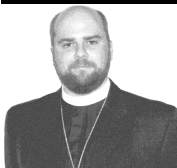


The Peace Post

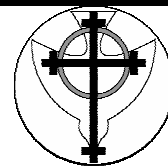
Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

December, 2009



From the Desk of Pastor Messer

"Come, Lord Jesus"



Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

"Come, Lord Jesus." That's the prayer the Christian Church has been praying now for nearly two thousand years. That's the prayer that brings Holy Scripture to a close: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (Rev. 22:20-21).

As Christians, this prayer should be always on our lips, for we know that the Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on the Last Day is our "blessed hope" and will bring us unspeakable peace and joy. On that Day, we will inherit the eternal Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world (cf. Matt. 25:34), where there will be no more pain and suffering, no more tears and mourning, no more sin, but only peace, joy, comfort, perfection, and unknowable bliss. All the struggles we endure in the wilderness of this sinful world will be decidedly absent in the world to come, the "new heavens and earth" our Lord will establish on the Last Day. We will live life as it was meant to be lived then, in full communion with our Triune God and with all His children, the saints of all time. Thus, we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus."

This prayer is especially on our lips as we begin a new Church Year with the season of Advent, during which we anticipate our Lord's Coming, both in the manger on Christmas and on the clouds in great glory on the Last Day. Advent is a season of prayer and reflection. It is a penitential season, much like the season of Lent—a time for Christians to examine themselves, recognize their sinfulness and their desperate need of a Savior. It is a season of anticipation and expectation—a time for Christians to meditate upon the Coming of the Savior they need, the One who came to earth in our Flesh to save us, the One who continues to come through Word and Sacrament to give us the salvation He won for us, and the One who will come on the Last Day to bring us into His eternal Kingdom.

Advent is not Christmas. That should go without saying, but we need to be reminded of this truth from time to time, especially since we live in a culture that has gone out of its way to secularize and commercialize Christmas. The world has turned the period between Thanksgiving Day (or, is it Halloween? - it seems to get earlier every year) and Christmas Day into an extended "Holiday Season," focused on its own agenda. The world has no use for the season of Advent. The world is not looking for the Coming of

Christ. The world could not care less what you believe. The world has no use for repentance and faith. The world is only interested in the bottom line. And, to get to the bottom line it desires, the world has hi-jacked Christmas and turned it into its own "season," replete with its own created symbols and such.

The Church is powerless to stop the world from doing what it wants. We will not be able to convince the world to replace its self-created "Holiday Season" with the penitential season of Advent. The world would simply laugh at such a suggestion—all the way to the bank!

But, what the Church can, and should, do is restrain herself from falling into the world's ways. The Church can, and should, retain the preparatory season of Advent, for it is good, right, and salutary for the Church to spend the weeks leading up to Christmas in prayerful meditation upon the Coming of her Lord. As the world busies itself with all the hustle and bustle of its "Holiday Season," let the Church busy herself with self-examination, prayer, anticipation, and expectation. The grand celebration of our Lord's Blessed Nativity will come soon enough. Let us be prepared to celebrate it faithfully when it does. Let us allow the season of Advent to have its way with us, that we may be led to pray with the faithful of all time:

Stir up, we implore you, your power, O Lord, and come, that by your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and be saved by your mighty deliverance; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



God grant you a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!
In Christ,

Pastor Messer

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

"Come, Lord Jesus".....	1	Council Minutes.....	8
"It Is Good to Wait"	2	Peace News & Notes	9-11
Advent Sermon Series.....	3	Mary at the Seminary	12
Installation of Officers.....	3	Ladies' Guild Info	13
Midnight Mass	3	Christian Education	14
Christmas Homilies	4-5	Birthdays & Anniversaries	14
The Parish at Prayer & Study...	6	Parochial Report	14
Advent Bible Study.....	6	December Calendar	15
Christmas Test.....	7	Serving in December	16

It Is Good to Wait!

An article on Advent by the LCMS Commission on Worship (October, 2001)

"It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord." (Lamentations 3:26)

Good to wait? It's hard to imagine any message more counter-cultural! In our time of e-mail, instant messages, fast food, and general impatience, the very notion that waiting can be good is unheard of. But here it comes: Advent is a season of waiting.

During Advent the church confesses the wisdom that Jeremiah spoke so long ago: "It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam. 3:26). The church's observance of Advent can serve as a quiet, peaceful oasis for people who are harried and hassled and trying to run in every direction at once. The church invites her children and the children of the world to come aside during these days for some spiritual R & R—for rest and reflection on the promises of God! Rather than fussing and fuming about the commercialization of Christmas, the church quietly offers an alternate way of approaching December 25th.

Here are some ways to let the quiet spirit of Advent permeate our homes and congregations as we prepare with great joy for the celebration of our Lord's birth.

- Use an Advent calendar for daily devotions at home. Little children (and the little child inside of adults, too) enjoy the discovery of the picture and Bible verse that hide behind the windows.
- As a family, learn by heart one of the Advent hymns of the church. "Savior of the Nations, Come" is a great one, and so is "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel." Both of these hymns express the quiet waiting and fervent longing for Christ's threefold coming: his great appearing at the end of time, his coming to us now in Word and Sacrament, and his coming in our human flesh at Bethlehem.
- Use the Advent wreath as the primary symbol for the season. At home, put it on the table in the dining room, and light it for all evening meals. (If you don't have one, they are very easy to make—and that's a great family project, too). At church, don't let the Advent wreath's growing light be overshadowed by the brighter lights of Christmas decorations. Even if the tree is up, hold off lighting it in church until Christmas Eve, and then, let it shine for the Twelve Days of Christmas and for Epiphany.
- For midweek services, instead of using specially designed Advent liturgies, let the congregation learn to savor the spirit of peace and quiet that pervades the Order of Vespers, Evening Prayer, or Compline.
- Try not giving into the temptation simply to replace the many hymns of Advent with the beloved hymns of Christmas. Use both and use them richly. At the very least, why not let the hymn of the day in the Divine Service for each Sunday in Advent be one of the great Advent hymns?
- If a nativity scene is used, don't set it out all at once; put it up progressively. During the first week of Advent, set out the stable alone. The second week, add the animals. The third week, place Mary and Joseph at some distance from the stable. The fourth week, have Mary and Joseph in the stable. On Christmas Eve add the Christ Child and the shepherds. On January sixth (Epiphany) add the wise men to the scene. You might even consider leaving your nativity scene up until February 2nd, the day when the church celebrates the Presentation of Our Lord and the Purification of Mary. Years ago in the Lutheran Church, Christmas hymns were sung in church until that day!
- Speaking of hymns, whenever the congregation has services during the Twelve Days of Christmas (for example, the Sunday after Christmas, New Years Eve, Epiphany), why not set aside 15—20 minutes prior to each service as a time to sing Christmas carols? Children in the congregation who play musical instruments could also be scheduled to play during this time.
- In all these and many other ways, we confess as a church that it is good to wait for the salvation of God, and that preparation is part and parcel of celebration. A blessed Advent to one and all!

Advent Sermon Series

My Soul Waits for the LORD

Dec. 2	First Wednesday in Advent	"Waiting for the LORD in Stillness"
Dec. 9	Second Wednesday in Advent	"Waiting for the LORD in Seriousness"
Dec. 16	Third Wednesday in Advent	"Waiting for the LORD in Sureness"

Installation of Newly Elected Officers

The following members were elected as new officers in our congregation at the Voters' Assembly on October 25, and will begin their terms on January 1, 2010:

President	Chris Brown (2nd term)
Financial Secretary	Gary Miller (2nd term)
Board of Elders	Miguel Ortiz
Board of Trustees	Daren Johnson
Bd. of Christian Ed.	Janice Sager, Andrea Elliott

Congratulations to all of you and thank you for volunteering to serve our congregation!

*Installation of New Officers will be held during Divine Service on **January 3**. Please be there to be installed into office if at all possible!*

Our other congregational officers who will be continuing terms in the new year include:

Vice President	Ken Hill
Secretary	Megan Brown
Treasurer	Carol Zeile
Board of Elders	Larry Elliott (chair), Terry Luplow, Dave Zeile
Board of Trustees	Vern Jakolat (chair), Jon Penzien, Art Tennant
Bd. of Christian Ed.	Sharyn Greening (chair), Marlene Miller

Our appointed officers include:

Youth Counselor	Jon Penzien—appointed
Bd. of Evangelism Chair	Carolyn Johnson—appointed
Bd. of Stewardship Chair	Vacant—if interested, see Chris Brown or Pr. Messer
Budget/Finance Comm.	Vacant—if interested, see Chris Brown or Pr. Messer

✠ Midnight Mass ✠

Midnight Mass will be celebrated at 11:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve this year at Peace. This is one of the most special Services held throughout the year. There is just something special and unique about being in the Lord's House to celebrate His Nativity and to receive the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood as the clock strikes Midnight. We hope that many of you will be able to share this special time with us this Christmas Eve!



A Christmas Homily from long ago . . .

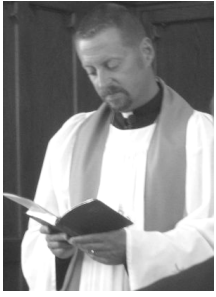
by St. Gregory of Nazianzus (A.D. 380)

Christ is born, glorify Him. Christ from heaven, go out to meet Him. Christ on earth, be exalted. Sing to the Lord all the whole earth; and that I may join both in one word, let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, for Him who is of heaven and then of earth. Christ in the flesh, rejoice with trembling and with joy; with trembling because of your sins, with joy because of your hope.

Again, the darkness is past; again Light is made; again Egypt is punished with darkness; again Israel is enlightened by a pillar. The people who sat in the darkness of ignorance, let them see the great Light full of knowledge. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new. The letter gives way, the Spirit comes to the front. The shadows flee away, the truth comes in on them. Melchizedek is concluded. He who was without Mother becomes without Father (without mother of His former state, without father of His second). The laws of nature are upset; the world above must be filled. Christ commands it, let us not set ourselves against Him. O clap your hands together all you people, because unto us a Child is born, and a Son given unto us, whose government is upon His shoulder (for with the cross it is raised up), and His name is called The Angel of the Great Counsel of the Father. Let John cry, prepare the way of the Lord; I too will cry the power of this Day. He who is not carnal is Incarnate; the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Let the Jews be offended, let the Greeks deride; let heretics talk until their tongues ache. Then shall they believe, when they see Him ascending into heaven; and if not then, yet when they see Him coming out of heaven and sitting as Judge.

This is our present Festival; it is this which we are celebrating today, the Coming of God to Man, that we might go forth, or rather (for this is the more proper expression) that we might go back to God—that putting off of the old man, we might put on the new; and that as we died in Adam, so we might live in Christ, being born with Christ and crucified with Him and buried with Him and rising with Him. For I must undergo the beautiful conversion, and as the painful succeeded the more blissful, so must the more blissful come out of the painful. For where sin abounded grace did much more abound; and if a taste condemned us, how much more does the passion of Christ justify us? Therefore let us keep the Feast, not after the manner of a heathen festival, but after a godly sort; not after the way of the world, but in a fashion above the world; not as our own, but as belonging to Him who is ours, or rather as our master's; not as of weakness, but as of healing; not as of creation, but of re-creation.





A Homily at Midnight Mass

Rev. William Weedon

St. Paul Lutheran—Hamel, IL

[Isaiah 9:2-7 / Titus 2:11-14 / Luke 2:1-14]

Running through all three readings on this holy night is the same theme: a Light shines in the darkness. And in each case, it is ultimately the same Light that shines: the Light that was with the Father before time began, the Light that is the everlasting joy of the holy angels, the Light that in the fullness of time became incarnate in the womb of the pure Virgin, the Light she gave birth to on this holy night. With St. John we confess that this is a Light that no darkness can overcome or ever snuff out. Behold, the Light that God shines upon us this holy night!

For darkness there is aplenty - outside and in. Isaiah spoke of the darkness as being deep and he indicated that the darkness was oppressive, burdening, and enslaving. What is this darkness the prophet speaks of except the darkness of sin, evil, death? All that weighs down the human family and causes us to weep. But look: into the darkness where we sat, chained in shackles of sin, shackles that we ourselves forged and willingly put on and now sit betrayed as slaves to our appetites and wayward desires, waiting helplessly for death to come devour us, into that darkness Light dawns.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given!” A human child and a divine Son and one and the same! This is shown by His name: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father of the Age to Come, Prince of Peace. And the promise that goes with this Child is that His kingdom will have no end, but grow and grow until time in endless time be lost.

But you might wonder: how can a child set me free from my darkness? How can a child break the chains forged by my long habits of sin? How can a child drive the pain of grief and sorrow from my heart? Is it possible?

Yes, people loved by God, it is possible. This Child can do it! For in Him the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people! He comes to train us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions—to see them for the cheats they are and to turn our backs on them—so that by His Spirit’s power we come to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age that is coming to an end, all the while waiting for the blessed hope, the appearing of that Child, grown to manhood, our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He gave Himself into our flesh to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His very own, His people, then, who are zealous for good works.

If you have tried to walk this way before and failed miserably, know that the Child comes to you anew this night, to give you the gift of a new beginning. A new start. He didn’t come so that you could stay stuck in the old life, the old way; what good would that be? He came to give you salvation—deliverance from that old bondage and to bring you into His new life. For the mess that your life has been, He comes to give you love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

gentleness, faith, and chastity.

And that is why the angels are so excited tonight. That is why their song rings out over the hills and startles the Shepherds. They can scarcely contain their joy at what this Child has come to do. He has come to bring this fallen race of man back to the home they share with the Blessed Trinity forever. He has come to be the Savior.

Savior, for what we need isn’t help. What we need is salvation. We don’t need someone to help us cope with the darkness, to learn how to manage it. God forbid! We need someone to shatter the darkness with the light of His own presence and love. And that is what the Child has come to do. This is the good news of great joy! God didn’t drop down to us a self-help kit from heaven. He sent His Son into our flesh, to assume that flesh into the unity of the Godhead. He sent His Son into our flesh that that flesh might be cleansed, healed, restored, and raised up. He sent His Son into our flesh that in that flesh He might bear all sin to death and leave it behind in the grave. He sent His Son into our own flesh that He might raise that flesh from death in total incorruption and bring it glorified to the Father’s right hand, ruling triumphantly over all. In the flesh that the Child appears in tonight, a whole new race has begun! There is a world in the Child bigger than all the universe outside Him!

This is why the Angels sing on this holy night: the lost race of man that had wandered in the darkness NOW has a way back home. The Light in which the angels ever rejoice shines in the darkness of a world gone wrong so that being joined to Him, to His light, the children of men might become the very children of God in Him. Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth among those with whom He is pleased! The Child opens the way back to paradise and raises us higher than ever we fell!

As you come and kneel before Him, the Child of Bethlehem, the Man of the Cross, your Risen and reigning Lord, comes to you as silently and wondrously as He came to our race that first Christmas night. Under the mystery of bread and wine, He reaches to you the very flesh and blood that He assumed from His holy mother and in which He wrought salvation. He says to you: “I am YOUR light. I will drive away the darkness! I will break the chains of sin! I will make you a people prepared for the joyous Age that already is full in me and will be full in you. Learn to live in Me, child, and let Me live in you! And then in you will be the light that no darkness can overcome.

Not the darkness of sin—for I am sin’s Forgiveness; Not the darkness of death—for I am death’s Defeat. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it!”

To such an invitation we can but join with the Shepherds and Angels, as we fall down before the Holy Child and worship Him and permit Him to pour into us Himself as living Light, the Light that was before time began and the Light that will be when time is no more – our Jesus, our Emmanuel, our Lord, our God, and our Savior – to whom be glory with His unoriginate Father and all-holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The Parish at Prayer and Study

As we begin the new Church Year, you will notice a new insert placed inside the bulletin each week, titled, “The Parish at Prayer and Study” (we’ll begin posting it on our congregation’s website, too, in the near future). This insert will include a summary of the theme for that particular Sunday, based on the readings from God’s Word assigned to that day. It will also include several other features meant to assist our congregation to be in prayer and “in the Word” together throughout the week, until we gather again the following Sunday to receive the Lord’s Gifts in the Divine Service. What follows is a brief explanation of the various features to be included:

- **Two-year Scripture Reading Plan**—This reading plan is from *The Lutheran Study Bible* and will take us through a chronological reading of Holy Scripture in two years. Because this is a two-year plan, the daily readings from Scripture are short and very manageable. I hope many of you will join me in following this plan. I am planning on using my blog to post thoughts on the readings daily and to facilitate discussion for any who wish to chime in, so stop on by and participate if you wish (www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com).
- **Daily Themes for Prayer**—For each day of the week, there will be suggested themes to assist us in focusing our prayers, that we might be faithful in praying not only for ourselves, but also for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people, according to their needs.
- **Collect and Hymn of the Week**—The Collect and Hymn of the Day for Sunday will be included, that we might add them to our daily devotions.
- **Psalms Schedule**—A chart that will enable us to pray the Psalms daily in a seasonal manner. The Psalms for each day have been chosen to be in harmony with the season of the Church Year in which we find ourselves.
- **Catechesis for the Week**—Each week, we’ll focus upon one of the teachings we find in Luther’s Small Catechism, that we might continue to be taught all that our Lord commands us. Included in this section will be a Bible Story to focus upon, excerpts from Luther’s Large Catechism, questions for self-examination, prayer after self-examination, and selected Bible verses for meditation. We’ll work our way through the Small Catechism and then start all over again when we reach the end.
- **Book of Concord One-year Reading Plan**—Also included will be a reading plan that will allow those who wish to make their way through the Book of Concord, which contain our Lutheran Confessions, in one year. If you do not have a hard copy of the Book of Concord, please see me and I will be happy to assist you in getting one. Or, you can access the Book of Concord online at www.bookofconcord.org (a very helpful and informative site).
- **Looking Forward**—Finally, the readings for the next Sunday, along with a summary of the theme for that day, and the Collect and Hymn of the Day, will be included, that we might prepare ourselves in advance for the next Lord’s Day.

I pray that we will use this new resource in the manner in which it is intended, namely to assist all of us in moving toward a richer and more dedicated devotional life between Sundays. It is not meant to replace other devotional resources you may be using, such as *Treasury of Daily Prayer*, the *Higher Things Devotions*, *Portals of Prayer*, or whatever else, but to be a supplement and a guide for furthering your devotional life. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask.

In Christ,
Pastor Messer

Advent Bible Study

Hidden Characters of Christmas

During the three Wednesdays in Advent, we will take time to study a few of the characters in the Christmas story who do not often receive the attention they deserve:

December 2	5:00 p.m.	Joseph
December 9	5:00 p.m.	Zechariah and Elizabeth
December 16	5:00 p.m.	King Herod

TEST YOUR CHRISTMAS KNOWLEDGE

1. *Which Gospel(s) speak of the events surrounding Christ's birth?*
a) Mark and John, b) Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, c) Luke only, d) Matthew and Luke
2. *What was the name of the King of Judea at the time of Christ's birth?*
a) Caesar Augustus, b) Quirinius, c) Herod, d) Nero
3. *How many magi (wise men) visited Christ after His birth, according to the Bible?*
a) An undisclosed number, b) One, c) Three, d) Five
4. *Where is Christ when the magi (wise men) come to visit Him?*
a) In a house, b) In the temple, c) In the manger, d) In the womb
5. *After the magi inquire of Herod where the Christ is to be born, he summons his priests and scribes, who know the location of the birth because of the prophecy of this prophet.*
a) Jonah, b) Micah, c) Amos, d) Joel
6. *What does "Immanuel" mean?*
a) Jesus saves, b) God is born, c) God in flesh, d) God with us
7. *Herod's slaughter of the children two years old and under fulfills a prophecy uttered by what prophet?*
a) Micah, b) Joel, c) Jonah, d) Jeremiah
8. *What was the name of the father of John the Baptist?*
a) Zechariah, b) Joseph, c) Benjamin, d) John
9. *How much younger was Jesus than his cousin John the Baptist?*
a) One year, b) Twelve days, c) Six months, d) Two years
10. *What was the name of the angel who announced to Mary that she would conceive Jesus?*
a) Gabriel, b) Michael, c) Raphael, d) Cherubim
11. *Who speaks words to the pregnant Mary that have become part of the Church's traditional "Hail Mary"?*
a) Simeon, b) Elizabeth, c) Anna, d) Zechariah
12. *What does the name "Jesus" mean?*
a) The Lord saves, b) God with us, c) God is born, d) God in flesh
13. *In which Gospel do we find "The Magnificat"?*
a) Matthew, b) Mark, c) Luke, d) John
14. *Who speaks the words that have become a part of our liturgy known as the Nunc Dimittis?*
a) Zechariah, b) Simeon, c) Mary, d) Elizabeth
15. *Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem, according to the Gospel of Luke?*
a) His adoptive father, Joseph, went home for a census, b) That's where both Mary and Joseph lived,
c) His mother went to visit Elizabeth, d) Bethlehem had the best hospitals
16. *When Jesus was born, we are told that He was laid in a manger. What is a manger?*
a) A barn, b) A cave, c) A type of Inn, d) A feeding trough
17. *The Bible tells us that Christ was born in December.*
a) True, b) False
18. *How do the shepherds learn of Christ's birth?*
a) There are no shepherds in the Biblical account, b) They see a new star in the sky, c) An angel appears to them, d) The magi tell them
19. *When was Jesus circumcised?*
a) At birth, b) He wasn't, c) At 13 years old, d) at 8 days old
20. *Who prophesied to Mary that Christ was "destined for the fall and rising of many" and that "a sword would pierce her own soul also"?*
a) Anna, b) Simeon, c) Elizabeth, d) Gabriel

Answers to these questions are given on page 14

Synopsis of November 10, 2009 Church Council Minutes

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:08pm. Pastor Messer led the opening prayer. The following members were present: Chris Brown, Carol Zeile, Sharyn Greening, Vern Jakolat, Larry Elliott, Carolyn Johnson, Gary Miller and Megan Brown. Pastor Messer was also present.

Prior to any business, Daren Johnson presented information regarding snow plowing for the upcoming winter. He offered his truck and plow for clearing the lot during the week and on most weekends. The Council thanked him for his offer and will be considering it during the Board of Trustees report.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was amended to add the following items: Advertising, 2010 Budget and Church Beautification. Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Secretary Brown to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Treasurer Zeile, supported by President Brown to approve the minutes from the October 6 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor** – Pastor Messer presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record. Pastor Messer also requested that Pastor Bakker be paid \$200 for serving on November 15 while Pastor Messer is away. Motion made by Councilmember Elliott, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to pay a stipend of \$200 to Pastor Bakker for serving on November 15. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
- **Financial Secretary** – Financial Secretary informed the Council that the third quarter financial statements have been distributed.

Boards

- **Board of Elders** – Councilmember Elliott informed the Council that the Board of Elders has been contacting inactive members by phone and letters, as appropriate. The Elders have also been continuing their visits to shut-ins.
- **Board of Trustees** – Councilmember Jakolat informed the Council of various projects including the kitchen phone and insurance report. Councilmember Jakolat also informed the Council of a proposal from Gratiot Medical Center to use our parking lot as secondary parking for the winter. The hospital will cover snow removal with no cost to the church. Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember Greening to allow Gratiot Medical Center to use our lot for secondary parking in exchange for snow removal at no cost. Motion carried unanimously. Councilmember Jakolat also informed the Council of a request to use the fellowship hall by the U.S. Census Bureau for training sessions. After discussion, motion made by Councilmember Johnson, supported by President Brown to decline the request. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Board of Christian Education** – Councilmember Greening informed the Council that the Board was meeting to finalize the Christmas Program, which will take place on December 23. Also, the Sunday School classes are continuing their study in the liturgy.
- **Board of Evangelism** – Councilmember Johnson reported that meetings are going very well and have been well-attended.
- **Board of Stewardship** – No report.

Organization and Committee Reports

- **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – No report.
- **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

Business

- **Request for Use of Fellowship Hall** – A request to use the fellowship hall was received from Jilian Stahl for Sunday, January 17 from 1pm – 6pm. Motion made by Councilmember Johnson, supported by Councilmember Elliott to grant the request. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Advertising** – The Council discussed advertising on restaurant placemats. There is a cost of \$169 for a space. Motion made by Councilmember Johnson, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to use the remaining advertising funds in the budget (\$68.69) and request that the Board of Evangelism (SALT) cover the remaining balance. Motion carried unanimously.
- **2010 Budget** – The Council discussed the attached proposed budget for 2010. No action was taken.
- **Church Beautification** – Larry and Andrea Elliott have been working on ways to improve the appearance of the church outside. They have been working with a master gardener to develop a low-maintenance landscape plan.

General Comment

No comments.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

The meeting adjourned at 9:42pm. Pastor Messer closed with the Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Brown, Secretary

(Note: Complete minutes with all attachments are available in the church office for review.)

PEACE NEWS & NOTES

PYG NEWS

December Events

BAZAAR

Saturday, December 5 - 9am-4pm

Fellowship Hall

MONTHLY MEETING

Sunday, December 13 - 5pm-7pm

Fellowship Hall

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Sundays during Fellowship
Youth Room

Greetings in Christ,

It is Bazaar time again. The Youth will be having a table once more this year with our standard fair and the big hit from last year of fudge. Thanks to the Ladies' Guild for their continued support of the youth at Peace.

Our monthly Bible study is continuing to grow as we had three guests this month and a total of six youth.

Thank you again to everyone who has assisted and supported us throughout this year. We have been richly blessed by the Lord's presence with us.

Keep those cans, labels and cell phones coming. Thank you.

POINSETTIAS - Please watch for future announcements in the bulletin or for a posting on the Youth bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

May the Spirit of the Lord be
with you,
Jonathan Penzien



ADVENT WEDNESDAY

EVENING DINNERS

December 2, 9, 16 @ 6 pm

Dec. 2 & 16—Potluck

**Dec. 9—Soup/Salad Dinner pro-
vided by SALT**



ADVENT TEA

The Advent Tea will take place on **Saturday, December 12 from 4-6 pm.** Alternate date, if we have bad weather, will be Tuesday, December 15 from 7-9 pm.

This is a wonderful opportunity for women to get together and focus their hearts on Christ as the Advent season prepares us for the celebration of Christmas!

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN TO SERVE AT THE TEA

The Advent Tea Committee needs men to help during the Tea. Please join us on **December 6** immediately after the Divine Service during fellowship for a brief discussion.

Questions? Please contact Lisa Messer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL INFO

Children's Christmas Program

- Rehearsal continues on Dec 6, 13 and 20. Lunch is provided immediately after Sunday School. Rehearsal will conclude at approximately 1:30.
- The Christmas Program will be held on **Wednesday, Dec 23 at 7:00 p.m.** Please plan on attending. Our Sunday School children will be working hard to prepare for the program, so please support them by being there as they share the Christmas story with us in a way that only they can. Plus, there will definitely be parts of this that you simply won't want to miss! So, come and support the children of your congregation. Thank you.

Christmas Break

- There will be no Sunday School on Dec. 27. The teachers are taking a Christmas vacation (along with the kids).

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

S.A.L.T. NEWS

Sharing with All the Love and Truth of Jesus Christ!

The next S.A.L.T. meeting will be held on December 3 at 6:30 pm. We would love to have you join us as we seek to put some of our plans into action.

**SUPPORT OUR TROOPS
CHRISTMAS CAROLING
ADOPT-A-FAMILY
SUPER BOWL PARTY
and MORE**

~~~~~  
**ADVENT DINNER  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9**

**MENU**  
**HOMEMADE SOUPS**  
Chicken Noodle  
Broccoli and Cheese  
Chili  
**SALAD**  
**HOMEMADE BREADS**  
Crackers  
**BEVERAGES AND DESSERT**

*Freewill offering gathered to support SALT*

~~~~~  
**S.A.L.T. SINGS!
PLEASE JOIN US!**

MEET AT CHURCH ON MONDAY,
DECEMBER 21 AT 3 PM FOR
CAROLING AT OUR LOCAL
SHUT-INS AT THEIR PLACE
OF RESIDENCE BEFORE
DINNER AND OUT-OF-
TOWN SHUT-INS AFTER
DINNER.



CHURCH DECORATION



At our November meeting, the Ladies' Guild members discussed preparation of the nave and sanctuary for the upcoming Advent and Christmas seasons. As a guide for these discussions we consulted *The Altar Guild Manual* by Lee A. Maxwell, Lutheran Service Book edition. This manual, published by Concordia Publishing House, is authorized by the Commission on Worship of the LCMS.

One section of the *Altar Guild Manual* is devoted to the seasons of the church year. The primary theme for the Advent Season is penitential, much like the season of Lent. In addition, during Advent, there also is an emphasis on the anticipation of the birth of our Savior.

The traditional liturgical color (for altar paraments and vestments) for Advent is violet, the same as is used for Lent. Violet symbolizes the penitential nature of the season. In recent years the color blue has been adopted by many congregations to signify the spirit of anticipation and hope of the Season. Here at Peace, we have used blue for just the last five years. Before that, violet was always our liturgical color during Advent.

After discussion about a variety of issues related to decoration of the worship spaces for Advent, the Guild members agreed to implement the following in order to emphasize the penitential nature of the Season. We will return to the use of violet for the altar paraments and vestments. In addition, we will make our decorating more simple by removing the candelabra from the chancel, using seasonal greenery with minimal flowers instead of fancy floral arrangements and minimizing decorations in the nave. We will put up the Christmas tree, but it will remain unlit. The simple decorations will be augmented by more elaborate ones for the Christmas Season, thus making a distinction between penitential/anticipatory Advent and joyous Christmas. It is the sincere desire of the Ladies' Guild members to enhance the season of Advent and improve our preparation for the most joyous occasion of the birth of our Lord and Savior.

Ladies Lunch Bunch

We will meet at Kristopher's for lunch at 1:30 pm on Monday, December 14. Average price is \$7, flat bread sandwiches, chicken baskets, hamburgs, reubens, etc.

All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest—someone without a church or someone living alone. Please enter your name on the signup list posted in Fellowship Hall and join us!

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

HUGE THANKS to all who assisted in cutting down the trees in front of our building, removing the wood, and cleaning up. What a difference this has made! You can see our Church now. Hey, look, there's a cross up there!



TABLE TALK

Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. Plus, THEY'RE FUN! Our next Table Talk will take place on **Thursday, December 10 at 7 pm** at the Church. We hope you'll be able to join us!

BLESSINGS ABOUND!

New Paraments and Vestments—Through the Memorial Fund and the generosity of some of our members, we have been blessed with the ability to purchase new paraments and vestments, and will now have them in all of the liturgical colors. The Ladies' Guild has also agreed to fund the purchasing of some new banners to hang in the chancel area. We are so thankful for these wonderful blessings and pray that they will be helpful aids in our worship.

New Projector and DVD Player—A very generous donation from an anonymous donor has enabled us to purchase a new video projector and DVD player for our congregation. Please pray a word of thanks for these blessings, which will allow us to, once again, host Movie Nights at the Church, and to use power point and video at times during Adult Bible Study or special presentations.

PEACE MOVIE NIGHT

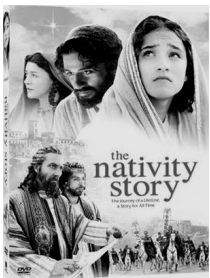
"The Nativity Story"

Friday, December 18

6:30 pm—Pizza and beverages

7:00 pm—Showtime

Pizza and beverages provided by SALT
Freewill offering collected



We'll have a devotion before the movie and a discussion after. Bring comfy chair and snacks if you wish. Hope you'll join us!



Issues, Etc.™
Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

Please consider supporting this Christ-centered, Cross-focused Worldwide Outreach. You can send a donation at any time by making a check payable to:

Lutheran Public Radio
P.O. Box 912
Collinsville, IL 62234

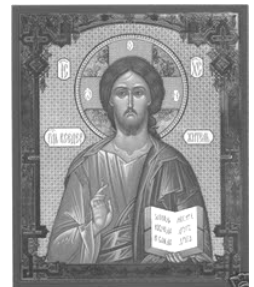
You can also donate online via PayPal by going to www.issuesetc.org and clicking on "Donate." There are also forms available in the church office for any interested in donating monthly via automatic withdrawal.

DID YOU KNOW that the hospital does not notify us when one of our members has been hospitalized? Please call the church office at 463-5754 or Pastor Messer at 989-388-2037 (cell) when a member of Peace has been admitted to the hospital.

PASTOR MESSER IS BLOGGING!

www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

*Check in from time to time
to see what's on his mind.*



Abide In My Word!

MARY AT THE SEMINARY



I would like to share some of the things I learned while attending the “Bach in Today’s Parish: Still the Evangelist” conference at Fort Wayne Theological Seminary on November 1-3. Following are some anecdotes of the speakers as I viewed them.

In Southern France there were several beautiful Gothic churches that were empty and no longer had worship services in them. A gentleman who loved Bach music decided to schedule some Bach concerts in the churches and invite people to attend. They became so popular that the churches began to be filled with people. The influence of Bach’s music encouraged the re-establishment of worship services in the churches, and they grew, once again alive with worship services.

Bach’s music was described as preaching without words. A Japanese scholar in Japan heard some of Bach’s music and became interested in learning more about the music. The more he learned about Bach, the more he became interested in the Christian religion. Ultimately, he became a Christian. All because of the influence Bach demonstrated in his music.

Bach was described as being used by the Holy Spirit, that he was comparable to Luther, but in the music world. In writing one of the cantatas, the music written in 3 sharps would depict the Trinity. When Christ died, the music was written in 2 sharps depicting the loss of one of the three of the Trinity. Different sounds, such as very low bass notes may portray God, with high running notes depicting the sorrow or joy of man.

In Luther’s day, when they were working on updating their hymnal with new hymns, they experienced the same problems our Synod

experienced in forming the Lutheran Service Book hymnal. Bach wrote music for Luther. Pietists at that time were opposing any changes, so Bach wrote interludes to be inserted between stanzas. One of our speakers said that our new LSB hymnal is the best hymnal to be published in the last 100 years, incorporating the old and new Christological hymns, hymns that preach the Word.

Kantor Hildebrand gave us many suggestions on how we might incorporate Bach into our music at Peace. We will be trying some of them that fit our small congregation, both in organ and in choir.

I was not aware of the vast influence Bach has blessed us with his music. I only know that I love his music and find it very inspirational. Now I am interested in learning more about how he “preaches in music.”

Experiencing being on campus of the seminary is indescribable. Upon entering the drive to the campus, it is like leaving the world behind and entering a little touch of heaven. The music was at its best beginning with a Bach organ recital on Sunday afternoon, Vespers featuring the Seminary Schola Cantorum choir; Choral Evening prayer with the children’s choir of Our Savior Lutheran Church of Grand Rapids on Monday afternoon; a hymn festival in the evening with the support of the Seminary Kantorei, with strings, brass and kettle drums; and the Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir at Tuesday Morning’s Matin Service with all of the instruments and organ doing a magnificent arrangement of the closing hymn, “We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God” our beloved LSB941.

My sincere thanks to the congregation for supporting my attendance at this excellent conference.

In Christ,
Mary Jakolat

Ladies' Guild

Ladies' Guild Meeting

Our next meeting will be **Monday, December 7 at 7pm.** Hostesses will be Charlotte Dargie and Marlene Miller. All Ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our Guild meetings. If you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you are a member of Guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the Guild.

Altar Flowers

There is a Flower Calendar for 2009 posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime during the year, please fill your name in on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. A bouquet costs \$25 and usually lasts about one (1) month. **We would like to encourage 2 persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand.** If paying the church for the flowers, checks should be made payable to Peace Lutheran, Church with a separate sizeable note marked "Flower Fund," attached and placed in the Financial Secretary's envelope in the church office. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel.



PLC Women's Prayer Chain

The updated list is posted on the Ladies' Guild Bulletin Board. All participants should have received a copy. If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, or if you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," please see or call Marlene Miller at 463-3710.



ANNUAL COOKIE WALK AND CRAFT SHOW SATURDAY DECEMBER 5, 2009 9 AM—4 PM

The Ladies' Guild is asking all the ladies of Peace who are baking cookies for the Cookie Walk to please have them at the church by Friday evening, December 4, if at all possible.

Setup will be on Wednesday evening, December 2 after the Advent Service.

Also, if you are willing to help during the bazaar, please contact Coaline Luplow (763-1016). We appreciate all the help that is offered!

Thanks so much for your help!



Altar Care

December

Carol Zeile

January

Marlene Miller, Charlotte Dargie

February

Sally Pease

Coffee Hostesses

December

6 Coaline Luplow
13 Jo Wendt
20 Cassie Tennant
27 Coaline Luplow

January

3 Carol Zeile
10 Tina Schafer
17 Peace Youth Group
24 M. Miller/C. Dargie
31 Janice Sager

February

7 Jennie Harmon
14 Y. Elenbaas/M. Girard
21 S. Greening/M. Brown
28 Carolyn Johnson



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Youth Confirmation Classes

- First Year Confirmands meet for instruction on at 10 am, followed by Second Year Confirmands at 11 am.

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School and Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11 am** for all children, adult members of Peace, and guests. We are currently using **"A New Song Unto the Lord"**.

Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study meets on **Thursday mornings at 10 am.** All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome as well. We are currently studying the book of **Romans**.

"Christian History 101"

- Weekly classes are held on **Wednesdays at 6 pm.** The class is studying the history of the Christian Church from the time of the apostles to today. Few Christians today really know and understand the history of the Christian Church, so this is a study that will benefit all who attend.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

DECEMBER

Happy Birthday to:

5 Phyllis Hill	18 Kelsey Gensler
6 Linda Oswald	19 James Sager
14 Cassie Tennant	20 Sarah Messer
17 Thomas Pease	30 Amber Brown
	30 Richard Wiser

Happy Anniversary to:

5 LeRoy and Maxine Isaksson
17 William and Jennie Harmon

If we ever miss your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so that we can update our records.



Answers to "Test Your Christmas Knowledge" from page 7:

1. d 2. c 3. a 4. a 5. b 6. d 7. d 8. a 9. c 10. a 11. b
12. a 13. c 14. b 15. a 16. d 17. b 18. c 19. d 20. b

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 11/22/09)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 141; Confirmed - 121

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report







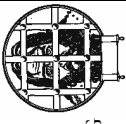










YTD Budgeted.....	\$ 105,045.00
YTD Receipts.....	\$ 92,373.48
Difference.....	\$ -12,671.52

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
(989) 463-3093—Home
(989) 388-2037—Cell
pastor@peacealma.org
pastormesser@gmail.com
www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Drive
Alma, MI 48801
(989) 463-5754
contact@peacealma.org
www.peacealma.org

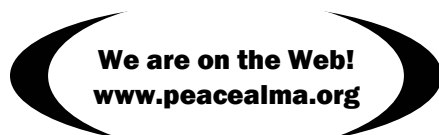
December 2009

REVISED

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 Ad Te Levavi (Advent 1)  9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—SS Practice	30 12 pm—Divine Service <i>Feast of St. Andrew</i> 	1 <i>Pastor Messer @ Winked</i> 7 pm—Church Council	2 5 pm—Advent Bible Study 6 pm—Potluck Dinner 7 pm—Evening Prayer	3  10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 6:30 pm—SALT	4	5  9 am—4 pm Ladies Guild Cookie Walk & Crafts 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.
6 Populus Zion (Advent 2) 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—SS Practice	7  7 pm—Ladies Guild	8	9 5 pm—Advent Bible Study 6 pm—Soup/Salad Dinner 7 pm—Evening Prayer	10  10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—Table Talk	11	12 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf. 4 pm—Advent Tea
13 Gaudete (Advent 3) 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 5:00 12:00—SS Practice PYG	14  1:30 pm—Lunch Bunch	15	16 5 pm—Advent Bible Study 6 pm—Potluck Dinner 7 pm—Evening Prayer	17  10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	18 6pm—Movie Night “The Nativity Story” 	19 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.
20 Rorate Coeli (Advent 4) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—SS Practice	21 12 pm—Divine Service <i>Feast of St. Thomas</i>  3:30 pm—Caroling	22	23 5 pm—Advent Bible Study 6 pm—Potluck Dinner 7 pm—Children’s Program	24  7 pm—Service of Lessons & Carols 11:30 pm Midnight Mass	25 The Nativity of Our Lord  <i>Merry Christmas!</i>	26 <i>No Confirmation Classes</i>
27 1st Sunday after Christmas 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC (No SS)	28 12 pm—Divine Service <i>Feast of Holy Innocents</i> 	29 12 pm—Divine Service <i>Feast of St. Stephen</i> 	30 6 pm—“Christian History” 7 pm—Divine Service <i>Feast of St. John</i>	31 10 am—Together in Word 12 pm—Divine Service <i>Circumcision/Name of Jesus</i> 	January 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR	2 <i>No Confirmation Classes</i>
3 2nd Sunday after Christmas 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS	4 	5	6 6 pm—“Christian History” 7 pm—Divine Service <i>The Epiphany of Our Lord</i> 	7 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	8	9 10 am—1st Yr. Conf. 11 am—2nd Yr. Conf.

Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801

Church: 989-463-5754
E-mail: contact@peacealma.org
Mary's Home: 989-463-3067
Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037



The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.

Serving in December

December	ELDER	ACOLYTES	USHERS	GREETERS
2 - 7:00 pm (Advent 1 Midweek)			Vern Jakolat	
6 - 9:30 am (Advent 2)	Miguel Ortiz	Tyrel Harwager Morgan Johnson	Bill Hendrick Daren Johnson	Bob and Jo Wendt
9 - 7:00 pm (Advent 2 Midweek)			Vern Jakolat	
13 - 9:30 am (Advent 3)	Larry Elliott	Natalie Penzien Phillip Schafer	Gary Miller Jim Sager	Lois Ramsey
16 - 7:00 pm (Advent 3 Midweek)			Vern Jakolat	
20 - 9:30 am (Advent 4)	Terry Luplow	Aaron Messer Sarah Messer	Chris Brown Jon Penzien	Charlotte Dargie
23 - 7:00 pm (Children's Christmas Program)			Vern Jakolat	
24 - 7:00 pm (Service of Lessons and Carols)	Terry Luplow		Vern Jakolat	
24 - 11:30 pm (Midnight Mass)	Dave Zeile		Vern Jakolat	
27 - 9:30 am (Christmas 1)	Dave Zeile	Sierra Luplow Melanie Penzien	Daren Johnson Bill Hendrick	Jim and Janice Sager
January				
3 - 9:30 am (Christmas 2)	Miguel Ortiz	Morgan Johnson Samantha Messer	Gary Miller Jim Sager	Jon Penzien and Family

"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men" (Eph. 6:7)