



DECEMBER 2021

FRIENDS IN CHRIST NEWS

Friends In Christ Lutheran Church – 1338 Clay Street, Morris, IL 60450

For unto us
a Child is Born;
To us a Son
is given

Isaiah 9:6

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Save the Date:

DEC 1:	Decorating the church for Christmas	10:00 a.m.
DEC 7:	Elders' Meeting	7:00 p.m.
DEC 14:	Church Council Meeting	7:00 p.m.
DEC 24:	<i>Christmas Eve Candlelit Worship</i>	7:00 p.m.
DEC 25:	<i>Christmas Day Worship</i>	9:30 a.m.

Being "His People"

*"And you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
(Matthew 1:20 -- the angel talking to Joseph in a dream)*

"His people" What does this mean? It might be becoming more and more important as things change in this world. Let's explore:

1. It means to be separated out for God, and for God's purposes. God's purposes may be different from our own. We may have our own desires and goals; but to be separated out for God means that He has claims on our lives. Part of His purposes is to show the full glory of His power in making us a royal priesthood and a holy nation. God will show His power by taking us poor sinners and "conform"ing us "to the likeness of His Son." (Romans 8:29) Part of being "His people" has to do with the glory of heaven and living forever. Other parts have to do with all kinds of blessings for this life, and help in times of trouble. And there are parts that have to do with lives of discipleship and holiness.

(Continued on p. 2)

Christmas Worship Times

Friday, December 24:

7:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Saturday, December 25:

9:30 a.m. – Christmas Morning Communion Service

*Christ
the
Savior
is
Born*

(Continued from p. 1)

2. To be His people means that we are different from the rest of the world. This Christmas season we should not be surprised when the rest of the world does not seem to "get" the meaning of Christmas. Some think Christmas is a divisive religious holiday. Some want to avoid even the words "Merry Christmas." Instead, they say it should be "Happy Holidays" so no one will feel left out. But Christmas without Christmas ends up being disappointing and empty.

Others think Christmas is a time of indulgence -- overeating; overbuying; overdoing. It keeps the economy going, money flowing, and life is good. The quiet reading of the Christmas story doesn't quite fit in; and Christians gathering in Church is a nice sentimental thing, but there are so many other things to do with the season.

To be His people means in part that we think and talk differently. The songs say, "Born a king on Bethlehem's plain . . ." ". . . and ransom captive Israel . . ." "... 'round yon virgin mother and child ..." "... Nails, spear shall pierce Him through; the cross be borne for me, for you ..." "King, ransom, virgin mother, spear, cross -- when was the last time any of these were part of the non-religious part of your daily life?"

We have been called to a different pattern of life -- set apart and called out by God to be "His people."

Joseph learned what it meant to be set apart: taking Mary home as his wife but keeping her a virgin until Jesus Christ was born. There are parts of Christmas that have a lot to do with morality. The definition of morality is that we do not make decisions by what seems good or convenient to us, but simply by what God has said is His choice of right and wrong.

Mary learned what it meant to be set apart as His people. It meant that her life was not her own. In God's service she would face a difficult journey while she was very pregnant; give birth in a stable in Bethlehem; flee as an exile to Egypt; search for 3 days in Jerusalem for the 12 year old Jesus; not completely understand His 3 years of ministry; see her Son crucified; and (again after 3 days in Jerusalem) see Him risen and glorified. Such an amazing journey to such a glorious goal. "He will save His people."

Others Learned as well -- Peter walking on water, the servants at the wedding in Cana seeing the water turned to wine, the blind seeing, the lame walking, and the poor hearing the Gospel.

So, the question comes to us this Christmas season. What does it mean to be set apart as "His people"? Do we understand the full reality of what God is calling and urging us to? Christmas changes things.

"He will save His people from their sins."

We do not get to be "His people" because of what we have done -- our obedience, our piety, or our celebrating Christmas well. We become "His people" because He has saved us from our sins -- from the consequences of those sins and from the uncleanness within.

The words "His people" lay a claim on our lives. It is a claim asserted as Jesus comes into the world and makes Himself one of us. Lying in the manger the Son of God was doing eternal things, claiming our lives back from emptiness and death. Then He walked among us and shared our physical existence -- He got hungry and ate, got tired and slept, rejoiced and wept, prayed and lived by faith. He extends His claims over every part of our life. But it is a claim that must be paid for; and it is. It is paid for in the suffering and death of the cross, and in the empty tomb of Easter morning.

As you celebrate Christmas this year remember the meaning of Christmas -- a Savior and a King born for you.

He is Christ the Lord.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Mark

1 Corinthians 2:2





Our next meeting:

Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 10:00 am

We will have a short meeting and then decorate the church for Christmas.

Please note: We will **NOT** be meeting in January



Helping Hands for Lutheran Deaf Outreach Lutheran Deaf Outreach — \$50,000

LWML Mission Grant #5 for the 2021–2023 biennium, Helping Hands for Lutheran Deaf Outreach, has one primary goal: to help deaf people develop a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. They provide resources and training specifically designed for deaf people to learn about the love of Jesus and to share it with others.

Check out lwml.org/2021-2023-mission-grant-5.

Food for Thought for the Holidays

During the holidays, a big meal isn't the only thing to prepare. If you're anxious about what might come up while visiting family members you haven't seen in while, take this opportunity to prepare your heart as well.

Here are 4 practical ways to keep your words and actions rooted in Scripture:

☞ Pray Beforehand

Ask God to give you wisdom, grace and patience if tense moments arise, or while interacting with difficult family members.

☞ Prepare to Address Specific Topics

Consider what topics might be discussed, then invest some time searching the Bible and praying about how to respond.

☞ Listen First

If something upsetting comes up, your gut reaction may be to lash out, but God's Word says be quick to listen and slow to speak.

☞ Respond With Love

Jesus commands His followers to love one another. How can you reflect Christ's love to friends and family?



Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

Isaiah 64:1

Happy Anniversary!



December 7th
Denny & Terry Knapp
 53 years

Dec 10th
Kurt & Tricia Johnson
 22 years

Dec 29th
Tim & Ann West
 32 years



Happy Birthday!

6th Bonnie Sanders
 8th Sharon Benner
 9th Erma Turner
 Joey Castleberry
 11th Pat Kennard
 20th Tristan Willig
 23rd Logan Tondini
 24th Sharon Wendling
 25th Elizabeth Kirk
 29th Ann West
 30th Chris Willig



A Little Bit O' Holiday Humor . . .

“Christmas shopping: Wouldn't it be wonderful to find one gift you didn't have to dust, that had to be used right away, that was practical, fit everyone, was personal and would be remembered for a long time? I penciled in 'Gift Certificate for a flu shot.' ”

– Erma Bombeck

“It's always consoling to know that today's Christmas gifts are tomorrow's garage sales.”

– Milton Berle

“You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage and tangled Christmas lights.”

– Maya Angelou

“I love Christmas. I receive a lot of wonderful presents I can't wait to exchange.”

– Henry Youngman

“I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. My mother took me to see him in a department store, and he asked for my autograph.”

– Shirley Temple

“There are 17 more shopping days until Christmas. So, guys, that means 16 more days until we start shopping, right?”

– Conan O'Brien

(From rd.com; keepinspiring.me; parade.com)

Financial Report

Friends in Christ Lutheran Church




General Fund	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	YTD Actual	BUDGETED
Income	\$ 14,442.67	\$ 8,977.67	\$ 12,826.26	\$ 8,842.66	\$ 11,242.59	\$ 117,392.86	\$ 116,950.00
Expenses	\$ 12,752.72	\$ 11,199.27	\$ 8,894.46	\$ 10,926.17	\$ 9,692.26	\$ 102,269.35	\$ 116,910.00
Net Income (Loss)	1,689.95	(2,221.60)	3,931.80	(2,083.51)	1,550.33	15,123.51	

Prayer Calendar

DECEMBER 2021



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<p>1 Please pray daily for Pastor Willig, Deb Carter, Kris Farber and Alex Castleberry. Pray for deaf ministry. Pray for all missionaries around the world.</p>	<p>2 As we fill our days with getting ready for Christmas help us to remember what Christmas is all about. Not a gift under the tree but Jesus being born.</p>	<p>3 Lord, for many the month of December is a very long month. Be with those that have a tough time during the Christmas Season. Help to lighten their load and bless them with your special peace and help them to remember that you are always with us.</p>	<p>4 Lord, please give Pastor Willig strength, understanding patience and a special peace when he is at rest. May he glorify You with the gifts You have given him. Help his sermons to touch the hearts and souls of those who hear them this Christmas Season. Thank You Lord for Pastor Willig.</p>
<p>5 Thank You for the wonderful children in our congregation. Bless them Lord as they are lights in this world for You. Help them to see You in their Christmas celebrations.</p>	<p>6 Lord help us to remember that everything we have is Yours and You give us what we need. Help us to wisely use what You have entrusted to us. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 Luke 16:11</p>	<p>7 Satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Psalm 90:14</p>	<p>8 As we celebrate this Christmas Season make our hearts soar with the knowledge that Jesus is the most wonderful gift. Help us to see the wonder of His love.</p>	<p>9 I praise You Lord, that You are intimately acquainted with my ways and that You always have my best interest at heart. Luke 2:8-20</p>	<p>10 God, please bless us with wisdom, discernment, and a God like heart for all our congregation. 1 Kings 3:6-15</p>	<p>11 Lord, many will attend church at Christmas time please help them to come to know You and believe in You after hearing the message of Your gift of Jesus that he died and rose up again for us.</p>
<p>12 God, we have a wonderful congregation here at Friends in Christ. Thank You for bringing us together. Help us to be a light for You in this world. We thank You Lord for our Friends in Christ.</p>	<p>13 Help us to put on the full armour of God and be alert to satan's strategies. Eph. 6:10-18 Acts. 17:11</p>	<p>14 Lord, help us to take some quiet time to read Your Word this Christmas Season. Help us to sense Your presence and discover more of You. Psalm 62:5 Psalm 37:7</p>	<p>15 Lord, help me to turn control of my life over to You. Walk with me daily as I try to be more like You. Thank You for loving me. Rom. 13:13-14</p>	<p>16 Lord, we pray that You would fill us with the Holy Spirit. Help us to listen to You and see Your blessings You give us.</p>	<p>17 Help us to come to You Lord when we are feeling stressed. Psalm 94:18</p>	<p>18 As we go through our busy days, help us to have patience with those we come in contact with. Matt 2:13-18</p>
<p>19 Let us remember that some of the best gifts we can give are gifts of time.</p>	<p>20 Be with our military Lord so they can feel the love of Jesus during this Christmas Season. Bless them Lord and keep them safe out of harms way.</p>	<p>21 Lord, help us to look beyond the glitter of the holiday and see the glory of Your presence.</p>	<p>22 Before the celebrations begin let us turn our hearts to You O Lord. No gift has ever been so costly, treasured, precious, or perfect. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. 2 Cor. 9:15</p>	<p>23 Thank You so much for the message that we can share. "Go tell it on a mountain, over the hills and everywhere: go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born. Luke 2:20</p>	<p>24 Lord, as we celebrate Your coming into the world to save us, let Our joyful hearts be attuned to Your voice. Proverbs 4:11-13</p>	<p>25 God, we Thank You for Jesus. Joy in the heavens and peace on earth for unto us a Son is given unto us a child is born and he will save his people from their sins. Matt 1:22-23</p>
<p>26 Thank You for the opportunity to openly celebrate Christmas with others as we are thankful for the gift of Jesus.</p>	<p>27 We are so very blessed! Thank You Lord!</p>	<p>28 Lord, Thank You for knowing my heart and hearing my prayers and answering them in accordance to your will for me. Exodus 40:14 Psalm 16:7-8</p>	<p>29 Lord, as You give us a fresh start daily, help us to start off each day of the New Year with You. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: old things have passed away and new things have come. 2 Cor. 5:17</p>	<p>30 Lord, help us to remember to prepare our hearts before we come to worship You.</p>	<p>31 In the New Year we pray that unity across our entire ministry will abound.</p>	