**FESTIVAL**/COMMEMORATION **DAYS IN DECEMBER**

Dec. 4 John of Damascus, *Theologian & Hymnwriter*

Dec. 6 Nicholas of Myra, *Pastor* (“Santa Claus”)

Dec. 7 Ambrose of Milan, *Pastor & Hymnwriter*

Dec. 13 Lucia, *Martyr*

Dec.17 Daniel the Prophet & the 3 Young Men (“Shadrach,” “Meshach,” &

 “Abednego”)

Dec. 19 Adam & Eve, *1st Human Beings*

Dec. 20 Katharina von Bora Luther, *Martin’s Wife*

**Dec. 21 St. Thomas, *Apostle***

**Dec. 24 The Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve**

**Dec. 25 The Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Day**

**Dec. 26 St. Stephen, *Martyr***

**Dec. 27 St. John, *Apostle & Evangelist***

**Dec. 28 The Holy Innocents, *Martyrs*** (baby boys of Bethlehem)

Dec. 29 David, *Psalmist, King, & Ancestor of Jesus*

**Dec. 31 Eve of the Circumcision & Name of “Jesus” – New Year’s Eve**

**“Growing as One”**

 The following memory items can be used within the **daily office services** in the ***Lutheran Service Book***: Matins (pp.219ff.), Vespers (pp.229ff.), Morning Prayer (pp.235ff.), Evening Prayer (pp.243ff.), Compline (pp.253ff.), Responsive Prayers 1 (pp.282ff.) & 2 (pp.285ff.), and **Daily Prayer for Individuals & Families (pp.294ff.)**.

**Week Passage *Catechism* Hymn(s)\***

Dec. 2 - 8 Luke 19:38 Lord’s Prayer – 4th & 5th Pet’s *LSB* #332

Dec. 9 - 15 Luke 3:4 Lord’s Prayer – 6th & 7th Pet’s, Conc. *LSB* #344

Dec. 16 - 22 Luke 7:22-23 Holy Baptism – 1st: What? *LSB* #345

Dec. 23 – 29 Luke 1:41b-42,45 Holy Baptism – 2nd: Benefits *LSB* #357

Dec. 30 – Jan. 5 Luke 2:38 Holy Baptism – 3rd: How? *LSB* #389

 (\*at least 1st stanza)

**OFFICIAL ACTS:**

**Baptism:** Hattie Angela Hill (infant daughter of Justine Watts), 11-24-18

**“Chrismon: Fish”**

 **Merry Christmas!** Virtually all churches have one or two **Christmas trees** in the Sanctuary during Advent and Christmas. Besides the lights, there are other decorations. Here, at St. John, we have family bulbs of various colors. As you probably know, many churches hang what are called **“Chrismons”** – short for **“Christ monograms.”** A “monogram” is like a short way of saying someone’s **name**. Thus, “Chrismons” depict **various symbols of “Christ”** and are usually made of white or gold Styrofoam or plastic beads, and are decorated with gold beads and sparkles. So each “Chrismon” on a tree **teaches us something about “Christ,” about Jesus, whose Birth Christmas is all about.**

 One common “Chrismon” is a **fish** (like you may also see on someone’s car rear bumper, or on business signs owned by Christians). In the Early Church, Christianity was illegal in the Roman Empire, so Christians had to use symbols as a **secret code** to let other Christians know they were believers. One of these code symbols was a fish. But **what does a fish have to do with Jesus?**

 Well, the **Greek** word for **“fish” is “*IXTHUS*”** (*ĭkthūs*). (Sometimes you’ll see these letters inside a fish symbol on a car bumper.) These letters also serve as an **anagram** for the who **Jesus** is: The **“*I*”** is the first letter of **Jesus’ Name** in Greek (“*Iesus*,” since there’s no “j” sound/letter in the Greek alphabet); the **“*X*”** is the Greek letter “*Chi*” (Kī), and thus is the first two letters of the title **“Christ;”** the **“*TH*”** is the first letters in the Greek word for **“God”** – “Theo” (as in “theology”: “study of God”); the **“*U*”** is the first letter of the Greek word for **“Son”** (“*Uious*”); and the **“*S*,”** like in English, is the first letter for the word **“Savior”** (“*Sōtĕr*”). So, **“*IXTHUS*”** is an anagram for **“Jesus, God’s Son, Savior.”**

 **Jesus is God’s Son, and He’s our Savior.** That’s a **“Christ Monogram.”** And **that’s what Christmas is all about!** My family and I pray that all of you have a blessed Advent and Christmas as we both look forward to Christ’s Coming – both as a Baby and on the Last Day!

 In His service & yours,

 ***Pastor Dodge***

**YOUTH NEWS**

 Monthly meetings of the Youth Group (Confirmed through high school) have resumed, and will continue on the **third Monday of each month at 7:00pm**, in the school building “Big Room.” This month’s meeting will include a **Christmas party**.

 The Youth will serve as commentators for the **Dec. 16 Christmas Hymn Festival**.

 The Youth continue to sell **150th anniversary cups** until they’re gone (about 40 left).

**“*ASK THE PASTOR*”**

**Q: Are there any guidelines for reverence in worship? (Part 3)**

**A:** Although there are **no laws/rules** regarding this, there are certain traditions that have been observed **voluntarily** by Christians from the very beginning. The ***Bible*** includes the following regarding public worship: “[Jesus said,] ‘But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in *spirit [faith] and Truth***, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him **must worship in *spirit and Truth***’” (John 4:23-24); “But **all things should be done** ***decently and in order***” (1 Corinthians 14:40); and “… let us offer to God **acceptable worship, with *reverence and awe***, for our God is a consuming Fire” (Hebrews 12:28). Thus our **Lutheran Confessions** state, “… the Mass is retained among us, and celebrated with the ***highest reverence***. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved” (*Augsburg Confession* [24]). Understanding the commonly used ceremonies can **help add meaning and depth** to the reception of the Lord’s Gifts of His Word and Sacraments. Last month, I covered the “Sign of the Cross” and “Bowing at the Name of the Holy Trinity and at the ‘*Sanctus*’.” This month I’ll cover one more of these traditions:

 The **“Pastor’s Self-Communion”**: Following the ancient custom the Celebrant (*i.e.*, the pastor leading the “Service of the Sacrament”) Communes himself before Communing the other clergy, Elders, and the people. This was the normal practice during Luther’s day. Luther writes, “Then while the *Agnus Dei* is sung, **let him [the Celebrant] Communicate, *first himself*** and then the people.”

 **The vocation of a pastor is to give to the people what he’s first received from Christ** (*i.e.*, Word & Sacraments). Therefore, the pastor first receives the Body and Blood of Christ, and then distributes it to the others. For these reasons **all of our hymnals**, in all of the “Divine Service” *Settings* have included the following “rubric” (red-print instructions) before the Distribution:

**“*The pastor* and those who assist him receive the Body and Blood of Christ *first* and then distributes Them to those who come to receive, …”**

Practically, then, the only way a pastor can “receive … first” is to Commune himself first.

 **Final comments** (on the traditions covered in this and the last two newsletters)**:** As much of this will be unfamiliar to our visitors (let alone to yourself), it’s our hope that by familiarizing yourself with these brief explanations that you may help those worshiping with us to more fully understand and appreciate the Lord’s Gracious Presence among us in His Word and Sacraments. For many, especially if it’s their first time experiencing such reverence in worship, this may be discomforting. If that’s the case, worshipers are encouraged to listen and observe rather than trying to keep up. As they continue to worship with us (and we hope they do!) they may consider observing one practice at a time. With regular practice comes comfort and appreciation of the ancient rites and ceremonies of the Holy Christian Church’s worship.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Sunday School (pre-school – high school): Sundays, 9:15 – 10:15am; school

 building; C.P.H.’s “Growing in Christ” curriculum

Adult Bible Class: Sundays, 9:15 – 10:15am; church basement; “The Heidelberg

 Disputation”

Jr. Confirmation Classes: Sundays, 5:00pm (7th grade); school building; *Luther’s*

 *Small Catechism*, *Workbook*, *LSB*, videos, miscellaneous resources

Mid-week Bible Study: Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:30am; Genesis; school building

 “big room”

*NOTE:* If you know of anyone interested in adult instruction, which can lead to adult Confirmation/membership, please let Pastor know.

**ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE**

(Mid-week services will be at **noon and 7:00pm each Wednesday**. Each 7:00pm service will be preceded by a **soup & sandwich supper** in the school building gymnasium, beginning at **5:30pm**.)

***“Your King is Coming”***

Wed., Dec. 5 “Jesus: King of Shame” Zechariah 9:9b; Psalm 25:1-3

Wed., Dec. 12 “Jesus: King of Guilt” Psalm 80

**Sun., Dec. 16, 4:00pm Christmas Hymn Festival**

Wed., Dec. 19 “Jesus: King of the Low” 2 Samuel 7:1-17; Luke 1:26-38

**Mon., Dec. 24, 7:00pm Sunday School Christmas Program**

**Mon., Dec. 24, 11:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Divine Service**

“Shining in the Darkness” – Isaiah 9:2-7

**Tues., Dec. 25, 9:00am Christmas Day Divine Service**

“Infinite Gifts in Finite Wrappings? –

John 1:1-3; Exodus 40:17-21,34-38; Titus 3:4-7

**Mon., Dec. 31, 4:00pm New Year’s Eve Divine Service**

 (w/ Commemoration of the Faithful Departed)

 “But Deliver Us This Day Our Daily Evil” –

 Psalm 90

***December Birthdays***

**12/1 Terry Friedland 12/2 Ryan Finkel 12/3 Michael Schave**

 **Douglas Howard**

**12/4 Dennis Pleiness 12/5 Ashley Koglin 12/7 Darlene Tyler**

 **Easton Iseler Leroy Schave**

**12/8 Heather Schultz 12/9 Jennifer Iseler 12/10 Fred Hasen**

 **Melvin Hartz Todd Maschke Sarah Birchfield**

 **Holly Iseler Donald Pitts**

 **Carol Young**

**12/11 Joyce Harwood 12/15 Shirley Piotter 12/16 Nathan Pawlowski**

 **Howard Griffore Joshua Polly**

**12/17 Amy Babcock 12/18 Jeffrey Schave 12/19 Chauncey Koglin**

 **Michael Reinke**

**12/20 Cynthia Woodke 12/21 Carol Hunter 12/23 Elaine Eggert**

 **Joel Gaffke Jordan Schave**

**12/24 Brittany Smaglinski 12/25 Eric Reinke 12/28 Weston Koglin**

**12/31 Brenda Friedland**

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***If there are any corrections or additions for the Birthday***

***calendar. Please call the Church Office 428-4140.***

***Thank you.***

 ***December Anniversary***

***![C:\Users\Secretary\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\IE\A5J3RAMJ\anniversary_graphics[1].gif]()*** 3: Willard & Ramona Reinke

 13: Elwyn & Phyllis Will

 20: Melvin & Beverly Hartz

 30: Howard & Della Finkel

***December Altar Guild***

 Vicki Koglin

***Church Attendance***

 Average Church Attendance for the month of October 2017: 140

 Average Church Attendance for the month of October 2018: 133

 ***Report of Contributions***

 *For the month of October 2018*

***Budget Income:*** General Fund: $10,773.00

 Loose: $514.36 ***Total: $11,287.36***

***Non Budget Income:*** Missions: $560.00 150th Anniversary: $150.00

 Stained Glass Window: $1,582.00 Trustees: $25.00

 Higher Things: $25.00

**St. John Ladies Aid** invites all ladies to come out for an evening of laughs on **December 3rd at 7PM** to the **Annual Christmas Party**. Wondering what this is all about? All you need to do is bring at least one $5 gift (or you can bring as many as you want). An Auctioneer (Pastor or a gent from our congregation) randomly grabs a gift off the table and the ladies all bid on it. Ladies Aid will match the amount raised and proceeds are donated to charity. Last year we donated to Huron County Safe Place, Lutheran Child & Family Services and LWML. Sometime things get a little competitive, but it is all in fun. So why not join the fun while helping to raise funds for wonderful causes. Oh, and bring a dozen cookies. We will eat some and save the rest to be put in Christmas fruit baskets for the shut-ins.

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![C:\Users\Secretary\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\IE\E8OHBZLZ\thank_you[1].png]()**The annual Harvest Home Bazaar** was a huge success again this year. **Thank you** to everyone who generously donated items for sale, worked the booths and kitchen, made posters, desserts, prep for the luncheon; the men who helped set up and tear down, those who came to shop and eat, and those who gave monetary donations. A special thank you to Suellen Emerick for the countless hours put in to the soup preparation. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do – Ephesians 2:10. We too, as followers of Christ have a part to contribute on God’s team – see Romans 12:4-5. God’s Blessings to all of you. ~~ Carolyn Collings, Bazaar Chair

***Acolyte Schedule***

December 2: 8:00 Jordan Schave 10:30 Tanton Babcock

December 5: 7:00 Hunter Iseler

December 9: 8:00 Jordis Pitts 10:30 Tori Iseler

December 12: 7:00 Tanton Babcock

December 16: 8:00 Jordan Schave 10:30 Hunter Iseler

December 19: 7:00 Jordis Pitts

![C:\Users\Secretary\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\IE\E8OHBZLZ\f3edafafd54c4e22ae35b1934cbaf09b[1].jpg]()December 23: 8:00 Tanton Babcock 10:30 Tori Iseler

December 24: 11:00 Jordan Schave

December 25: 10:00: Jordis Pitts

December 30: 8:00 Tanton Babcock 10:30 Hunter Iseler

December 31: 4:00 Tori Iseler

***December Baptism Birthdays***

***Dec*** 1: Otyllia Abraham 3: Justin Belt 4: Tori Iseler

 Tracy Terassi Vicky Mazza 5: Howard Finkel

 2: Scott Witherspoon Frank Gaffke Elaine Reinke

 6: Jacob Naeyart 7: Charlene Scharrard 8: Dylan Burton

 Sharon Joy Stacy Gaffke

 Ricky Finkel Christopher Golden Cheryl Neuenfeldt

 Brenda Prange

 Sheila Jurgess Jonathan Maschke

 Bridget Goretski

 10: Blake Bender 11: Jodi Bender

 Nelson Erbisch Ellie Bender

 Jeffrey Bucholtz

 Eleanor Hall

 Kari Verellen

 Elwyn Will

 12: Tina Osentoski 16: Kimberly Koglin 17: Danny Arnott

 David Burkhard

 Gloria Schmaltz

 18: Christopher Inda 19: Lawrence Friedland 21: Donna Inda

 Grayson Kraft Sharon Sobczak

 Lisa Fisher

 Kristen Weiss

 22: Stacy Fisher 23: Bonnie Koglin 25: Dennis Pleiness

 Sharon Schave

 Danny May

 Carsyn Pawlowski

 26: Sherry Kelley 27: Joyce Friedland 28: Darlene Tyler

 Sandra Wohlford Ricky Mazza

 29: Ty Woodke 30: Ronald Rhode 31: Candace Strozeski

 Dennis Zick Melissa Siemen

 Jonathan Koglin

**A huge “THANK YOU”** to the following ladies that came out on October 9th to help shine up the school kitchen: Suellen Emerick, Brittany Smaglinski, Marissa Schave, Lori Kowaleski, Kristen Weiss, Shannon Popour, Becky Dodge, Kathy Schave, Carol Young, and Rose Westenberg. It was a job long overdue and you all made the kitchen sparkle!

This year’s **Harvest Home Dinner** served just under 400 people. I can’t thank everyone enough for all of you help in making this event a great success. No job is too big or too small, and whatever you do to help does not go unnoticed. Again, “THANK YOU!” ~~Shannon Popour

**ATTENTION:** In looking ahead to the upcoming Christmas season, we are in need of participants for the **Sunday school Christmas program**, which is held on **Christmas Eve at 7:00PM**. We need students of all ages to take part in the program in any capacity – speaking parts, playing an instrument, singing, or helping in the background. Because of the low attendance in Sunday school, we are asking that you ***sign up with your name and phone number, so that we know how many people we will have to work with***. Preschool children are always welcome to sing “Away in a Manger,” which has been a tradition in the past. Please use the **sign-up sheet on the bulletin table** and stay tuned for upcoming practice dates which will take place during Sunday school time. If you have any question, please contact Albert Bender at 989-553-4484.

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DECEMBER CALENDAR

