

*Adapted from Pastor Vogts'
Sermon for New Year's Day*

The names of the months of the year pre-date Christianity and are derived from the ancient Romans. "July" is named in honor of Julius Caesar, who was born that month. "August" is named in honor of Caesar Augustus, who plays a role in the Christmas story as the Emperor at the time of Christ's birth: "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1).

In the old Roman calendar, September, October, November and December were the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth months, and so are named simply after the Latin numerals for seven thru ten: *septem*, *octo*, *novem*, and *decem*.

However, most of the months were named in honor of pagan false gods and goddesses. "February" comes from the Etruscan god Februus. "March" comes from the Roman god of war, Mars. "May" comes from the goddess Maiesta, "June" from the goddess Juno, and "January" from the Roman god Janus.

The Apostle Paul says, "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (Romans 1:20). Scripture tells us that non-Christians also have a Natural Knowledge of the true God, and although that knowledge is incomplete and defective and cannot lead to salvation, it does have some elements of truth. According to Paul, one of "God's invisible qualities" which even pagans "understood" are "his eternal power and divine nature."

That is why the false god Janus was depicted by the Romans as a head with two faces, one looking back and the other looking forward. The ancient Romans understood the eternity and what we call the "omniscience" of God, that he knows all things. And so they ascribed these qualities to their false god Janus, who is said to be eternal and omniscient, a timeless god, who looks both backward over time and forward into the future.

In Athens, Paul said to those who worshipped such false gods, "Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23). Janus is only an imaginary being, who does not truly exist. But, Jesus Christ really is eternal and omniscient, the only true God. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," he says, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8).

For the ancient Romans, their belief in a god who knew all things was not a comfort, but a curse. Because that meant he knew all their sins. Janus looked back over their past failures, and he looked forward to their future punishment, unless they would appease the gods with sacrifices and offerings.

The bad news is, the true Almighty God does indeed know your sins. But, the Good News is, he himself sent his

own Son to be your Savior, to appease God's wrath for you, by his life, death and resurrection. As Revelation 1:7 says, "[He] loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood."

The Apostle John writes, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). None of us can claim this past year, or throughout our lives, to have been without sin, failures, and shortcomings. Like the false god Janus, Jesus, the one true God, really is eternal and omniscient, the true timeless God, who looks both backward over time and forward into the future. But, the Good News is, unlike Janus, Jesus does not look backward with anger, or forward with threats of punishment.

Jesus looks backward with you over 2005, and over your entire life, not with anger, but with forgiveness. As John continues, "If we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. . . The blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin" (1 John 1:7-9).

And Jesus looks forward with you over the coming year of 2006, and the rest of your life to come, not with threats of punishment, but with love. "Surely I am with you always" he promises (Matthew 28:20). The Lord says in Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will hold you up with my mighty hand." Hebrews 13:5-6 puts it this way: "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.'"

Paul says in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Janus was thought to be against those who displeased the gods; but Jesus, the true eternal, omniscient God, is not against you, but for you, on your side, throughout



Thirteen women and Pastor Vogts gathered for the first annual Women's Christmas Dinner on December 12. Thank you to Ginny Peterson and Betty Gunderson for organizing this fun event. The Women's Fellowship meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm, with the next meeting on February 7. Activities include a devotion, topic and service projects. All women all welcome!

the coming year of 2006 and beyond. That is why Paul tells us in Romans 8:28, "And we know that God works all things together for the good of those who love him."

Moses tells Joshua, "Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). As you enter the New Year, have confidence that, unlike the imaginary god Janus, the true God Jesus really does know all things into the past and the future, and he is working all things together for your good. For he is the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Pastor Kevin Vogts

Crossnotes

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New Member Sunday and "Fat Tuesday" Potluck February 26

On Sunday, February 26 we will rejoice to welcome about a dozen more new members to our congregation. There will be a welcoming ceremony during the worship service at 9:15am with a potluck dinner, following the Sunday School hour, at 11:30am.

This is the last Sunday before the beginning of Lent. You may have heard that the Tuesday just before Ash Wednesday is called "Fat Tuesday." In Medieval times, Lent was a season of strict fasting with very austere foods. Therefore, the last day before Lent began became a time of celebration to consume rich foods and use up your remaining

cooking fats, and thus became known as "Fat Tuesday." ("Mardi Gras" is actually French for "Fat Tuesday.")

Everyone is invited to come and welcome our new members, bring a dish, and enjoy (a few days early) a pre-Lenten "Fat Tuesday" feast!



Long Range Planning Committee Selects Architect

After several months of visiting numerous area churches and receiving presentations from three area firms, the Long Range Planning Committee has selected an architect to recommend be engaged by the congregation for a study of our needs and a proposal regarding a possible building expansion.

The committee will present its report and recommendation to the congregation at the Quarterly Business Meeting on Tuesday, January 17 at 7:00pm. All members of the congregation are invited and urged to attend this important meeting.

White, Purple and Red Paraments Donated

Our thanks to Don and Nancy Wiese for donating a beautiful new set of white altar paraments to our congregation, in memory of Don's son Nathan. They were dedicated on Christmas Eve, which was a holiday special to Nathan. Also dedicated that evening were a new silver Baptismal shell and a ewer, a silver pitcher used for Baptisms, given by Don and Nancy in memory of Nancy's son Corey Naab.

Our thanks also to Mabel Schibonski for donating a new set of purple paraments, in memory of her husband Elmer, and to Doug and Janet Martin for donating a red set.



A record 20 poinsettias were donated to beautify our church for Christmas. The new white altar paraments were donated by Don and Nancy Wiese in memory of Don's son Nathan and dedicated on Christmas Eve. Used primarily for Christmas and Easter, they feature a creche on the lectern hanging, symbolizing Christmas, and the victorious Lamb of God on the pulpit hanging, symbolizing Easter, with Alleluia on the altar hanging.



Poinsettia Donations



Thank you to all who donated a record 20 poinsettias to beautify our church this Christmas, and to all who helped decorate. The church was especially beautiful for our Christmas celebrations!

<u>Given By</u>	<u>In Memory or Honor Of</u>
John & Gail Dorr	
Denise Honner	Grandparents
Doug & Sue Jansen	Paul Jansen
Doug & Sue Jansen	Nathan Schubert
Mark & Mindy Krause (3)	
Doug & Janet Martin	Grandparents
Todd Peters	Rev. Carl & Dorcas Brueggemann Walter & Edit Peters
Ginny Peterson (4)	Bob Peterson
Mabel Schibonski	Elmer Schibonski
Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts	Leroy Vogts
Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts	Grandparents
Don & Nancy Wiese	Parents, Nathan Wiese, Korey Naab
Ron & Jeannette Yockey	Parents
Ron & Jeannette Yockey	Grandparents

Our green paraments are in very good condition and do not need replacing. We were also recently given a black set, used only on Good Friday, in new condition by Concordia Lutheran Church, Sioux City.

If you have an interest in donating a set of paraments, perhaps as a memorial, light blue is a new color now used during Advent. Contact Pastor Vogts to discuss designs, etc.



Sharing God's Love with Soliders in Iraq

By Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing , USAF

Rev. Franke is one of dozens of LCMS pastors serving as chaplains in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some are full-time career chaplains, many others are parish pastors serving in the reserves who have been called to active duty. LCMS Chaplain (Maj.) Mark Nuckols—an old friend of Pastor Vogts—was recently chosen to represent the chaplain corps and explain the work of military chaplains in interviews on Fox News and CNN.

Ministry in the military is unique! As I lead worship for soldiers and airmen at Balad Air Base in Iraq, their a cappella singing rises above the noise of the helicopters coming and going, often with wounded. Most nights in Iraq find me in the convoy lanes, praying with those who are about to leave the base and travel the most dangerous roads in the world. After the convoys depart I often counsel, pray with, and help load wounded onto aircraft to be flown to

hospitals in Germany and the United States.



Airmen and soliders gather for worship led by LCMS Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Franket in the chapel at Balad Air Base, Iraq. The chapel may be in a tent, but it has a steeple!



A military chaplain goes where the troops go. In Iraq I fly many miles to minister to troops in Balad and Baghdad, Al Asad and Abu Ghraib, Mousul and Tirkit. As a full-time career chaplain, military ministry has taken me from the desert of Nevada to the Azores Islands of the Atlantic. As chaplain for the Air Force Thunderbirds, I've soared with them through the skies, and as a chaplain for nuclear missile launch officers, I've spent time in their control capsules 60 feet underground.

Military chaplains are, in effect, missionaries. Like those who serve in foreign mission fields, we live and work alongside the people to whom we're called to minister. We wear their clothing, speak their language, practice their customs and courtesies. We go where they go, reminding them that God goes with them too.



**Logo of LCMS
Ministry to the
Armed Forces**



Elders

January 1
Ron Yockey

January 8
Joey Schroeder

January 15
Greg Huibregtse

January 22
Dennis Melstad

January 29
Mike Bargstadt

Alternate
Doug Jansen

Altar Flowers



Thank you for these flower donations to beautify our worship. The new sign-up sheet to provide flowers for worship in 2006 is on the bulletin board at the back fo 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.

There is a separate listing of poinsettia donations on page 3.

November 6
Jane Michels
In Memory of Jim Michels

November 13
Doug & Sue Jansen
Veteran's Day

November 20
Mabel Schibonski
Mabel's Birthday

December 11
Ron & Jeannette Yockey
Katelyn's Birthday

January 1
Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts
15th Wedding Anniversary



Acolytes

January 1
Jacob Vogts

January 8
Keegan Johnson

January 15
Justin Peterson

January 22
Trevor Vilhauer

January 29
Zachary Selby



CRUCIFERS

January 1
Jacob Vogts

January 8
Dylan Sawyer

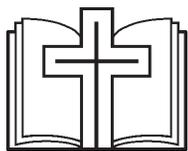


Over 125 worshippers enjoyed the Children's Christmas Program on December 11. The children enthusiastically told the Christmas story with readings and songs by both Sunday School students and children from the Preschool (above) and Mother's Day Out (below). Due to a conflicting school activity for many 5th-6th Grades confirmation students, a special program featuring their classes was held during the Advent service on December 14.

January 15
Zahn Bose

January 22
Evan Steerken

January 29
Quinton Bose



Why Do Lutherans Do That?

We are continuing our study in Adult Bible Class "Why Do Lutherans Do That?" looking at our Lutheran worship customs.

Have you ever wonder why we have certain worship customs? Why our worship may differ from other denominations? Join in Adult Bible Class on Sundays at 10:30am to learn, "Why Do Lutherans Do That?"

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.

January 1
Bob and Sue Pfeil
Kyrgyzstan

January 8
Matt and Kim Myers
Vietnam

January 15
Marat and Amy Kashenov
Kazakhstan

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January 22
Bethanie Frick
Japan

January 29
Ryan Tinetti
Thailand

Lutheran Confessions Backordered Until March

Holy Cross members signed up to receive 20 copies of the new gift edition of the Book of Concord, which contains the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, such as the Augsburg Confessions, Large and Small Catechisms, and Formula of Concord.

Concordia Publishing House reports that, due to exceptionally strong demand, the first printing of 40,000 has been exhausted. The good news about that is that in the specialized field of church publishing this extraordinary response is unparalleled, and shows a great interest among the members of our Synod in the teachings of our Lutheran Church. The bad news that the copies we ordered are on backorder until the second printing is completed in March.

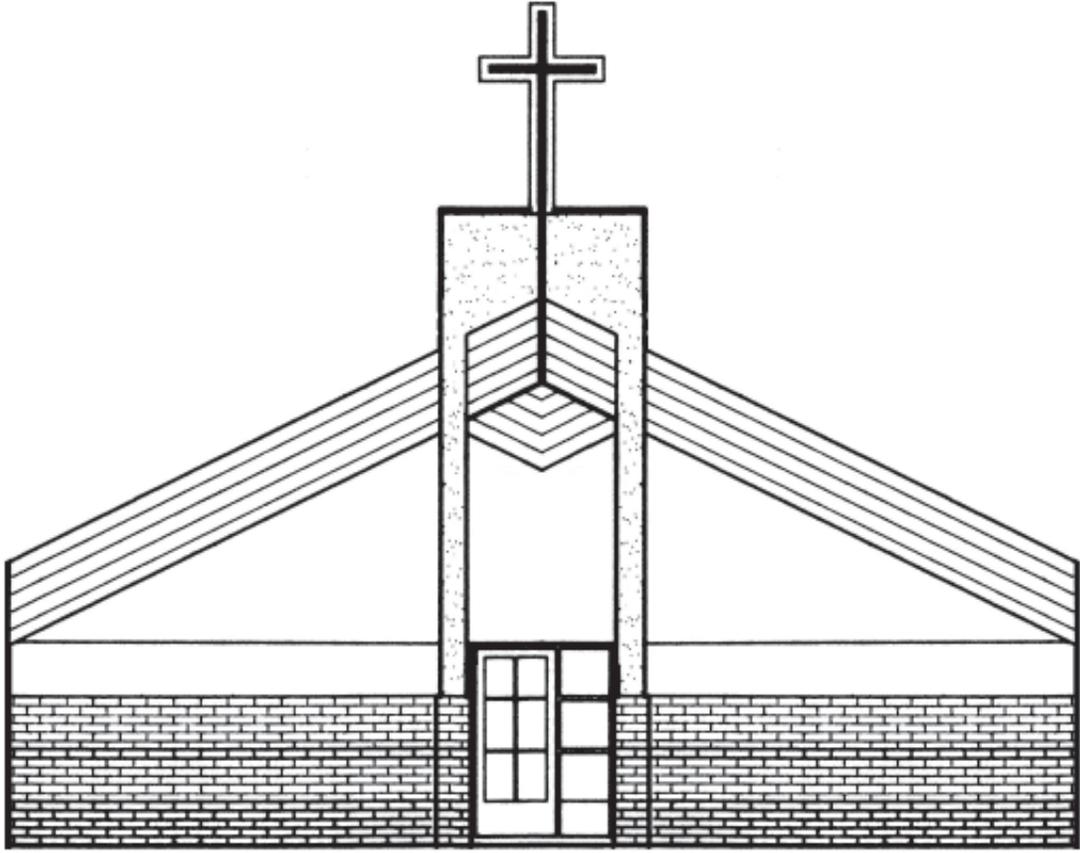
Those who placed orders will be notified when the books arrive and can pay for them then.

Portals of Prayer

The new Portals of Prayer devotional booklets, which begins this month, are available in the church entryway. Take copies to share with friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc.

2006 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2006 are available to pick up at church. If you have not received your envelopes or have questions, contact Financial Secretary Sue Jansen (232-0280).



Return Service Requested

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Crossnotes
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