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Lutheran Church of Our Savior

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## FROM THE PASTOR...

**It is Christmas and he sits in his chair.** He's only got the one chair, you see, and he sits there just like he has every day for the past five years. His roommate in the nursing home has gone to his son's house. How he wishes he had children, especially during Christmas time. But ever since his beloved wife died, he has no one. What kind of Christmas can he expect?

It is Christmas and she sits in her cold living room: alone. The children have been put to bed. Since their father walked out on them, every Christmas has been a struggle! But this one is the hardest. She just got laid off. She sighs, "Ain't no Christmas bonus if there ain't no work. Can't even turn up the heat; so how am I supposed to come up with money for presents this year?" She dreads the thought of going to church and seeing those other families happy together. She imagines them opening presents under the tree. "Sure they can sing 'Joy to the World' but what are we supposed to do." What kind of Christmas can she expect?

It is Christmas and the pastor sits next to her hospital bed. He knows for 90 years this woman struggled in life. Polio as a little girl; first husband killed in the Great War; first child miscarried; youngest child killed by a drunk driver. Now the creeping death ravages her body. She looks like a living skeleton. The pastor knows she won't see another Christmas. But she smiles and prays the Lord's Prayer with him. And inside he marvels at her strength, her inner peace; he is humbled by her faith... so he asks her, "What kind of Christmas do you expect?"

Every year we celebrate the first Advent (coming) of Jesus on Christmas and remember those people of faith who waited in expectation for God to send a Messiah to save them. The prophet Jeremiah wrote to folks who were going through a national crisis. And they were waiting... waiting for God to deliver them... waiting for God to send a Messiah, a Savior. The Babylonian Empire conquered their nation. Their cities overrun, their armies destroyed—the people were no longer free. And many of the people were dragged away into exile in Babylon. And with that as a background, Jeremiah tells the people about a day when a "righteous Branch" would grow up from the line of King David. Jeremiah comforts the people with the vision of a new king who would redeem the people and end their slavery and exile. But that day was off in the future and everyone who believed Jeremiah had to wait in expectation for it to happen. We can look back from the other side of the cross and see Jesus is that "righteous Branch" Jeremiah talked about.

So many expected, so many waited, and yet so many missed seeing Jesus when he came. What

happened? When it comes to expectations, we human beings seem to fall into one of two extremes: either we expect too much or we expect too little. A few years ago researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine suggested women usually think jokes are funnier than men do because men expect jokes to be funny while women have lower expectations. While writing about this study, Internet humorist "Mad Dog" (I'm pretty sure that's not his real name) said: "women think jokes are funnier because they have lower expectations than men, which probably helps explain how women manage to put up with guys in the first place. Not that I'm complaining. Hey, there's nothing like having low expectations to make me look good... But the truth is, as humans we have high expectations. We expect good customer service, high quality products, and fair wages for workers. We expect our leaders will do the right thing. And tell the truth. We expect a movie sequel to be as good as the original, even though it's never happened. We expect a product that comes in a package which screams "New and Improved" to be, well, new and improved. And we expect the holiday season to be about love, friendship, and spirituality, not rampant commercialism. We expect the weather forecast to be accurate and airplane seats to be comfortable no matter how many times we've flown and know otherwise. We expect product claims that arrive by email to be true, vacations to be relaxing. Come to think of it, maybe it would be a good idea if we all lowered our expectations.

So many folks expected the Messiah; they were waiting for him. But so many folks still missed Jesus. Maybe that's because some expected too much. Messiah can't come riding into the city on a donkey. Messiah has to be riding a warhorse and leading armies. Messiah can't be eating and laughing with sinners. Messiah is supposed to make the unclean pay. Messiah shouldn't be preaching and teaching peace and forgiveness and love and turning the other cheek. Messiah should be restoring the kingdom and destroying our enemies. Messiah can't be born to poor parents in a stable with animals and with only shepherds to witness. God wouldn't do it that way. There has to be more. Maybe they missed Jesus because they expected too much. Jesus certainly didn't fit their ideas of the "righteous Branch" no way... no how!

Are you expecting too much from God? I went to Google and typed in "Expect a miracle." I got 1,550,000 hits. But doesn't expect-a-miracle thinking imply we



should count on divine intervention to solve our problems for us? Don't we often expect God to act in certain ways and do certain things for us? When God doesn't always do what we want or act the way we expect we miss seeing his hand working in our lives. Just like those folks who missed Jesus. Their expectations got in the way. What kind of Christmas did you expect? Do you expect too much from God? Have you turned Jesus into a spiritual Santa Claus with his bag of gifts, checking his list twice? If you've been nice, he'll open that gift bag for you! And if Santa Jesus doesn't give you what you asked for then Jesus isn't for you, God has failed you, let you down.

Actually we can't expect too much from Jesus because he always exceeds our expectations. So maybe we miss Jesus at Christmas not because we expect too much but because we expect the wrong things. Jesus comes to you wanting a relationship with you on his terms. And the gifts he brings are peace, love, forgiveness, meaning for your life. His gifts are always better and more than you ask for.

Maybe some of those folks missed seeing Jesus because they expected too little. Who expects Messiah to be an ordinary man and yet more? God in human flesh! Who could expect the great God of creation to stoop so low as to take on human skin? Who would have expected the God of the parting of the Red Sea and the power behind all the Egyptian plagues to come here as a helpless baby? Who would expect Messiah to die cursed as a common criminal on a tree...to carry a cross; pour out his blood for the sins of all, absorbing God's anger and punishment? And who could expect to find an empty tomb on a bright Sunday morning? Maybe they missed Jesus because they expected too little.

Did you expect too little from God this Christmas? Expect the baby of Bethlehem to bring peace... not always happiness... but peace; deep down—the peace of knowing God wants to have a relationship with you... the peace of knowing God is not angry with your sins but forgives, restores, loves...Are you expecting too little from God this Christmas? Expect Jesus to walk this life alongside you. Expect Jesus to laugh with you, cry with you, carry you through life's struggle. Expect that in your last hour, the Messiah will come to take you home to the place he has prepared as he promised. Expect your grave to be empty one day as his was empty on Easter. Expect him to fulfill his promise. "Because I live, you will live also."

What kind of Christmas did you expect? Has God become too far away for you to care? Jesus has come. A baby to die for your sins: A baby to bring you back into God's family. The cross tells you if you were the only one who needed him, Jesus would still come. That's how much God loves you.

It is Christmas and he sits in his chair. He's only got the one chair, you see, and he sits there just like he has every day for the past five years. Suddenly he hears voices... singing...Hark the Herald Angels Sing...The choir from the local Lutheran Church is caroling. He imagines them singing just for him. A young girl smiles and says, "Blessed Christmas. Jesus loves you." And the old man knows it is true. He remembers because of the

manger and the cross, he will have an eternity of Christmastimes with his beloved wife and friends and relatives unknown and unmet. And he sings with them. As he sings, he knows he is not alone... never alone... because Emmanuel has come... God with us is here... God with him.

It is Christmas and she sits alone in her living room. The children come down the stairs to the tree. She sees their sleepy faces and she realizes God is with her in them and the love they all share. She knows in her heart that Christmas is about faith and family, not presents and trees and lights. She thinks about the Christmas church service and remembers all those other folks at her church have their struggles and hurts and pain too and she knows they are all her family now too. The Christ child has made them so. She does not face the season alone. Jesus is with her in her children's smiles and the fellowship of her church. He is Emmanuel after all... God with us... God with her.

It is Christmas and the pastor sits next to her hospital bed. He asks her, "What kind of Christmas do you expect?" she smiles weakly and says, "Pastor, Jesus has carried me through all the trials of my life and I know he will never fail me. I expect to spend Christmas at home with Jesus, just like he promised." He is Emmanuel after all... God with us... God with her.

In these days after Christmas did you see the mystery in the manger? Did you see Immanuel is God with us? If not, what kind of Christmas did you expect? ❁

...Pastor Steve Eckert

## LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION



### MITE BOX – 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY

The Mite Box will be available on January 5 outside church. Once again, you will have the opportunity of supporting many worthwhile Lutheran mission activities.



## MOWING IN DECEMBER

Jan. 11 - Art Atrops,  
Jim LaBelle

Jan. 25 - Mark Hathaway, Terry Morgan,  
Dick Scholar





## FROM THE PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR... THANKS A TON

Jan 01	<b>New Year's Day – Church Office Closed</b>
Jan 02	7:00 pm Elders' Mtg.
Jan 05	8:15 am Comm. Svc.
Jan 05	9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
Jan 05	10:45 am Comm. Svc.
Jan 12	8:15 am Worship Svc.
Jan 12	9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
Jan 12	10:45 am Worship Svc.
Jan 13	6:00 – 8:00 PM – Men's Club
<b>Jan 15</b>	<b>February Ministry Schedule Due</b>
Jan 16	<b>Council Mtg.</b>
Jan 19	8:15 am Praise/Comm. Svc.
Jan 19	9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
Jan 19	10:45 am Praise/Comm. Svc.
<b>Jan 20</b>	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Office Closed</b>
<b>Jan 20</b>	<b>February Newsletter Deadline</b>
Jan 21	9:30 am Tabitha Quilting Group
<b>Jan 25</b>	<b>10:00am – 12:00 pm – Snow Day</b>
Jan 26	8:15 am Worship Svc.
Jan 26	9:30 am SS/Bible Study/Confirmation
Jan 26	10:45 am Worship Svc.

We have been offering our community a "FREE" SNOW DAY event for over ten years now! It's surprising how many children come to play. For many, it is their first time seeing snow. The families of our community look forward to this annual event. However, the snow / ice that we purchase from Glacier Ice Company is not cheap. In fact, this year, our Snow Day will be a lot smaller unless we can get some more donations.

I am reaching out to you all in hopes that you, your family, your business, or your workplace might be willing to make a (tax deductible) donation of \$300.00 to buy a TON of snow. Two families can go together to make a ton @ \$150.00 each. In exchange for the donation there will be a banner hung on snow day showing all our supporters that says 'THANKS A TON' for your support. Each person/company that donates a ton will have a snowball made to display their family or business name.

Your support is greatly appreciated! The more snow we can buy, the more fun the children will have! Thank you for this consideration. Be sure to share the news to all your family and friends.

You can now donate online at [www.lcos.net/donate-now/](http://www.lcos.net/donate-now/) And select the "Snow Day Fundraiser" on the "Select Fund\*" dropdown menu.

SNOW DAY will be on **Saturday January 25, 2020! 10AM - 1:00PM**. If you can or know of someone who would like to donate, please have them get in touch with me at (805) 938-5121. Thank You! **DEADLINE 1/17/20.** ❄️

**Blessings,  
Deborah Maddison**

### JANUARY Birthdays

Jan 01	Greg Amaral, Joan Kerns
Jan 06	Hannah Tate
Jan 11	Thomas Heuchert
Jan 14	Georgiann Willie
Jan 16	Donna Finlay
Jan 18	Arlin Weiting
Jan 21	Jocelyn Graham, Ron Peterson, Crystal Shaffer
Jan 22	Terry Murdock
Jan 25	Joretta Borchert
Jan 26	Katherine Lee, Sharon Weiting
Jan 30	Ernest Heuchert, Jr.

### JANUARY Anniversaries

Jan 01	David & Marleen Munger
Jan 03	Terry & Jill Murdock
Jan 21	Dave & LaDene Hersman
Jan 26	Dick & Debra Scholar



## ELDER'S CORNER

### New Year Promises

**Here we are with a New Year at hand!** What do we do with the promises we will make and the stresses we will experience trying to make them come true?

Even though we all make some sort of promise to our friends, spouses or children...do we keep them? We also make resolutions on what we will do to make our lives better or how we will help others we come in contact with make their lives better!

We know in our hearts that we do not control our destination with regard to the promises and words we try to keep. As Christians we may think we are in control, but that is God's job! He is in control! Isaiah 40:31 says: "Even youths grow tired and weary...but those who trust in the Lord will rise up and renew their strength!" We also believe the Old Testament promises of a covenant God! Something we can depend on!

This new year, instead of making resolutions or promises to those people you love here on Earth, give them a word from God that gives them hope, peace and clarity of mind so that God's Covenant will give them a feeling of being loved and a life worth the promises He tells us about! He was born on Earth, lived and died for you and me, and has made a covenantal promise to all men!

We must believe in Ephesians 4:23 that we are "to be made new in the attitude of your minds! "

God's Peace and the Love and Promises of His Son Jesus be with all of you this new Year!

*If you wanna' be great in God's Kingdom, you've gotta be a servant of all!* ✨

In Loving Care and Ministry, Tom Heuchert

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## LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

**LCEF is seeing increased loan demand** from churches, RSOs and universities. The funding for these loans comes from those of you who invest in LCEF. To do this, changes are being made with some of the most popular investments and targeting church's bank accounts.

Get started by taking a look at your bank account to see what rate of interest you are paying. Then, compare your bank rates with LCEF's offerings. You will most likely receive an excellent return from LCEF while knowing that your money is helping grow LCMS churches and organizations. It's a WIN-WIN!

Go to: [bill.swift@lcef.org](mailto:bill.swift@lcef.org) or ConnectPlus and PartnerPlus at [www.lcef.org](http://www.lcef.org). Or call Bill Swift at (530) 417-4555.

Join LCEF in growing the Kingdom of God. ✨

## ALL PRAISE THE LORD!

**The Lord answers prayers!** Two thousand forty-six (2,046) Gospel Opportunities were brought to the



local Drop-Off location here at LCOSA during the National Collection Week for Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes. This compares to last year's number of 1,830. The total for the Central Coast was 14,080,

surpassing the goal of 13,464. Co-chairmen Kathy Lee and Anita Lange that the volunteers who made the collection week a pleasure. ✨

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## STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

**The new year brings with it new resolve**, but so often that resolve fades before the first week is ended. The apostle Paul advised the Corinthians, "Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means" (2 Corinthians 8:10, 11). By ourselves, we grow tired or get bored or just plain lazy. Let us ask the Lord to give us the desire to give generously, to serve joyfully, and to expend our time eagerly in response to what God has given to us and done for us. ✨

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## A PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY

**The following prayer**, almost 1,000 years old, was written for pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) — 500 miles across northern Spain. Use this adaption as you journey into the new year:

God, you called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert. Guard your children, who seek to grow in you this year. Be their companion on the way, their guide at the crossroads, their strength in weariness, their defense in dangers, their shelter on the path, their shade in the heat, their light in the darkness, their comfort in discouragement, and the firmness of their intentions. Through your guidance, may they be enriched with grace and virtue, and be filled with salutary and lasting joy.

...from the 12th-century *Codex Calixtinus*

# CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES



## Puzzle

### Reminder rocks

When Joshua and the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, they set up stones for a special reason.

*Directions: Shade all the rocks that aren't completely rounded. Unscramble the remaining rocks to reveal a message from Joshua 4:24, NIV.*

that river to might God the from  
 a peoples if men hand a is all  
 water call that always the an tell  
 know had the fear are So you LORD  
 together of each powerful ask of the what

So \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ the  
 \_\_\_\_\_ the  
 \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ .

JOSHUA 4:24, NIV

Answer: So that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful. Joshua 4:24, NIV

## "STEP" INTO THE NEW YEAR



Make this craft to remember God's many blessings.

**What you need:**

- Small stones
- Permanent markers
- Foil pan and cooking spray
- Drop cloth
- Gloves
- Quick-set concrete (and adult help)
- Bucket and paint stirrer

**What you do:**

1. After reflecting on the past year, use markers to decorate stones with memorable words, dates and drawings.
2. Spray pan with cooking spray. Set pan outside on a drop cloth.
3. Wearing gloves, mix concrete in a bucket, according to instructions.
4. Pour concrete into pan. Smooth top with paint stirrer.
5. Press in stones, handprints and other decorations.
6. Let dry completely. Remove from pan.
7. Place the stepping-stone outside as a reminder of God's continued goodness.

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### **Our Mission**

“Responding to God’s love, Lutheran Church of Our Savior desires to reach more people for Christ by proclaiming Him, by growing in faith, and by caring for all people.”



### **WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**Sunday Worship – 8:15 AM & 10:45 AM**  
**Sunday School and Bible Class - 9:30 AM**

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*  
**John 3:16**