Him we have comfort. One of my favorite hymns is "The Church's One Foundation". Foundations built by human hands and intelligence may seem to be very sturdy and indestructible. Yet, these foundations cannot stand up very well when a tornado, an earthquake happens. They crumble and fail. If we trust in our own efforts to build a spiritual foundation through good works or creating a god or Jesus that is not based on what the bible says, we too will fail.

In this New year that is approaching I want to assure that all of us are going to be ok, and that is because of Jesus. We can be thankful that our spiritual foundation is secure in the Lord Jesus Christ. When you think of our spiritual foundation in Christ, here are a few examples from scripture. First off there are close to 80 references to foundations in God's Word. Here are just a few scripture verses to ponder for the New year:

Matthew 7:24

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Isaiah 28:16

Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'"

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

In this New Year that is approaching, take heart, and be comforted in knowing that your spiritual foundation is secure in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Happy New Year everyone and remember that God really, really, really does love you. Amen.



Pastor Mark Peterson



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

Bible Study Resumes at the WIM meetings:

Starting in January, we will once again be having our monthly WIM meetings with Bible study by Pastor Peterson. Following the Bible study, we share our brief business items and announcements. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00, and our meetings usually conclude before 3:00. All women are members and are welcome to join us. Bring your Winter Quarterly and your favorite Bible along to use for the Bible study. If you have already misplaced your Quarterly, we have a couple extra and we do share.

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

Christmas Bake and Craft Sale

Thanks to everyone who participated in our craft and bake sale for mission projects, whether you crafted, baked or purchased! We had a successful event, and are grateful for everyone who helped. All bake sale proceeds will be used to provide knapsacks (backpacks) filled with products for daily needs to be given to area foster children. The craft money will go to our regular mission gifts and projects. It was such fun to work on this event with the women in mission in our congregation. As you know, each woman is considered a woman in mission. We also thank Thrivent for their support with the use of their Thrivent Choice cards. We used those funds to purchase baking supplies for making cookies. Any baking supplies that were unused for our bake sale were taken to the Bread of Life food pantry in Chilton. These items could then be used for Christmas baking by food pantry recipients. Thanks, everyone.

Free at Last Warm Clothing

By the time you read this, we may have concluded our Gifts from the Heart gathering for the post-offenders program at Mission of Christ

Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. The post-offenders are those inmates from the Milwaukee House of Corrections who have been receiving spiritual care from Rev. Afam Ikanih, LCMS Chaplain. Following discharge, they continue with the Free at Last program to receive encouragement and assistance to transition into a meaningful life in society. Because many of them do not have family support in the community, Mission of Christ has a food pantry and a clothing co-op to provide for immediate needs. It has been our tradition to take warm winter clothing for those who find themselves without any means of immediate support. Thanks to anyone who can provide any new or gently used warm winter clothing. We were also able to obtain Thrivent Choice funds for this mission and are grateful for the funds they provide. Many thanks to those Thrivent members who choose to designate their choice dollars for mission projects.

Souper Bowl Sunday

Another tradition the members of St. Peter have adopted is to gather non-perishable food items for the Bread of Life Food Pantry in Chilton. Our tradition is to gather these items from January 1 until Super Bowl Sunday each year. You will find the ingathering container in the Narthex by the bulletin board. Please place your items there before Super Bowl Sunday, and we will take them to the pantry. Food pantries are usually quite low in supplies after the holidays, and our gifts are always received with many thanks. We have also been granted the use of a Thrivent Choice card to use for this mission. We are so grateful to our Thrivent members for participating in the opportunities to help those children of God who are in the greatest need.



Mission Matters

**Bethany Lutheran Church in
Asaba Delta State, Nigeria, Africa**

According to the International Mission Office of the LCMS, the fastest growing Lutheran church is the Lutheran Church in Africa. One of the congregations growing at a rapid rate is Bethany

Lutheran Church in Nigeria. This is a church plant dear to the hearts of Rev. Chris and Joy Ikanih of Bethany Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. The Ikanih family is originally from Nigeria, and each year they spend vacation time going back to Nigeria to spread the Word of Jesus. Bethany, Nigeria, is one of the fruits of their work. The physical presence of a building will serve as a place to worship and a mission center. The final phases of their building are waiting for additional funds. They need to complete electric, flooring, plastering, painting and plumbing work.

We give thanks to God for the privilege of sharing His Word with our brothers and sisters in Nigeria and other African countries. We boldly ask for funds to complete the construction of churches to continue to spread the Gospel message of Jesus' love and sacrifice for all people in order to bring many souls into His Kingdom. One of the funding sources for Bethany, Nigeria, is the LWML-SWD grant of \$12,000. This is the grant currently being funded with mites from the SWD Women in Mission. Seventy-five percent of all mites received in SWD are designated toward the SWD mite projects, and the other 25% of our mites goes to fund the national mission grants. Thank you for your mite offerings.



Nunc Dimittis

By Roy S. Askins

The prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of God's glory departing from the temple. God's people had defiled the temple with idolatry; they had worshiped false gods in God's house. They had turned their backs to God to worship the rising sun, thereby putting "the branch to [God's] nose" (Ezek. 8:17); they became a stench in His nostril. They neglected His commandments, violated His

rituals and, in turn, brought uncleanness into His presence. And so, the glory of God departed from the temple (Ezek. 10:1–22).

God's glory indicates His presence for the good of His people. His glory appeared in the cloud by which He led the people of Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 16:10); from a cloud of glory, He spoke to the people of Israel and gave them the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19–20). In the tabernacle built by Moses and in the temple Solomon built, God descended in a cloud of glory to indicate His blessing and presence among His people (Ex. 40:34–38; 1 Kings 8:10–11). The departure of His glory from the temple meant that He had abandoned Israel as surely as a parent abandons a wayward child — only after years of longsuffering patience, warning and admonition.

But God did not leave Ezekiel and his hearers without hope. Ezekiel also received a vision of the glory of the Lord returning to the temple. Simeon saw the fulfillment of this vision and sang the song we now know as the Nunc Dimittis; God's glory has returned.

Circumcision and purification

The context of Simeon's song in Luke 2:29–32 frames the event and helps us understand what he sings about. Mary and Joseph had returned to the temple to fulfill the Old Testament ceremonial law (Luke 2:22–27). These Old Testament regulations can seem weird to us. At worst, we sneer at such requirements for purification from our modern, scientific perspective. At other times, these requirements can leave us bewildered and wondering: How can giving birth to a child make a woman unclean? How does modifying the vessel by which begetting occurs incorporate a child into the household of God?

We might also ask: Why is God so obsessed with childbirth?

God promised to Eve a seed, a descendant, who would crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). And He promised this also to the patriarchs, and thereby also to their wives, even when they found it amusing (Gen. 18:12). God is obsessed with childbirth because the begetting and birthing of

children is how He would bring forth the Redeemer of the world.

The rites of purification mark the woman's privilege of participating in the divine blessing of childbirth, of the lineage of the Savior promised to Eve and — as hindsight reveals — delivered through Mary. The rites of purification, therefore, moved the woman from her own cycles and timeline to God's time and His order.

The consecration of firstborn sons took place for the same reason. All the firstborn children of Israelite women point to and are completed in the birth of the Child from the womb of the Virgin Mary. Whereas the former sons were tainted by the sin of their fathers, this Child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a woman who had not known a man. This Child was not born with original sin.

And yet, despite His purity and perfection, He lived under the laws and requirements of those who were not pure, who were tainted by sin. As sinful men circumcised His flesh, He was preparing to set apart those who would receive Him with a circumcision not made by hands, but in the heart by the hand of God.

In short, all the rituals and rites, all the lineage from Abraham to Joseph, all the practices and worship of God that His people and priests in the Old Testament had abandoned and for which God abandoned the temple, pointed to the Child born of Mary — the infant Simeon took in his arms and for which he blessed God.

Simeon's Song

With eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, Simeon sees the glory of God returning to the temple. The glory does not sit on a sapphire throne upon the cherubim, as Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1:26). Instead, the glory of God rests in the tabernacle of human flesh (John 1:14), in the baby Simeon held in his arms.

The glory of God, which once abandoned the temple because of the failure of the Israelite people to follow His commands and their failure to circumcise not merely the flesh but also the heart, now returns to the temple. God Himself undergoes

the law's demands. The One who chose Israel out of all nations and gave them the mark of circumcision as the sign of His choosing now undergoes circumcision Himself. His mother who received the fulfillment of the promise made to Eve now receives purification and reincorporation into the household of God. Not, ultimately, because of the turtledoves she offers as a poor woman, but because of the Son she birthed.

This is the glory of God: the law fulfilled by His own hand. The presence of God, now no longer found in houses made by men, is found in the flesh born of the Virgin Mary and that would be crucified by hands of men. It was this glory the Holy Spirit led Simeon to see and therefore sing about in what we now know as the Nunc Dimittis:

Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:29–32)

The church's song

The Christian church has now taken up Simeon's song as her own, and rightly so. For, as with Simeon, we have also seen and rejoice in the salvation of our God.

The way most of us know the Nunc Dimittis is a rather recent innovation. We know this song from the Divine Service, following the distribution of the Lord's Supper. After we have received the body and blood of Christ from the altar by the hand of His messenger, we stand in humble adoration and sing, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace" (*LSB*, pp. 199–200).

While there is some evidence of this use of the Nunc Dimittis in early liturgies of the church, it was not a common practice until American Lutheranism, of all things. Wilhelm Loehe, a German Lutheran who sent numerous missionaries to America and profoundly influenced American Lutheranism, included the Nunc Dimittis in an agenda he published in 1844.

Placing Simeon’s song after the distribution illuminates the glory of the gift we receive in the Lord’s Supper. As Simeon saw the fulfillment of God’s promise and the return of God’s glory to His temple, Simeon was ready to die in peace. So also, the saints who receive the body and blood of Christ have seen and received in themselves the salvation of God. As Simeon was prepared to die in peace, so is every Christian who receives this gift in faith.

For when the pastor says, “Depart in peace,” He is not saying, “Go back to your seats quietly,” which is what I, in my youth, surmised from the dour expressions of those returning from the altar. Nor is that what we mean when we sing, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.” Rather, we are singing a joyous funeral hymn. We are saying, “I’m ready to die in peace.” From the youngest, newly confirmed child to the most aged saint at the rail, each leaves the altar ready to die in peace. They have seen and received the salvation of God, prepared in the presence and for the benefit of all people.

A song for dying

It comes as no surprise, then, that the other place the Nunc Dimittis frequently occurs in Lutheran circles is in the funeral service. The *LSB Agenda* encourages people to consider selecting Simeon’s song in Luke 2:25–32 as a text for the sermon. But even when it is not chosen as a primary text, the editors of the *Lutheran Service Book* included it as the closing Bible passage of the Funeral Service, just before the last collect and Benediction (*LSB*, p. 281). They also framed the passage with Jesus’ words:

“I am the resurrection and the life,” says the Lord. “He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.” (LSB, p. 281)

How fitting it is to close one’s life with the Word from Simeon. How fitting, having witnessed and received the glory of God returned to the temple in the body of Jesus, to then depart in peace.

*This article originally appeared in the [December 2021 issue](#) of *The Lutheran Witness*.*

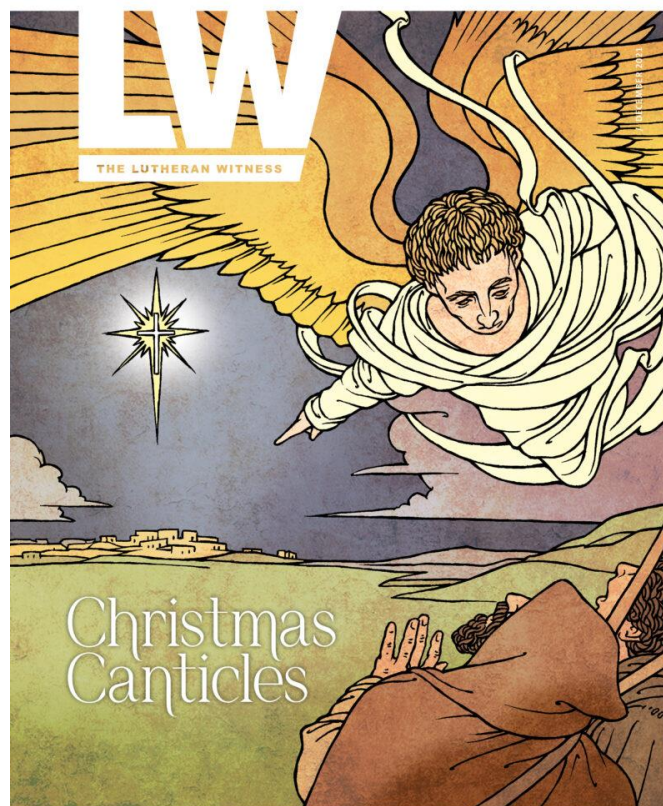


Happy Birthday

January

- 7 Ron Ott Jr.
- 8 Dan Bergelin
Brian Price
- 10 Chad Roehrig
- 21 Elliana Mueller
- 22 Jenny Peters
- 26 Amanda Pompa
- 29 Ellen Niemann
- 31 Cindy Koffarnus

The December issue of *The Lutheran Witness* discusses how the Christmas canticles — the Magnificat, Benedictus, Gloria in Excelsis and Nunc Dimittis — point to Christ year-round.



**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter article – January 2022**

'Tis More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” (Acts 20:35)

And indeed, it is. Does this not strike a chord that resonates in us all? Which of us can't recall the look of surprise and thanks for the Christmas gifts that we labored to give to those whom we love? And the joy written on their face when that gift is received with thanksgiving means more than all the gifts we have received. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Our Lord knew this because He practiced it. He gave of Himself – sparing not even His life in death – in order to give us back to our Father in heaven. He knew that in giving you get more because joy is multiplied in giving. The one who receives and the one who gives both rejoice in what is given and received. And, what is more, the one who receives only wants to give back to the one who gave so generously in thanksgiving.

So it is with our tithes and offerings in church. We want to give because we have received from God all that we are and all that we have. Our giving does not originate in what we must do to earn God's favor. We have God's favor because of His gift of His Son, given through Word and Sacrament. Thus, we are made free from the compulsion of giving so that our tithes and offering are freely given in thanksgiving for what God has so generously given to us.

Why then does the church struggle to make

budgets? Why does the church always seem stretched so thin when it is the place where God continually gives us His forgiveness of sins? Why does the church struggle when God, out of love for us, generously pours out His grace and mercy?

It is because we are sinners. Our fallen nature makes us selfish and miserly. It leads us to believe that we can have our cake and eat it, too. Because of sin, we want God's grace and mercy; we want His blessings of body and soul. But we don't want to share it with those around us. We want to remain comfortable in our own self-contained, neat, and tidy lives – without the headaches of loving those around us by helping them in their time of need.

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” Remember that God has placed you in a church, not only to receive His grace and mercy, but to press His eternal and temporal blessings into service to your neighbor.

Your tithes and offerings ensure that those around you have a pastor to preach the life-saving and life-giving Word of God. They ensure that the lights, heat, and air-conditioning are working. They ensure there is water for Holy Baptism as well as bread and wine for Holy Communion. They even ensure that your pastor has food and clothing and presents for his own family. The gifts of God are immeasurable. They multiply and redound to everyone's good as the fish and loaves in the feeding of the five thousand.

So, remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And remember the joy that attended the gifts you gave at Christmas. This same joy attends your gifts to the church.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

Our Response to His Love

	12-15 + 12-12	12-8 + 12-5	12-1 + 11-28	11-21-21	11-14-21
General Fund	\$1965	\$1825	\$1355	\$532	\$2057
Missions				\$10	
Aluminum Cans					\$84
Totals	\$1965	\$1825	\$1355	\$542	\$2141

January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Altar Guild: Dan & Cindy Koffarnus						1 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Pastor Away-→</div> New Year's Day
2 Second Sunday after Christmas <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">←-----Pastor Away----- </div>	3	4 7:00p Bible Study	5 4:00p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke	6 Epiphany 7:00p Joint Committee Mtg @ St. Peter	7	8
9 The Baptism of Our Lord <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) 9:30 Sunday School	10	11 1:00p WIM Meeting & Bible Study 7:00p Bible Study	12 4:00p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke	13	14	15
16 Second Sunday after Epiphany <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	17 M L King Day	18 7:00p Bible Study	19 4:00p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke	20	21	22
23 Third Sunday after Epiphany <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) 9:30 Voters Meeting Sunday School	24	25	26 4:00p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke	27	28	29
30 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	31	7:00p Bible Study				

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion