

Lifetogether

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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*Next newsletter items
and articles will be due
December 22.*

From the Desk of Your Pastoral Leaders

Peace to You!

When the angel showed up to Zechariah in the temple, Zechariah was never the same. Not only was he mute from questioning the angel, he, along with his wife, held the responsibility of raising a child worthy of his calling. It is safe to say that Elizabeth, his elderly wife, physically embraced the change that went along with raising the prophet that would introduce Jesus to the world. One might say that it was a time of holy chaos for this quiet couple.

The angels were on the move again. They came to Mary to tell her about her impending role and then later to Joseph to fill him in on the story so that he might answer the call to serve as the earthly father of Jesus, the savior of the world, A.K.A. God's only son. The striking characteristic about both of these spiritual giants is there unconditional trust and surrender to God's agenda. Here again, the angel of the Lord showed up and every thing changed. Was this a time of Holy Spirit madness?

The interesting part of the story is that in the midst of all of these life altering announcements, changes, visions and events, the goal is "peace." The prophecy that flew out of Zechariah's mouth after he named his baby declared that the role of John was to announce how his son would participate in the realization of God's promise in the world which would bring peace via salvation. John would help the people get ready for the one who was "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:79) Later, an angel showed up to speak with the shepherds. When the angle began to proclaim the good news, an entire army of angels showed up to help, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace

among those who he favors," (Luke 2:14)

So, what we have here in these first short verses of Luke's Gospel is age old prophecy remembered, initiated, and in the process of moving God's people towards fulfillment – toward a time of peace. While the ending didn't pan out as most had thought, God made the promise a reality. Now the world has no need to fear death. We are claimed people who live under the promise of the resurrection. Peace is at hand...isn't it?

If it is finished, if God's promised is realized then why doesn't our world seem peaceful? Why are there still countless wars, hunger and preventable disease in the world? Why are we still living in bondage to sin, fear and death?

God's Kingdom is complete buy not yet fully revealed, and God invites us into this art of revelation so that all might live in the hope and the peace. We have been given a "foretaste of the feast to come."

What does that mean for God's earthly disciples? That means telling our own stories of faith to others. It means venturing out and risking a little by sharing with others what Christmas means to us – beyond the tradition of food, presents and family gatherings. Who knows, maybe an angel will show up to help us along the way...then again I wouldn't wish that kind of holy chaos on anyone.

As we all surrender to the holy chaos of Jesus coming to the world, may we know the love that passes all understanding, and may that love guard our hearts and give us all peace.

"Merry Christmas" from our family to yours.

- The Sandquists (Sonja, Gordy, Symone, Monique and Sirka Dog)

Olsburg Council Highlights

The Olsburg Lutheran Church council met October 15, 2008. The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by the vice chair, Jim Nelson, and we opened with prayer led by Joyce Cantrell. Members present: Susan Adams, Joyce Cantrell, Donica Nelson, Jim Nelson, Kristi Fronce, Floyd Munson, Willis Poppe, and Gordy Sandquist. Absent: Jan Cooper and Kirby Burklund

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Reports

Secretary's report: Floyd moved and Kristi seconded to approve the meeting minutes from September 17. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report: The treasurer, Susan Adams, reviewed the report. Our contract with Fox Business is finished. Joyce moved and Willis seconded to accept the report as presented.

Pastor's report:

- ✚ Pastor Gordy reported that he had conducted two funerals: Pat Johnson, member of the congregation, and Eunice Webster, mother of Jan Cooper.
- ✚ Gordy met with the worship team to select hymns for the next few months.
- ✚ Thanksgiving worship service will be held at Olsburg on the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving.
- ✚ The Grace Ways Bible study will begin in November.
- ✚ Confirmation: A student from St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Waterville, KS, has been added to the class.
- ✚ Pastor Gordy would like to take vacation time from December 29 to January 4. He requested that we count January 4 Sunday as one of the vacation Sundays in 2008. Motion made by Joyce and seconded by Kristi that we approve Pastor Gordy's request. Motion carried.
- ✚ Pastor Gordy has agreed to serve as an assistant boy's basketball coach for the Blue Valley Middle School. Pastor Gordy views this as ministry in the community

Old Business

- ✚ Outside lighting - Mitch Webster will not be able to do the electrical work. Jim will check with another electrician and will check with Lester Krause to see if he can dig the trench.
- ✚ Parsonage sale update - Jim distributed the contract prepared by Todd Sheppard for the council to review. Donica will ask Tom Nelson if he would be available to answer questions when the contract is presented the at the special congregational meeting. The contract with terms and price for the sale of the parsonage as written by Todd Sheppard with Charlson and Wilson was received and will be presented to the congregation for approval on

October 26. The constitution was reviewed with regard to the divestiture of property and the procedure outlined was followed.

- ✚ Luther League - The group met at Tom and Donica's on Oct. 12. The silent auction at Walsburg's 135th Anniversary celebration made \$800; the group served lunch at Alan and Sharon Hubbard's horse sale and made about \$400. The Luther League will be selling energy efficient light bulbs.
- ✚ The Christmas home tour will be held on December 14.
- ✚ Church insurance: Church Mutual Insurance Company will wait until March to meet with us since our current policy doesn't expire until June 2009.
- ✚ Spraying the Church: Susan will check with her husband Mitch about spraying the church for insects.
- ✚ Christmas party: A tentative for a Christmas gathering with church council members has been selected for December 17.

New Business

- ✚ A letter from the trustee of the Palmer M. Mellgren Trust was read. Mr. Mellgren's Trust has provided a gift of \$7,500 for improvements to the physical plant of the church as determined by the church council and approved by the congregation. Joyce will send a thank-you letter to Dave and Linda Mellgren.
- ✚ A thank-you note from Gordy Sandquist for the \$500 scholarship was read.
- ✚ Joint Budget Meeting - Gregg Gibson, Jim Nelson, Susan Adams, and Joyce Cantrell will meet with representatives from the Walsburg Council to develop the Joint Parish Budget for 2009.
- ✚ New Council Members - After the congregational elections on October 26, the new council members will be invited to the November meeting.
- ✚ Installation of all council members will take place on January 18.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

December birthdays and anniversaries

If you know of a member whose birthday is not listed, please contact the church office.

Birthdays

- 3 Willa Erickson (O)
Blake Fronce (O)
Kylie Rothlisberger (W)
- 6 Carol Deetjen (W)
- 7 Kim Berggren (O)
- 10 Carla Hageman (W)
- 11 Beverly Sundgren (W)
Rita Nelson (W)
Alyssa Kulp (W)
- 15 Loree Allen (W)
- 16 Albert Lee (W)
- 17 Vern Bulk (W)

- LaRae Kraemer (W)
- Adam Bestwick (W)
- 18 Kylie Grater (W)
- 20 Brian Monser (O)
Garrett Olson (W)
- 22 Tom Nelson (O)
Brandon Rogge (W)
- 26 Heather Nelson (O)
Mildred Nelson (W)
- 28 Rick Johnson (O)
Kent Nelson (O)
- 29 Jerome Flohr (W)

Anniversaries:

- 2 Loren and Lorraine Oman (W)
- 13 Allan and Paulette Kulp (W)
- 15 Justin and Kathy Ricketts (O)

- 19 Raymond and Maxine Anderson (O)
- 22 Floyd and Julie Munson (O)
- 29 Dale and Eva Larson (W)
- 30 Russell and Terry Peterson (W)

January 1-8

- 3 Darnell Vargo (O)
- 5 Gavin Hargrave (W)
- 6 Gary Holt (O)
- 7 Kenneth Neilson (W)
- 8 Julie Strauss (W)

Campus Ministry at Kansas State

We celebrate the leadership of Jan Cooper and Coleen Esping who are serving on the Campus Ministry board at Kansas State in Manhattan. Jan is serving as the secretary of the board as well as a member of the Human Resources Team. Coleen is serving as the treasurer as well as a member of the Finance Team. Both Sonja and Gordy serve together on the Fundraising Team, the Facilities Team, the Human Resources Team and the Strategic Planning Team. All are happy to be serving with Pastor Kevin Clark who has joined campus ministry this past Fall. We are looking forward to seeing how it is that ministry can happen on and off campus for this amazing group of young adults.

Members in service this month

Thank you to these members for their service to the parish during December.

Walsburg

Ushers: Russell Peterson, Mike Hagenmaier, Dennis Peterson, Loren Oman, Norman Johnson

Greeters: Mike Hagenmaier Family, Russell Peterson Family, Dennis Peterson Family

Communion Ushers: Bill Neilson, Kim Nelson, Jay Peterson, Russell Peterson, Jessie Sundgren

***Acolytes:** 12/7 Alyssa Kulp; 12/14 Emma Glessner; 12/21 Cajsja Larson; 12/25 Rachel Peterson, Cassie Miller; 12/28 Rachel Rheaume

***Lay Assistants:** 12/7 Gavin Hargrave; 12/14 Rita Nelson; 12/21 Jerry Bohnenblust; 12/25 (Julotta) Kim Bulk; 12/28 Alan Peterson

Flowers for Church: Volunteers (Please contact Altar Committee) Christmas-Altar committee

Altar Committee: Diana Hargrave, Alicia Scofield, Lynne Berry

Olsburg

Ushers: Jim Nelson, Brian Clifton, Blake Fronce, Shane Adams

Communion Assistants: 12/7 Kirby Burklund; 12/21 Joyce Cantrell; 12/24 Kristi Fronce

***Acolytes:** 12/7 Shane Adams; 12/14 Shelby Adams; 12/21 Blake Fronce; 12/24 (Christmas Eve) Bryon Nelson, Bailee Howland, Jonathan Nelson; 12/28 Kyle Clifton

***Lay Assistants:** 12/27 Shelby Adams; 12/14 Susan Adams; 12/21 Bailee Howland; 12/24 (Christmas Eve) Tami Howland; 12/28 Bill Monser

Kitchen Committee: Susan Adams

Altar Committee: Kathy Monser and Shelly Burklund

***If you are unable to be present for your assignment, please find a replacement and contact the church office so the correct name will appear in the bulletin.**

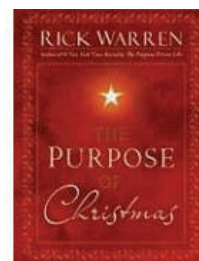
Sonja's Book Review of: *The Purpose of Christmas* written by, Rick Warren

I'm a sucker for Christmas books so I decided to check out Rick Warren's book on Christmas. Many people might already recognize his name. He is the author of the "Forty Days of Purpose" program that captured the attention of churches of all denominations, helping them to find clarity in their existence. *The Purpose of Christmas* falls into the same genre, offering a time to pause and reflect on what Christmas is all about. In true Rick Warren fashion, he cuts to the chase and highlights the most important elements involved in this portion of our Christian Story, lifting the heart of the events out of denominational boundaries and placing them out in the open, free from the institutional baggage that often bogs down the movement and awareness. Likewise, he cannot tell the story of the birth without linking it to the events of death and resurrection. The birth is not significant without the prophecy of death and the promise of the resurrection. Keeping that in mind, Warren divides his book into three sections and unpacks his ideas with speed and efficiency. Christmas is a time of *celebration* because of God's love seen in the gift of his Son given to the world. Christmas is a time of *salvation* seen in the Easter parts of the story of Jesus. Finally, Christmas is a time of *reconciliation* helping all to see that what was given more than 2,000 years ago continues to be available to us right here, right now. Peace on earth is still a possibility. He calls each person to task in this section. Peace starts with you.

While I love Rick Warren because he nails the issue, I always struggle with two things in his theology as a Lutheran Christian. First, he says with clarity that salvation is secure. It was accomplished through Jesus 2,000 years ago. It is a gift that no one can earn. That part I agree with – Amen. Later in his writing, he uses the language of "accepting the gift of

salvation thought praying a specific prayer." Is it ritual or conditional action? I'm not sure. That makes me wince a little because it gives us control over something that is clearly beyond our control. Salvation is God's action on us, not our action on God. As a Lutheran, I have learned that I can negotiate the acceptance language by simply transforming it into "response to the gift" language. The second thing that I have always struggled with is his pre-destination theology. He might write, "God has a plan and purpose for your life and it is already mapped out in advance with great detail." Again I wince a little when I encounter that kind of language. Lutherans are pretty particular about their free will and that kind of language steals away a large portion of it. We are pre-destinarians to the extent that we believe that God has secured our future and our place is indeed in heaven, as promised by the risen Lord. The rest of our lives, our vocations, our service, our worship, our learning, is our response to the good news. We have the opportunity and the call to come into alignment with God to share the good news with the world, but discerning the path on this journey is part of our work in this world. No one ever said it would be easy – simply reflect on Mary, the mother of Jesus for a moment. She had a tough row to hoe, and she did it with incredible faith and trust.

Do I recommend this book? Absolutely. It is a fast read and it has a pretty cover that screams, "Leave me on the coffee table for someone who might need some simple way to enter into the story of Christmas in a more meaningful fashion." The theological stuff can get worked out later. This book is about promise and hope. That is a gift that never stops giving. Enjoy.





Confirmation Christmas Party

Sunday,
December 7th,
5:00 PM

Meet in Keats at the City Park for "Journey to Bethlehem"

(We already have your ticket reservations)

Wear warm outdoor clothing.

Following the play we will have pizza at Gambonis in Riley.

Bring money for supper...or bring your parents.

Confirmation Serving at the Swedish Supper

Saturday, December 6th @ 4:00 PM

Olsburg Elementary Gym

Find Luellen Kasselmann and she will give you a job! You will be able to eat at the end of the event.

Confirmation Classes will resume on January 7th. Enjoy your Christmas Break!

Luther League for High School Youth

Serving at the Swedish Supper Bake Sale

Saturday, December 6th @ 4:00 PM

Olsburg Elementary Gym

National Youth Gathering House Tour Fundraiser

Sunday, December 14, 1:00 – 5:00 PM

All youth going to the National Youth Gathering in July are encouraged to call Donica Nelson or Darnell Vargo and learn how to serve as a host at any of the homes on the tour.

Luther League Christmas Party Pizza and Game Night at the Parsonage

Sunday, December 14, 5:30 PM

Meet at the parsonage with your friends for pizza, games and short Christmas bible study. How good is your movie knowledge?

Gift Exchange Option: All who bring a "white elephant" gift will receive a "white elephant" gift. Join the fun. Remember to wrap up your surprise and let's keep this a Rated G event. **One rule: you cannot buy this object.** (What is a white elephant gift? This could be something that has value but not use, it could be a re-gifting of something you already received, it could simply be something silly...It might have a Christmas theme and it might not. This is your opportunity to be creative and silly.)

Cradle Roll Christmas Party

Walsburg will have a Cradle Roll (infant through kindergarten) Christmas party, Saturday, December 6th @ 10:00 AM.

Parents and grandparents are encouraged to attend. The party will last approximately one hour. There is no gift exchange, however, if the children wish, they may bring an item to put on the "Mitten Tree".

Salvation (noun)

"Rescue by God from something bad and for something good, which we deny to enemies on principle, promise to friends as a reward and assume is our personal right." (*Crazy Talk: A Not So Stuffey Dictionary of Theological Terms* by, Rolf Jacobson)

Christmas happenings!

Walsburg Outreach and Fellowship Plans "Goodie Box" Assembly

Outreach/Fellowship Committee has been gathering addresses of college students & military personnel to remember with Christmas goodie boxes. You are encouraged to bring homemade cookies/candy or any other items to the church by Sunday, December 7. We plan to assemble the boxes following worship on the 7th.

Christmas Program Practice Schedules

Olsburg will hold practice during regular Sunday School. Practice will begin at 10 a.m.

Walsburg will hold practice beginning at 9:30 Sunday Dec. 7.

Sunday Schools plans Christmas Programs

Walsburg Lutheran Church Sunday School will present their Christmas program on Wednesday Dec. 10 at 7:00 p.m. There will be refreshments in Memorial Hall following the program.

Olsburg Sunday School will present their Christmas program on Sunday Dec. 21 at 9:00 a.m. The Outreach and Fellowship committee will serve **brunch** in Fellowship Hall following the program.

The children have worked hard to bring us the Christmas story, so make plans to attend on the 7th, 10th or both!

Olsburg taking Poinsettia orders

If you would like to share a Poinsettia at Olsburg on Christmas eve, please fill out the envelope found in the pews (as we have done in the past) and put them in the offering plate or give to Shelly. We would like to have all orders before December

13. We will be setting up the Poinsettias on Dec. 13 this year so they will be in place for the Luther League Home Tour. Thank you!

Olsburg Church Christmas Decorating Party

The Olsburg Outreach and Fellowship committee invite all members to help decorate the church on **Saturday, Dec. 13 at 6:00 p.m.** We will put up the decorations and tree. Pizza, pop and desserts will be served. It's sure to be a good time! Hope to see you there!

Olsburg Christmas Eve Candle Light Worship

**Wednesday, December 24th
11:00 PM**

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Paul reminds us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh – in Christ's body and blood – so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world. - Sundays and Seasons

Christmas Nursing Home Worship

Leading Worship: Sonja and Gordon Sandquist

Sunday, December 28, at 4:00 PM

Help needed: Piano Player

Continued on page 7, column 1

Walsburg Julotta Worship

(Julotta: A Swedish service that is held early on Christmas morning, as early as 4 AM. Julotta means "Christmas Morn." "otta" is the time which is slightly before dawn. – Wikipedia)

Thursday, December 25

6:00 AM

On this Christmas morning the people of God gather to celebrate the birth of the Word made flesh, Christ our Lord. Luke recounts the familiar story of the shepherds and angels; John's gospel tells of the Word that dwells among us, full of grace and truth. The meaning of Christmas is made clear: the light shines in the darkness. It is in the liturgy that we encounter the Word made flesh – in the people of God gathered together as the body of Christ, and in the meal around the holy table. We go forth to be bearers of light as we proclaim this good news to all the ends of the earth. – Sundays and Seasons

Other Happenings at Walsburg and Olsburg

Area 4 Rostered Leaders Gathering at Walsburg

Wednesday, December 10th at 9:30 AM
Hosted by the Sandquists

Graceways Bible Study

During the first three Monday nights of the month, at 7:00 PM, all are welcome to come and wrestle with Scripture. This is a time of looking at the intentions of the first reader and the first writer, looking at different connections and use of words, listening in prayer and discerning how to hear and engage with God's Word today. Each lesson stands alone so don't be afraid to drop in and join us for the evening.

Schedule:

***December 1st and 8th**

*(Due to our daughters' music concert, we will not be meeting on the 15th. Thanks for your understanding.)

Yearbooks

The annual yearbooks for both churches will be ready to pass out/pick up no later than Dec. 31, 2008. I hope to have them ready for you to pick up at the churches on Dec. 28, but to be safe and stay out of trouble, I'm saying the 31st.

Walsburg Parsonage Repairs

The new furnace has been installed at the parsonage at a cost of approximately \$2,900. Contributions are being accepted to help with this expense. Please indicate on your contribution if you wish for it to be used to help with this expense.

Walsburg 2008 Budget

\$71,640.00

2008 Anticipated Expenses (Including Furnace) \$71,500.00

Offerings to Date
\$49,850.94

Amount needed to meet anticipated expenses \$21,549.06

New scrubs at Olsburg Lutheran Church

A special thank you to Don and Ardie Holt for the gift of new scrubs. Thank you to Kirby who planted the scrubs on the south side of the church on Sunday, Nov. 30.



Peace, joy, hope, and love to all!

Life *together*

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