



The Messenger

December 2022 Edition

A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

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Gather. Grow. Go. To the Glory of God.



Devotional Corner

Ever Wonder... Where Can I Find God?

Christmas is a time for searching. People go from one store to another in search of one specific gift. When they finally find that special present, they feel a sense of relief and accomplishment.

What are you looking for this Christmas season? Many of us spend a lot of time looking but not finding. We look for peace in our lives, but the strains of work and stresses of our relationships bring tension and turmoil. We look for understanding about why our lives have taken the direction they have only to be left pondering and wondering. We look for happiness but find only sorrow. We ask the question, "What's life all about?" We wonder, "What have I accomplished?" We're left searching for answers.

All life's questions really boil down to one. Those who have found the answer to this question also have the answers to the question of peace, understanding, and happiness. This question may be asked more at this time of year than at any other. If your life needs meaning, peace, understanding, and happiness, then you need to first ask the big question: "Where can I find God?"

Long ago some ordinary blue-collar workers - some shepherds - were presented with the answer. These shepherds were told that the world's Savior was born in the small town of Bethlehem. Was it true? They went to investigate. And they found God!

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. Luke 2:15,16

Where can we find God? The Bible takes us back to Bethlehem, where we join the shepherds in beholding the Son of God who took on our human nature and was born into the world. He came to seek and save all of us who had lost our connection with God. He came to give us the answer for finding God. We find God through him because he is the Savior who has opened the way to life with God.

No more searching. Jesus is the answer for finding God.

In Christ's Service and Yours!
Pastor Mike Gehl



Worship With Us!

Sundays at 7:45 or 10:15 am

Thursdays at 6:30 pm

1537 Day St. Greenleaf

Sunday School and Bible Classes Sundays at 9:00 am



Today's Christian Parenting: Installing Gratitude in Children

Excerpts from a *Forward in Christ* article

How many times have you reminded your children to say “Thank you” when they’ve received something? More than you can count, right? Why do you do it? Part of the answer is that it’s polite, but at the heart of it is gratitude. We want people to know that we appreciate and are grateful when they help us or give us something. Our two authors this month help us go beyond the “Say thank you” level of gratitude. They remind us who the giver of all good gifts is and offer ways to focus on instilling a grateful heart in ourselves and our children. — Nicole Balza

Among the many things I wish for my children is that they grow up to be grateful to God for his provision, but even more so for his grace. I’ll tell you about some of the practical things my husband and I do to encourage gratitude, but in the end it all comes down to Jesus. The more our children understand their sinfulness and Jesus’ great love for them, the more grateful they’ll be. So we teach them God’s Word. God’s words don’t fail!

Look around you. Your own life is full of examples of how God has forgiven you, provided for you, and been faithful to you. Talk about how thankful you are for these things. When I lose my temper, I share that I struggle with the sin of anger and how thankful I am for Jesus’ forgiveness. We say a prayer of thanks when we avoid an accident on the freeway. We talk about how cool it is that God is providing for our church to build a new sanctuary and school.

Look outside yourself. To be truly thankful for what you have, it’s helpful to look outside your own small circle. Just keeping up with the daily news as a family helps us realize all for which we have to be thankful. Thank God that he forgives, provides for, and is faithful to his church all around the world.

Look in the Bible. Read God’s Word. It’s full of examples of how God has forgiven sinners, provided for his children, and been faithful in keeping his promises. We talk as a family about the particular accounts we’re reading and how thankful we are that this is the kind of God we serve! My seventh grader does her Bible reading on the drive to school and often reads out loud or asks questions while the younger two listen. It’s my privilege as a mom to remind my children over and over that Jesus lived, died, and rose for them and covers their sin with the white robe of his perfection.

No matter what they do, they are forgiven. Yet they still sin. Over and over. And it’s my duty to teach them right from wrong and remind them over and over when they don’t live up to God’s standards. It’s in understanding their sinfulness that they grow to be truly thankful for that robe of righteousness. See the cycle? It’s the same one I’m constantly in if I’m in God’s Word being reminded of my sin and God’s grace every day. Over and over. —Laura Schaefer

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“Kids today just don’t appreciate what they have!”

I remember the first time I made that statement out loud. I was immediately shocked by my own words. I had officially turned into a curmudgeon. It is a bit ironic how each generation, when they reach a certain age, suddenly notices how spoiled and entitled the next generation is.

Over 2,000 years ago, the Greek philosopher Plato supposedly quipped to his young protégé Socrates, “The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority. . . . They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers.”

As wise King Solomon said, “There is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Parents throughout history have struggled to teach their children to be grateful and appreciate what they have. Living in 21st-century America, our task is complicated by the many advances of modern technology we enjoy. Our children have every form of information and entertainment at their fingertips. They are growing up in a world in which Amazon delivers to their front door, Walmart does their shopping for them, and their cars drive themselves.

Article continues on page 7.

Upcoming Events

Christmas Parade- Saturday, December 3rd

St. John will once again have a float and walkers in Wrightstown's annual Christmas Parade. Join us on Friday, December 2nd to help decorate the float, and bring any white Christmas light strands you can spare. We will decorate from 6:00-8:00 pm at the Heimmermann's (6966 Shanty Rd). Then meet us at 1068 Debra St. on Saturday at 4:30 pm to walk the parade route or ride on the float. Those joining us on the route can be picked up at school following the parade. The parade officially kicks off at 5:00, and will be followed by the village Christmas tree lighting at 6:00.



FVL Christmas Concerts- December 10th and 18th

Fox Valley Lutheran will be hosting a couple of Christmas concerts during the month of December. Come on Saturday, December 10th, to hear bands from FVL high school and FVL middle schools. The bands concert will begin at 6:00 pm. Then on Sunday, December 18th, come at 1:00 pm for a vocal concert from FVL choirs. Both events will be held in FVL high school's auditorium.



Adult Christmas Party- Saturday, December 17th

St. John will hold its annual adult Christmas party and ornament exchange on Saturday, December 17th. Meet at the Zahn's house (287 Royal St. Pat's Drive) from 5:30 until 8:00. Bring a dish to pass and a wrapped ornament to exchange (around a \$10 value).

Student Christmas Services- December 10th and 18th

We will be holding two separate student Christmas services again this year. The early childhood (preschool and preK) students will hold their service on Saturday, December 10th at the Wrightstown High School Auditorium. Meet us at 1:00 pm for the program, which will be followed by light refreshments.

Also make plans to attend the kindergarten through eighth grade program at church on Sunday, December 18th. The K-8 service will take the place of regular Sunday services, but will be held at 8:00 and 10:00 am. Seating will be limited, so be sure to either check your email or the back of church to sign up to attend.

Mark Your Calendars!

- December 2- Parade Float Decorating
- December 3- Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting
- December 4- Early Childhood Classes Sing
- December 4- Special Voters' Meeting
- December 10- Early Childhood Christmas Service
- December 10- FVL/FVL Schools Band Concert
- December 13- Fellowship Luncheon
- December 15- FVL Girls Basketball at WHS
- December 16- FVL Boys Basketball at WHS
- December 17- K-8 Christmas Program Practice
- December 17- Adult Party & Ornament Exchange
- December 18- K-8 Christmas Services
- December 18- FVL Choirs Concert
- December 22- No Worship Service
- December 23- ½ Day of School/ Classroom Parties
- December 24- Christmas Eve Worship Services
- December 26-January 2nd- No School
- December 29- No Worship Service
- December 31- New Year's Eve Worship Services
- January 3rd- Classes Resume

Church Highlights

Holiday Services Schedule

There are several adjustments to our typical service schedule for the upcoming holidays. Please take note of the unusual times and dates below:

Saturday, December 10th- 1:00 pm
Early Childhood Christmas Program

Thursday, December 16th- 6:30 pm
**Only regular worship service for the weekend/
only communion opportunity for the weekend**

Sunday, December 18th- 8:00 and 10:00 am
**K-8th Grade Christmas Services (please register to
attend, as space is limited)**

Thursday, December 22nd
No regular Thursday worship service

Saturday, December 24th- 2:00 and 6:30 pm-
Christmas Eve worship services

Sunday, December 25th- 7:45 and 10:15 am
**Christmas Services during regular worship times/
No Sunday School or Adult Bible Class**

Thursday, December 29th
No regular Thursday worship services

Saturday, December 31st- 2:00 and 6:30 pm
New Year's Eve worship services

New Campus Updates

Progress Made on New Campus

The builders are on site and progress is being made daily! Pastor Gehl has been sending up a drone to take pictures of the progress so that we can view everything happening. He has created a Google album that will be updated frequently. Visit stjohnwrightstown.com/bold-steps to reach a link for the album, which you can then join for easy access to the updates.



Church Birthdays

Happy Birthday to these church members celebrating during the month of December!

Dec 3 Michael Gehl
Dec 4 Lincoln Cisler
Dec 5 Danielle Bruecker
Dec 6 Mason Kussow
Dec 7 Carol Just
Dec 7 Eric Kraus
Dec 8 Christopher Wicker
Dec 9 Shawn Jandrey
Dec 11 Jared Hendricks
Dec 11 Lynn Zirbel
Dec 13 Joshua Vickman

Dec 18 Paige Schisel
Dec 24 Alexa Foelske
Dec 25 Jules Cappelle
Dec 25 Holly Schmidt
Dec 27 Kay Neuman
Dec 27 Leah Uitenbroek
Dec 28 Janet Wierschke
Dec 30 Samuel Reschke
Dec 30 Jonathan Van Schyndel
Dec 30 Judith Wicker



School Highlights



Christmas Program Practice

Kindergarten through eighth grade students are asked to come to church on Saturday, December 17th from 10:00-12:00. This will allow us to ensure that we have the church set up properly, that students know where to go and what to do during the service, and that we are used to singing along with the organ. Parents do not need to stay through the practice.



Christmas Caroling

For our second quarter service project, we plan to visit Matthew's Assisted Living for caroling and giving out treats and ornaments. Families can join us at Matthew's at 12:30 to 1:30 pm on Saturday, December 17th (following the K-8 Christmas program practice). Families are invited to bring treats to share with the residents to school prior to the caroling event so that they can be packaged for distribution for the residents.



Classroom Christmas Parties

Traditionally, each classroom holds their own Christmas party on the last day before break (December 23rd this year), complete with fun, treats, and a Christmas gift exchange. Please check with your child's teacher or watch for notes to come home in folders regarding what you can bring and details for any gift exchange.

Scrip for Christmas



Order Your Christmas Gift Cards from Scrip Today!

Raise Right Scrip gift cards make great Christmas gifts! Stop by our office to check out our selection of cards available for restaurants, retail stores, entertainment, online shopping, and more. We have lots in stock and the ability to order from thousands of additional places. Cards can range from \$10- great for stocking stuffers- to \$500, and there is something for every price range. Special orders often take about a week to arrive, so get your order in now to ensure that you receive it in plenty of time for Christmas!

You pay only the face value of each card you receive, but our school gets a rebate. Each purchase helps us fund tuition support and a portion can be applied to your own families' school tuition. Speak with Dierdra Stary or Rebecca Wicks for more information or to learn about our easy online program for instant e-cards and refills.

School Birthdays

Happy birthday to the following students celebrating in the month of December!

- Lincoln C.- December 4th
- Benjamin P- December 6th
- Lucy P.- December 10th
- Ruby V.- December 16th
- Daxton S.- December 19th
- Jules C.- December 25th



Installing Gratitude Article- Continued from page 3

So how do we as Christian parents avoid raising entitled children and instill in them a spirit of gratitude to God? Here are a few suggestions:

Learn to say no. Just as God in his love and wisdom doesn't give us everything we ask for, so we should understand that it's loving to say no. We often want to give our kids a happy, fun-filled childhood, but we have to understand that giving children everything they want only spoils them.

Teach them to work. When my son was 11 years old, he asked us for a Nintendo Switch. Though we had the money to buy it, my wife and I talked about it. We felt he needed to learn the value of the money we often spent on him.

So we brainstormed with him about how he could earn the money to buy it himself. He ended up starting his own pecan business, picking and peeling pecans to sell. Within a few months, he had earned enough to buy his Switch.

Broaden their perspective. One of the reasons children fail to appreciate how richly God has blessed them is that they don't have the perspective of those who have less than they do. Visiting or volunteering regularly at a local nursing home or food pantry will help open your children's eyes to how abundantly God has blessed them.

Model gratitude. They say that the greatest sermon children can ever hear is the life of their parents. Live a life of gratitude and generosity. Talk to your children regularly about how Jesus has blessed you more than you deserve. Keep a notebook next to their bed and each night write down with them one blessing for which they are thankful. Teach them to thank God in prayer at mealtime and before bed.

With your words and actions, show your children what it means to have a grateful heart. -Andrew Schroer

To see the complete article, visit <https://forwardinchrist.net/instill-gratitude/>



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