

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church

Crossnotes

2009




Pastor's Christmas Message

As I write this our family is about to leave for a vacation at Disney World, in conjunction with the LCMS Fall Leadership Conference in Tampa. Several years ago I visited there during this same conference, and the highlight was the amazing Christmas lighting display at their studios. The "city street" backlot is decked with millions of lights that flash in sync with Christmas carols. With the help of special effects magic it even "snows" on cue—in Florida!

It was a beautiful display, but there was something important missing: Almost no references to the event that started it all some 2,000 years ago, the birth of Christ.

It's easy for us also to get so wrapped up in the *doing* of Christmas that we forget the *meaning* of Christmas. We've got the glitz, but no God; the lights, but no Lord; the celebration, but no Christ.

Jesus Himself expresses the true significance of His birth into our world this way: *"For God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that*

whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned."(John 3:16-18)

He is the very Son of God, come down to earth and made man. By His life, death and resurrection from the dead, He made up for your sin and reconciled you to God, so that your sins are not counted against you. As the Apostle Paul says: *"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. . . For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things . . . by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."*(Colossians 1:19-20, 2:9)

That's what it's really all about: the lights, the trees, the decorations, the gifts, the Christmas carols and nativity scenes. We are celebrating the Good News: You are at peace with God, on account of His Son, born into our world as the Babe of Bethlehem.

I wish you and your loved ones a blessed and happy Christmas, as you celebrate your Savior's birth!

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Advent Services Begin December 2

This year's sermon series for both Wednesday and Sunday services during Advent is *"Symbols of the Season,"* looking at the history and significance of such common Christmas symbols as the Advent Wreath, Angels, St. Nicholas, Shepherds, the Christmas Tree and Christmas Presents.

Advent services are on Wednesdays at 7:00pm, December 2, 9 & 16, and last about 30-45 minutes. Bring your family to meditate on the real "reason for the season"!

BUDGET UPDATE



As of November 15, 2009

Total Offerings Budgeted	
Year-to-Date	\$156,430
Total Offerings Received	
Year-to-Date	\$151,003
Total Budget Deficit	
Year-to-Date	(\$5,427)



POINSETTIAS

The deadline to sign up to order poinsettias through Mosher Garden Center for \$11 each is Sunday, November 29.

However, you are also welcome to bring your own plants, if you wish to

purchase them elsewhere or receive them as gifts. Please sign up in the Gathering Room, indicating either that you wish to have your plants purchased for you and put your payment in the offering marked "Poinsettias," or that you will provide your own plants, which you may drop by the church anytime before Christmas.

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. After Christmas you may take home the plants you have donated or brought.



Guest Minister December 27

Rev. Henry Witte, LCMS missionary to Hispanics in Sioux city, will serve as our guest minister at Holy Cross on Sunday, December 27, so that the Vogts family can celebrate with relatives in Kansas City.

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Published Monthly by

Holy Cross Evangelical
Lutheran Church

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December, 2009

Volume 7

Number 12

Worship with Holy Communion will be at the regular time of 9:15am. There will not be either Sunday School or Bible Classes that morning, due to the absence for the holidays of Pastor Vogts and many of the other teachers.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Plan now to attend Christmas Eve Candlelight Services on Thursday, December 24.

A Family Service will be held at 7:00pm, with "Midnight Mass" beginning at 11:30pm.

Bring your family and holiday guests to celebrate the real "reason for the season!"

"Oh, come, all ye faithful!"



Children's Program During Morning Service December 20

Due to the growth of our Sunday School, this year we are holding our Children's Christmas Program during the Sunday morning service at 9:15am on December 20. The children's presentation of the Christmas story will take the place of the sermon, and the service will include Holy Communion,

along with many favorite Christmas carols, an adult choir anthem, and a children's Christmas pageant.

Holy Cross Preschool will have a separate Christmas program on Sunday, December 13 at 4:00pm.

Come and experience the wonder of Christmas as seen through the eyes of children!



Virginia Strauser

Mother of Vickie Britson
Entered Eternal Rest
November 4, 2009

*"Blessed are the dead
who die in the Lord."
Revelation 14:13*



Worship Assistants

Elders for December
Earl Biggers and Rob Finkral
Ushers for December
Gary Amunson, Doug Jansen,
Tony Waybright

Chancel Care for December
Jeri Melstad

Acolytes for December
December 2 (Advent) Tiara Selby
December 6 Gracie Nelson
December 9 (Advent) Kathleen Soukup
December 13 Stephanie Stoeger-Moore
December 16 (Advent) Bryce Schroeder
December 20 Nathan Soukup
December 24 (7:00pm) Kaleb Martin
December 24 (11:30pm) Anna Vogts
December 27 Claire Johnson

Crucifers for December

December 2 (Advent) Kasey Michels
 December 6 Emily Steemken
 December 9 (Advent) Myron Bose
 December 13 Jace Waybright
 December 16 (Advent) Megan Winborn
 December 20 Ashley Bargstadt
 December 24 (7:00pm) Kaleb Martin
 December 24 (11:30pm) Anna Vogts
 December 27 Megan Winborn

Snacks for December

December 6 Kuhn
 December 13 Reifke
 December 20 Winborn
 December 27 Kay Hageman

Women's



All women of Holy Cross are invited to our annual Women's Christmas Dinner, Tuesday, December 1, at 6:00pm at Grahams in Dakota Dunes. The cost of the meal, which includes tax and gratuity, is \$13.

Our freewill offering will go towards buying cookie dough for the Women and Children's Center of Jackson Recovery.

Please RSVP to Betty Gunderson (235-1551); or Ginny Peterson (232-3287).



**Come
Decorate for
Christmas**

Christmas Decorating December 5

Remember how beautiful our church was a Christmas last year? The Decorating Committee needs your help to decorate the Sanctuary and Gathering



You Are Invited to a Christmas Open House at the Home of Rev. Kevin and Terese Vogts
369 Partridge Circle, Dakota Dunes

Sunday, December 6, 1:00pm–5:00pm
Bring the Whole Family – Children Welcome

All Invited – Everyone Welcome!

Room. The fun begins on Saturday, December 5 at 9:00am.

Delicious pulled pork sandwiches—from our Hog Roast—will be provided for lunch. Please bring a salad or desert to share. Everyone is invited—the more, the merrier! See you there.



Sunday School Topics for December

December 6—Today's Sunday School lesson is the foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5–25). The children will learn that God in His mercy promised to send John to prepare sinful people for the coming of the Lord. God in His Word calls us (sinful people) to repentance, declaring us righteous because of His Son, Jesus.

In your family discussions, ask the children to retell the story they learned. Talk about times when you have doubted God's Word and how because of Jesus, God forgives our doubts, granting us

faith to believe through the power of the Holy Spirit.

December 13—In Sunday School today, the children will hear the message of the angel to Mary, telling her that the promised Savior would be born to her (Luke 1:26–38). God favored Mary because of Jesus Christ, choosing her to be the mother of Jesus. God favors us because of Jesus Christ, choosing us to be His children!

In your family discussions, ask your children to tell you the story of the angel's visit to Mary, pointing out that because of our sin we are separated from God, and we deserve nothing from Him. Encourage your children, reminding them that God grants us unmerited grace and favor because of His Son, who unites Himself with us through His Word and Sacraments.

December 20—Today in Sunday School children will study Luke 1:57–80, the story of John's birth. Zechariah spoke God's Word announcing that this baby John would give people knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of sins. God speaks through His holy Word to give me knowledge of salvation and forgiveness through Jesus, His Son.

In your family discussions, talk about how sin causes us to doubt and fear, and just as God provided John to preach forgiveness and the message of Christ Jesus, the Savior, He provides us with

faithful preachers to point us to the Savior from sin, death, and the devil.

On December 20 we will also study the birth of Jesus as recorded in Luke 2. A Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord!

As a family, read Luke 2:1-20 together, and talk about the details of Christ's birth. Talk about how our sin causes us to fear God like the shepherds did. Focus on the fact that God's Son, Jesus, takes away our fears and offers us true peace, rescuing us from sin and death.

December 27—There will be no Sunday School, or Adult or Youth Bible Class, on Sunday, December 27, due to the absence of many students and teachers for the holidays.



The Lutheran Difference

During December we will continue our study in Adult Bible Class on "The Lutheran Difference."

Why did Martin Luther and his followers seek to reform, and eventually separated from, the Roman Catholic Church? Why did the other "Protestants" which followed separate themselves in turn from the Lutherans?

In this class we are looking at how the Lutheran Church differs from other denominations on such fundamental topics as justification, Scripture, Baptism, Communion, etc.

Join in Sundays at 10:30am to learn more about "The Lutheran Difference" on these and other key teachings.

Midweek Adult Bible Study Concludes

Due to the special services for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, beginning November 18 the Midweek

Bible Study for adults is taking a break for the remainder of the year.

Due to great interest in the subject this group has been studying, in 2010 we will also be using the DVD series "Speechless: Silencing the Christians" as a topic for Sunday morning Adult Bible Class.

Thanks to those who have so faithfully attended Midweek Bible Study this fall!



We list members' birthdays and anniversaries in the newsletter each month and the bulletin each week. However, our records are not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the church office at 232-9117 or email holycross@longlines.com.

Randy Stein, December 2
Katelyn Yockey, December 2
Helen Hamilton, December 11
Melissa Rehnelt, December 15
Julie Eickhoff, December 21
Sherry Isley, December 26
Levi Finkral, December 30
Barbara Goede, December 30

Kevin & Terese Vogts
December 29, 1990

T.J. & Tami Michels
December 31, 1989



The flower calendar for 2010 is now on the table in the Gathering Room. Occasions to remember include

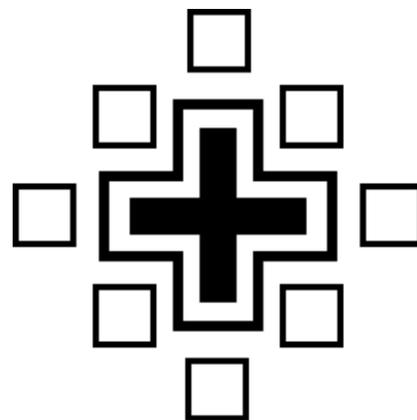
anniversaries, birthdays, in memory of loved ones, etc.

Flowers may be obtained anywhere and you may provide your own vase or use one of the assortment in the Coffee Bar. They may be delivered during Office Hours, Tuesday thru Friday from 9:00am-11:00am, and placed in the flower cooler in the Sacristy west of the altar area. Or, you can simply bring them early on Sunday morning.

November 8
Mabel Schibonski
Birthday

November 15
Steven & Susanne Stoeger-Moore

November 29
Ron & Jeannette Yockey



December Commemorations

You may have noticed on our church calendar that in addition to members' birthdays and anniversaries there are also listed historic commemorations of some of our forbearers in the faith.

The Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran Church states:

"We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church . . . among them being certain holy days, festivals, and the like." (Article XV)

"It is also taught among us that saints should be kept in remembrance so that our faith may be strengthened

when we see what grace they received and how they were sustained by faith. Moreover, their good works are to be an example for us, each of us in his own calling." (Article XXI)

A list of such occasions commonly observed in the Lutheran Church is included on pages xi-xiii in the front of *Lutheran Service Book*. The following brief descriptions of the significance of these commemorations this month are from the new *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. This excellent publication is available from Concordia Publishing House, 1-800-325-3040, www.cph.org, stock #124318.

**St. Thomas, Apostle
(December 21)**

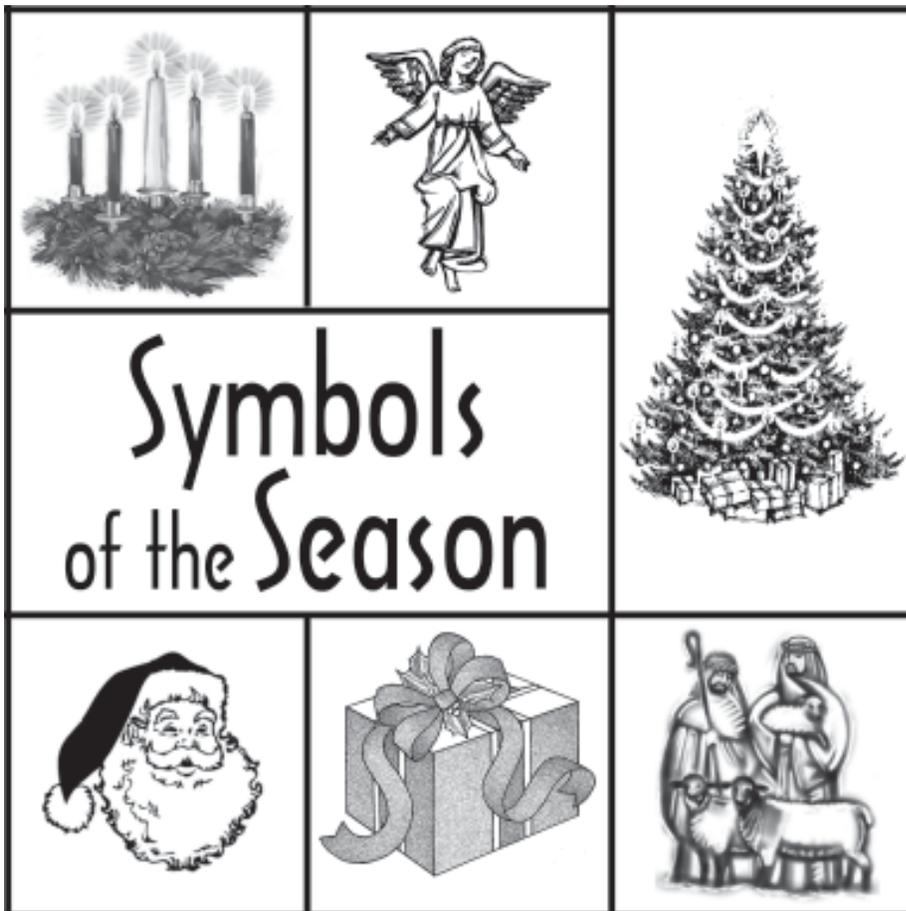
All four Gospels mention St. Thomas as one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. John's Gospel, which names him "the Twin," uses Thomas' questions to reveal truths about Jesus. It is Thomas who says, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" To this question Jesus replies, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:5-6).



The symbol for St. Thomas is a carpenter's square and a spear, because tradition says that he built a church in India with his own hands, and that he was martyred by being speared to death.

John's Gospel also tells how Thomas, on the evening of the day of Jesus' resurrection, doubts the report of the disciples that they had seen Jesus. Later, "doubting Thomas" becomes "believing Thomas" when he confesses Jesus as "my Lord and my God" (John 20:24-29).

According to tradition, Thomas traveled eastward after Pentecost, eventually reaching India, where still today a group of people call themselves "Christians of St. Thomas." Thomas was martyred for the faith by being speared to death.



**Symbols
of the Season**

2009 Advent Sermon Series

November 29
1st Sunday in Advent
"Advent Wreath"
John 1:9

Wednesday, December 9
Advent Service II – 7:00pm
"Shepherds"
Luke 2:15-18

Wednesday, December 2
Advent Service I – 7:00pm
"Angels"
Luke 2:13-14

December 13
3rd Sunday in Advent
"Christmas Tree"
Isaiah 35:1-2

December 6
2nd Sunday in Advent
"St. Nicholas"
Hebrews 13:7

Wednesday, December 16
Advent Service III – 7:00pm
"Christmas Gifts"
Matthew 2:11

December 20
4th Sunday in Advent
Children's Christmas Program

St. Stephen, Martyr (December 26)

St. Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5), was one of the Church's first seven deacons. He was appointed by the leaders of the Church to distribute food and other necessities to the poor in the growing Christian community in Jerusalem, thereby giving the apostles more time for their public ministry of proclamation (Acts 6:2-5).

He and the other deacons apparently were expected not only to wait on tables but also to teach and preach. When some of his colleagues became jealous of him, they brought Stephen to the Sanhedrin and falsely charged him with blaspheming against Moses (Acts 6:9-14).

Stephen's confession of faith, along with his rebuke of the members of the Sanhedrin for rejecting their Messiah and being responsible for His death, so infuriated them that they dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death. Stephen is honored as the Church's first martyr and for his words of commendation and forgiveness as he lay dying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" and "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:59-60).

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist (December 27)

St. John was a son of Zebedee and brother of James the Elder (whose festival day is July 25). John was among the first disciples to be called by Jesus (Matthew 4:18-22) and became known



The symbol for St. Stephen is three stones, to symbolize his martyrdom by being stoned to death, and the palm of victory, to symbolize that he is now with all the faithful in heaven, whom Revelation 7:9 describes as "wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands."

as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," as he refers to himself in the Gospel that bears his name (e.g., John 21:20).

Of the Twelve, John alone did not forsake Jesus in the hours of His suffering and death. With the faithful women, he stood at the cross, where our Lord made him the guardian of His mother.

After Pentecost, John spent his ministry in Jerusalem and at Ephesus, where tradition says he was bishop. He wrote the fourth Gospel, the three Epistles that bear his name, and the Book of Revelation. Especially memorable in his Gospel are the account of the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12), the "Gospel in a nutshell" (John 3:16), Jesus' saying about the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-16), the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11), and Jesus' encounter with Mary Magdalene on Easter morning (John 20:11-18).

According to tradition, John was banished to the island of Patmos (off the coast of Asia Minor) by the Roman emperor Domitian. John lived to a very old age, surviving all the apostles, and died at Ephesus around AD 100.



As an Apostle and Evangelist, St. John actually has two symbols. The first is his symbol as an Apostle, a Communion chalice with a snake, because tradition says that false teachers attempted to kill him with poisoned Communion wine. The second is an eagle, his symbol as an Evangelist, based on the vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-10, 10:14), upon which also Mark is represented by a winged lion, Luke by a winged ox, and Matthew by a winged man.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs (December 28)

Matthew's Gospel tells of King Herod's vicious plot against the infant Jesus after being "tricked" by the Wise Men. Threatened by the one "born King of the Jews," Herod murdered all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or younger (Matthew 2:16-18).

These "innocents," commemorated just three days after the celebration of Jesus' birth, remind us not only of the terrible brutality of which human beings are capable but, more significantly of the persecution Jesus endured from the beginning of His earthly life.

Although Jesus' life was providentially spared at this time, many years later, another ruler, Pontius Pilate, would sentence the innocent Jesus to death.



Our congregation has designated a tithe of 10% of our general offerings to support the work of our District and Synod. Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services specific missionaries around the world who are supported in this way by our congregation.

December 6

*Rev. Jacob and Michelle Gillard
Uganda*

December 13

*Bruce and Sarah Wall
Panama*

December 20

*Rev. Carl and Grace Kaye
Thailand*

December 27

*Lisa Williams
Hungary*



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

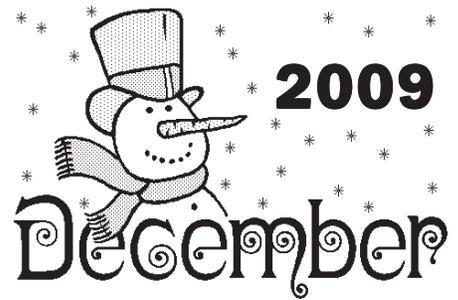
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Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. <i>(Collect for Christmas Day)</i></p>		<p>1</p> <p>6:00pm Women's Christmas Dinner at Grahams</p> <p>Women's Christmas Dinner</p>	<p>2</p> <p>6:15pm Midweek School 7:00pm Advent Service 7:45pm Board of Education</p> <p><i>Randy Stein Katelyn Yockey</i></p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9:00am Church Decorating and Pulled Pork Lunch</p>
<p>6 2nd Sunday in Advent</p> <p>9:15am Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p>10:30am Sunday School & Bible Class</p> <p>11:30am Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>1:00pm-5:00pm Vogts Open House</p> <p><i>St. Nicholas</i></p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>6:15pm Midweek School 7:00pm Advent Service</p>	<p>10 11 12</p> <p>Preschool Schedule Monday-Friday Mornings Chapel Wednesdays & Thursdays 9:00am</p> <p>After School Care Monday-Friday, 3:15pm-6:00pm <i>Both Follow Dakota Valley Calendar</i></p> <p><i>Helen Hamilton</i></p>		
<p>13 3rd Sunday in Advent</p> <p>9:15am Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p>10:30am Sunday School & Bible Class</p> <p>11:30am Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>4:00pm Preschool Christmas Program</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Newsletter Deadline</p> <p><i>Melissa Rehnelt</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p>6:15pm Midweek School 7:00pm Advent Service</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>9:30am Christmas Program Rehearsal</p>
<p>20 4th Sunday in Advent</p> <p>8:45am Choir Warmup</p> <p>9:15am Children's Christmas Program with Holy Communion</p> <p>10:30am Sunday School & Bible Class</p> <p><i>Children's Christmas Program</i></p> <p><i>St. Thomas, Apostle</i> <i>Julie Eickhoff</i></p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>CANDLELIGHT SERVICES</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7:00pm Christmas Eve Family Service 11:30pm "Midnight Mass"</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas Day</p>	<p>26</p> <p><i>St. Stephen, Martyr</i> <i>Sherry Isley</i></p>
<p>27 First Sunday after Christmas</p> <p>9:15am Worship with Holy Communion</p> <p><i>St. John, Apostle & Evangelist</i></p>	<p>28</p> <p><i>Holy Innocents, Martyrs</i></p>	<p>29</p> <p><i>Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts</i></p>	<p>30</p> <p><i>Levi Finkral Barbara Goede</i></p>	<p>31</p> <p>Happy New Year! <i>T.J. & Tami Michels</i></p>	<p>Church Office Hours Tuesday-Friday 9:00am- 11:00am (Closed for Holidays December 24-January 4)</p>	

Deadline for Calendar Submissions or Changes is the 15th of the Prior Month
Email to holycross@longlines.com or Leave Voicemail Message at Church Office
This Calendar May Not Reflect Late Submissions or Changes



Church Decorating December 5

Everyone is Invited to Help
Decorate Holy Cross for Christmas

Saturday, December 5
Beginning at 9:00am

Pulled Pork Lunch Provided
Bring Salad or Dessert



You Are Invited to a Christmas Open House
at the Home of Rev. Kevin and Terese Vogts
369 Partridge Circle, Dakota Dunes

Sunday, December 6
1:00pm-5:00pm
Bring the Whole Family - Children Welcome

*All Invited
Everyone Welcome!*



Return Service Requested

Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
149 Bison Trail
Dakota Dunes, SD 57049

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