

**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**

***"The Twelve Days of
Christmas" Is Really
a CHRISTIAN
Christmas Song?
You Must Be Kidding!***

During the 16th century England was at war with various Roman Catholic nations, and thus severe restrictions were placed on the practice of Roman Catholicism in England. The Roman Catholic faithful there devised ingenious ways to preserve their religion and pass it on to their children.

One such strategy was "catechism riddle songs," seemingly aimless ditties that actually contained a hidden message, reminding Roman Catholics of the tenets of their forbidden religion. To outsiders these songs seemed innocuous, if not meaningless. But for those who knew the code, they were a powerful mnemonic device, especially for children.

One such code song is "The Twelve Days of Christmas," which can be interpreted this way:

***"On the first day of Christmas
my true love gave to me . . ."***

"True love," of course, represents God.

" . . . a partridge in a pear tree"

Anti-Catholic sentiment led to a taboo against anything considered too "popeish," including the traditional

crucifix with Christ on the cross. This became the leading symbol of Roman Catholic resistance, and thus the song begins with "a partridge in a pear tree," a cryptic reference to Christ on the cross.

" . . . two turtle doves"

Old and New Testaments, which form an inseparable pair, like two turtle doves.

" . . . three French hens"

Three Persons of the Trinity. France was considered a bulwark of the Roman Catholic faith, and priests who surreptitiously served in England were often trained in France.



" . . . four calling birds"

Four Gospels, through which we are called to faith.

" . . . five gold rings"

Five obligatory sacraments in Roman Catholic theology, Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Penance

and Last Rites, Matrimony and Ordination being optional. (Lutheranism recognizes only Baptism and Communion as Sacraments per se.) They are described as "gold rings" and the music sets off this verse to highlight the importance of the Sacraments.

" . . . six geese a-laying"

Represents the six days of work, and thus stresses that one day is reserved for worship, as Exodus 20:9-10 says, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."

" . . . seven swans a-swimming"

The gracefulness of swimming swans brings to mind the seven gifts of the Spirit (Isaiah 11:2).

" . . . eight maids a-milking"

During their oppression Roman Catholics in England were required to receive Holy Communion eight times a year. The Church is like our spiritual mother, nursing her children with the milk of Word and Sacrament (Isaiah 66:11).

" . . . nine ladies dancing"

The gracefulness of ladies dancing brings to mind the nine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

" . . . ten lords a-leaping"

Ten Commandments.

" . . . eleven pipers piping"

Eleven remaining Apostles after Christ's ascension, who blazoned the Gospel to the world like noisy bagpipers and refused to be silenced.



November 14 was a very special Sunday as we welcomed 16 new members into our congregation with a special recognition during the service with a potluck dinner following. If you have an interest in learning more about and possibly joining Holy Cross, you are invited contact Pastor Vogts (232-9117 or 232-4013).

**“ . . . twelve drummers
drumming”**

Apostles Creed, in Roman Catholic tradition divided into 12 articles, which together “drum” the faith into us.

Did you ever dream “The Twelve Days of Christmas” has such a deep Christian significance? That reminds us how easy it is to overlook the true meaning even of the Christmas event itself, the birth of God’s Son in the flesh for our salvation.

This Christmas, look deeper and consider carefully the real “reason for the season.” Really listen to the words of the Christmas songs that you hear and sing again and again. Really meditate on what the Christmas story that you see portrayed and hear and read means for you, personally.

Crossnotes

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Volume 2

Number 12

And, of course, the place to experience the true significance of Christmas is in worship and study at your church home!

Pastor Kevin Vogts

[Based on Hugh D. McKeller, “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” The Hymn: Journal of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, Vol. 45, No. 4, Oct. 1994, pp. 30-32]

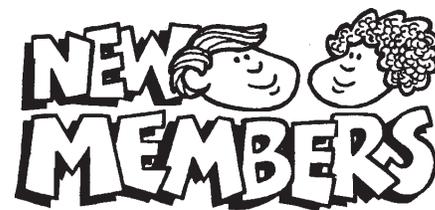


Guest Preacher December 5

Our guest preacher on December 5 will be Rev. Paul Mueller, a retired pastor who formerly served at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux City.

There will not be Adult Bible Class that Sunday so that the Sunday School can rehearse their Christmas Program.

Pastor Vogts will be on a mission trip in Africa from November 29 – December 8. Our thanks to Pastor Mueller for helping out in Pastor Vogts’ absence.

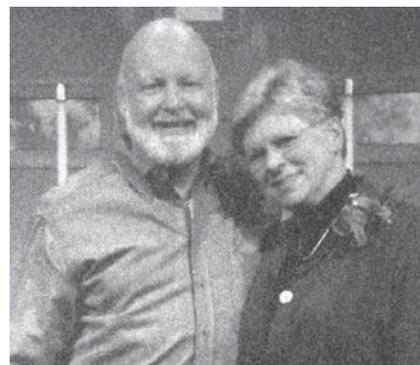


November 14 was a very special Sunday as we welcomed 16 new members into our congregation. There was a special recognition during the service with a potluck dinner following.

We are excited to welcome these newest members of our family of faith!



BARB, BRANDON AND TREVOR (not pictured) DOLAN—The Dolans moved to Dakota Dunes from Aberdeen, South Dakota and join by release from Trinity Lutheran Church. They moved to this area for Barb’s work as a Registered Nurse at St. Luke’s Hospital. Brandon and Trevor attend Dakota Valley schools. They are at home in the Wellington Apartments at 260 Courtyard Drive #302. (898-7945)



GARY AND BETTY GUNDERSON—The Gundersons moved to Dakota Dunes from McCook Lake. Their family operates Gunderson Jewelers, which was

founded by Gary's father. They are retired and enjoy travelling and their grandchildren. They join by release from Riverside Lutheran Church. They are at home at 918 Willow Drive. (235-1551)



MABEL SCHIBONSKI—Mabel grew up in rural Iowa and early in her marriage lived in Sioux City. She and her late husband, Elmer, worked in the hotel and restaurant industry. They settled in the Denver area and she moved back to Sioux City several years ago to be closer to family. She joins by transfer from St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Sioux City. She is at home in Dakota Dunes at the Sterling Green Apartments. (235-1150)



LYLE, LINDA AND LISA SCHUKNECHT—The Schuknechts moved to Dakota Dunes from Sergeant Bluff, Iowa and join by transfer from Shepherd of Peace Lutheran Church. Lyle works at Gateway and Linda works at Pioneer Bank. Lisa is studying marketing and mathematics at Wayne State University. They are at home at 19 Whitetail Place, #103. (232-1716)

RYAN, AMANDA AND LOGAN WEATHERS—The Weathers could not be present on November 14, so we will welcome them at another New Member Sunday in early 2005. Ryan and Amanda both grew up in Merville, Iowa. Amanda graduated from Notre Dame University and received a Masters Degree in Taxation at DePaul University. She is Tax Director at BPI Technology, Inc. Ryan graduated from Wayne State University and is an elementary music teacher with Sioux City Community Schools. Logan was born on March 16, 2004. They join by transfer from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gretna, Nebraska. The Weathers are at home in Dakota Dunes at 202 East Sawgrass. (422-1608)



STEVE, JANELL JORDAN AND CAM WOLLSCHLAGER—Janell is the new food service director at Briar Cliff University and Steve is a machinist and currently a stay at home Dad. Jordan is in Kindergarten at Dakota Valley and Cam is still at home. They join by transfer from Messiah Lutheran Church, Sartell, Minnesota. They are at home in Dakota Dunes at 201 Bison Trail—right next door to the church! (422-1611)

Pastor Vogts Visits Africa



Pastor Vogts is on a mission trip to Africa from November 29–December 8. He is serving as the representative parish pastor for an inspection tour of Kenya and Uganda with Lutheran World Relief,

visiting projects they sponsor in those countries and local Lutherans and missionaries.

Pastor Vogts' expenses are paid by a special donor and the Board of Elders has given permission for him to take advantage of this very unique opportunity.

Please pray that this is a blessed and profitable trip for Pastor Vogts and for his safe return.

Pastoral Services During Pastor Vogts' Absence

During Pastor Vogts' absence in Africa, November 29–December 8, we have arranged for Pastor Lee Schmidt, LCMS institutional chaplain for Sioux City and vacancy pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, to provide pastoral services for our members in case of an emergency. You may contact him at home (712-274-1599), or at Faith Lutheran Church (712-258-4820), or on his cell phone (712-251-0437).

Our thanks to Chaplain Schmidt for covering during Pastor Vogts' absence.

New Bible Class on "The Lessons of the Lord"



We will not have Adult Bible Class on November 28 or December 5 due to Pastor Vogts' absence in Africa.

On December 12 we will begin a new study on "The Lessons of the Lord," the weekly Scripture readings in worship, including the history of how this system developed, how they are selected, and an in-depth look at that Sunday's readings.

Join in this Adult Bible Class on Sundays at 10:45am to learn more about "The Lessons of the Lord" and how they can bless you on your weekly walk with God.



Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate
the Real "Reason for the Season"

Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24
Family Service at 7:00pm
"Midnight Mass" at 11:30pm

Enjoy Your Favorite Christmas Carols
Including "Silent Night" by Candlelight

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!



Because Pastor Vogts will be in Africa, in place an Advent service we will decorate the church on Wednesday, December 1 at 6:00pm. A light supper will be provided. Everyone is invited to please come and help decorate our church for Christmas.

No Advent Services This Year

Advent services originally scheduled for December 8 and 15 have been cancelled for this year, since Pastor Vogts will be arriving back from Africa too late on December 8 to conduct the service that evening.



Poinsettia Donations

We have arranged for poinsettias through Mosher Garden Center for \$11 each. Sign up on the bulletin board indicating that you wish to have these plants purchased for you, and put your payment in the offering marked "Poinsettias."

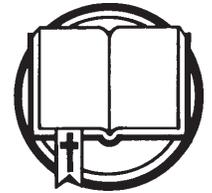
The deadline to sign up is Wednesday, December 8. The plants will be delivered to the church on December 10 for display beginning on Sunday, December 12.

You are also welcome to bring your own plants, if you wish to purchase them elsewhere or receive them as gifts.

Please sign up on the bulletin board indicating that you will provide your own plants and drop them by the church anytime before Christmas.

After Christmas you may take home the plants you have donated or brought. When you sign up, please indicate whom your plants are in memory or honor of, the way you want it printed in the January newsletter.

Sermon Themes for December



December 5
Guest Preacher
Rev. Paul Mueller

December 12
"Isaiah's Picture of Jesus"
Isaiah 9:6

December 19
"The Virgin Birth"
Isaiah 7:14

December 24
(Christmas Eve, 7:00 and 11:30pm)
"No Room for Jesus?"
Luke 2:7

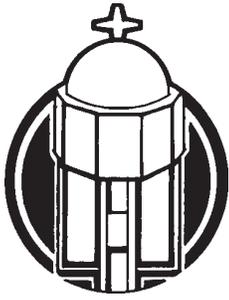
December 26
"The God Who Understands"
Isaiah 63:7-9

Advent Booklets and Portals of Prayer

Advent devotional booklets courtesy of Lutheran Hour Ministries are available in the church entryway.

Also, a new issue of the excellent daily devotional booklet *Portals of Prayer* will begin in January and

Take copies of these devotional booklets for yourself—perhaps extra copies to keep them both at home and work—and to share with friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc.



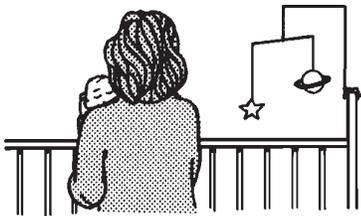
New Lectern and Baptismal Font Donated

Our thanks to Joey Schroeder for donating a beautiful new handcrafted oak lectern and Baptismal font. These match the new pulpit and altar he crafted for us previously, so that we now have a completely new, matching set of beautiful chancel furnishings.

These pieces not only enhance our current worship facility, but can be moved to our permanent new sanctuary when it is built. If purchased from a manufacturer, they would cost tens of thousands of dollars.

We will have a dedication ceremony to consecrate these pieces to the glory of God. Depending on when the other new items for our sanctuary are installed, this may be combined with dedication of the new stained-glass windows and/or organ. Both the stained-glass windows and organ are currently under construction and should be installed within the next two months, perhaps even in time for Christmas.

Thank you for your beautiful work to the glory of God!



Nursery Volunteers Needed

Holy Cross now has a nursery during Sunday services for children who are four months thru age four. It is held in the north classroom. Parents may bring their children in for all or part of the service.

Additional volunteers are needed. We hope to have enough volunteers so that you will serve only about once every two months. Our thanks to Daniell Bargstadt for being the nursery coordinator. She will make up the schedule and call to remind you. We hope to also have a designated alternate for each month.

Please sign up on the bulletin board to help out with this important service to the families of our congregation. For more information contact Daniell (235-0700).

December 5
Daniell Bargstadt

December 12
Janet Martin

December 19
Daniell Bargstadt

December 26
Vogtses



Flowers for Worship

Thank you for these flower donations to beautify our worship. Any additional donations will be listed in future newsletters.

A sign-up sheet to provide flowers for worship is on the bulletin board at the back of the church. Occasions to remember include anniversaries, birthdays, in memory of loved ones, etc. Flowers may be obtained anywhere and you may provide your own vase or use one of the assortment in the church kitchen.

A separate sheet is posted on the bulletin board for poinsettia donations,

which will be listed in the January newsletter.

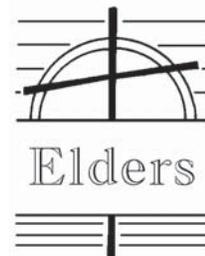
November 7
Doug & Sue Jansen
Veteran's Day

November 14
Joey, Marcy, & Brady Schroeder
Bryce's Baptismal Birthday

November 21
Mabel Schibonski
96th Birthday & New Member Sunday

November 28
Steve & Janell Wollschlager
Thanks for Many Blessings

December 19
Mike & Daniell Bargstadt
Ben's Birthday



Elders

December 5
Mike Bargstadt

December 12
Joey Schroeder

December 19
Dennis Melstad

December 24 (Christmas Eve)
Doug Jansen

December 26
Greg Huibregtse

Alternate
Doug Jansen



December 5
Morgan Kaardal



It was very festive around the church as the Monday-Wednesday-Friday morning (left) and afternoon (below) Preschool classes for four and five year-olds enjoyed dressing up for their Halloween parties.

"Miss Julie" Krull is the four and five year-old teacher and "Miss Sandra" Diaz is the aide. Holy Cross also offers a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class for three year-olds, taught by "Miss Amber" Hoffman, and a Tuesday-Thursday class for two year-olds, taught by "Miss Mary" Lee. All our teachers hold education degrees and are state-certified teachers.



December 12
Kendall Martin

December 19
Alex Kaardal

December 24 (Christmas Eve)
7:00pm–Sarah Vogts
11:30pm–Jacob Vogts

December 26
Kylie Martin



Missionaries of the Month

Each month we remember in prayer in our worship specific missionaries sponsored around the world by our congregation, through our Synod and related organizations. You are encouraged to remember them also in your personal and family prayers.

December 5
Dr. Steve & Julia Lutz
Papua New Guinea

Dr. and Mrs. Lutz have served as medical missionaries at Immanuel Lutheran Hospital in Enga Province since 1986. He is the hospital's general surgeon and treats a wide range of illnesses and injuries. Pray for the Great Physician's hand to be with his healing

ministry, and in the midst of political strife, which at times erupts in civil war, please pray for the safety of Dr. Lutz, his wife Julia, and their son David, who attends a boarding high school in Papua New Guinea.

December 12
Mike & Cathy Tanney
Puerto Rico

The Tanney's and their sons Lucas, Nathan, Mark and Adam previously served 13 years in Venezuela. Pray for blessings on their family as they now begin planting a new church in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

December 19
Rev. James Rimbach
Hong Kong

Rev. Rimbach serves as a professor of theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong. Pray that both he and the dozens of native pastors he is helping to prepare may be a powerful witness and their efforts may also be used to reach the great mass of people hungry for Christ in mainland China.

December 26
Tom & Debbie Going
Japan

The Goings teach English and lead English Bible studies with students at Urawa Lutheran School, one of two very successful K-12 Lutheran schools in

Tokyo. Pray that the seed of faith planted in the hearts of these mostly non-Christian children may bear fruit to eternal life.



*From Rev.
Francois
Poillet,
France*

Do you know the one thing that brings me much joy in this ministry? It's the baptisms! Leading sinners to repentance and faith is, of course, a great privilege. But what always fills my heart with gratitude and joy is to receive children and infants in the alliance of grace through the sacrament.

The Lord must know, because He is now spoiling me! From December 2003 to May 2004, he allowed me to baptize seven children. This has never been seen in our little congregation. Their names are Lilas (six months old), Théôme (4 months), Jeanne (10 years old) and her sister Margot (6 years old), Vincent (4 months), Lila-Rose (17 months) and Noé (18 months).

What needs to be underlined is that all these children only have one Christian parent (except for Vincent). The Gospel entered their home through the father or the mother and the Holy Spirit blessed the child with the fruits of that conversion.

You see, to prepare for the baptism, I always meet *both* parents three times. As I speak in simple words the message of Jesus, the Christian parent

prays silently for his or her unbelieving spouse. Moreover, I always require that the baptism be performed on a Sunday during the Divine Service, as a great event for the congregation. It's a great joy for my little flock, but it's also an opportunity for the many unbelieving family members of the child to hear the Word.



*From
Kip and Ivy
Hoech,
Kyrgyzstan*

Medical doctors are one of the low-wage and underpaid government professions in Kyrgyzstan. They are known to be creative to get extra income from patients. We often hear the locals complaining about the unreliable medical system and questioning their doctors' pure motives. Some prefer folk treatment, self-medicate, and others wait until they are so sick that they have to be put in the hospital. Recently, an LCMS one-year volunteer medical missionary, Dr. Keith Harvey, and his family came to our town and offered a one-day service to our local friends. All of our friends were very appreciative of our effort and Keith's unbiased diagnoses.

With Dr. Keith, the patients, and translators speaking three languages, our home visits took longer than planned. The translators in this case amazingly were the two of us (we took turns depending on the gender of the patient) and the Holy Spirit. We were an hour and a half behind schedule when we arrived at F's house. Thank God that the patient S, who is F's niece, also walked into the door at the same time, right on time for Kyrgyzstan. The hostess F and her daughter H warmly welcomed us.

I introduced Dr. Keith, his wife and children to F, H, and S. Even though we know F's family really well, it was a still a little awkward for these conservative Dungan ladies to open up to this English-speaking foreign male. I showed them two thick dictionaries we were using for

medical terms and pictures of the organs. Eventually these three women took turns revealing their health problems. In the end Dr. Keith pulled out a bottle of multi-vitamins to treat S's anemia.

"How much does it cost?" she asked with hesitation. "It's free for you," I said in Dungan. "But why?" S spoke in disbelief. "Because God loves us," Dr. Keith testified, "so we love others by serving the people in Kyrgyzstan." Having a doctor genuinely care for them and offer them something to improve their health was refreshing. S was touched.

It is amazing what God did that day. Constantly struggling with language learning, we never thought we could help with interpretation. Nevertheless it wasn't challenging at all for God to work through English, Russian, and Dungan to speak His love. We were humbled by how God touches lives through Dr. Keith, a medical professional, and through us, amateur translators.



*From
Danelle
Putnam,
Panama*

In June of 2003 the Los Andes Church, Gloria Dei, was dedicated and her first 15 members were confirmed. Today, Gloria Dei continues to grow and her members are maturing in their faith under the shepherding of Pastor Ruben Avila.

Currently there are 15 people in confirmation class and when asked "How has your life changed since you started attending Gloria Dei?" Milton Castillo said, "I now am more sure of my salvation in Jesus Christ. I know that it is only through faith in Him that I can have eternal life. It does not depend on what I do."

Señor Florentino Rodriguez was Gloria Dei's first contact. He came to the church after he and his wife separated. He was suffering from depression. He

did not like to leave his home, and he was alone. The Lord brought him each week to Bible study. He was often the only one, as the church was just beginning to reach out to the community. Through the study of God's Word, coming to know Christ as his Savior and through the fellowship of his Christian brothers and sisters, Sr. Florentino began to recover from his depression. He is now the loved "Abuelo" or "grandpa" of the congregation. He is the head of the maintenance team at Gloria Dei, plays guitar for worship and is an algebra and calculus tutor for the youth at the church.

Stephanie "Fany" Vasquez, 18, came to a vacation Bible school program with her younger brother and sister. Soon after VBS, Pastor Ruben and I visited her home and met her parents. Fany's mom took me aside and said, "I really want you to help Fany. She doesn't believe in God, that He exists or anything." We continued to visit Fany and her family. Fany and her siblings were faithful about attending youth group. They soon joined the confirmation classes and then they began to invite their parents to worship. Today, Fany, her brother and mother are all confirmed members. Fany is the church secretary, is learning to play piano for worship and is the prayer partner for Pastor Ruben and his family.

Jacob Vogts Wins Essay Award

Each year Lutheran Family Service of Iowa holds a "Grandparent of the Year Essay Contest." Four regional winners were selected from among 99 entrants statewide. Jacob Vogts' essay about his grandfather, Donald Schmidt of Winner, South Dakota, was selected as the North West Regional Winner.

He was honored at a regional banquet, with his grandfather present, at which the essays were shared by video link with the other regional banquets. He also received a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond.

Congratulations to Jacob—and his grandfather—for this honor.



Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate
the Real "Reason for the Season"

Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24
Family Service at 7:00pm
"Midnight Mass" at 11:30pm

Enjoy Your Favorite Christmas Carols
Including "Silent Night" by Candlelight

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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