

Redeemer news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER BY THE SEA LUTHERAN CHURCH | DECEMBER 2017 – VOLUME 5 ISSUE 12

A JOURNEY TO CHRISTMAS

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

– Matthew 2:1-2, NIV

This Advent we are embarking on an unforgettable journey to experience Hope, Joy, Peace & Love!

What an amazing season it is as we journey together toward Christmas. The word *advent* comes from Latin and roughly means "coming." So we use these weeks leading up to Christmas as a chance to look forward to our celebration of the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, the light of the world ... our Savior.

Advent is a season of great expectation, and I'm inviting you to join us as we embark on a journey (actually as we join in an epic journey that began more than two thousand years ago!) as we follow the Star and discover the Light of the world. It's a journey of the heart and soul, but it's also a journey that will realign our expectations and experience of the Christmas season. And it's a journey that will explore the gifts of Christmas delivered by and through Christ: hope, joy, peace and love. We all need **hope** in the storms of life and **love** that never gives up. We need fresh **joy** on our journey and **peace** no matter what we're facing or dealing with.

And you probably know someone who needs that too! That's why we're making an outreach tool available to you this Advent. The free pamphlet is available in the church lobby, and it introduces the four themes for the weeks of Advent (love, joy, peace and hope), and invites the reader to ponder the true gifts of Christmas. You can use it to invite your friends and family to join you in your journey to Christmas.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL

Tis' the season to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. During the month of December, the children are busy practicing for the Christmas Experience through song and narration.



The presentation will be followed by a family "Keepsake Christmas" in the Fellowship Hall with lots of fun. Teams are now forming, so if you would like to help with the preparations from beginning to end, please contact me as soon as possible.

Just a reminder that we are offering a combined Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., so you have 2 opportunities for your children to learn about God.

If you would like to be involved in the Sunday School Program in any way, please let me know as we are always looking for more hands to serve the Lord. Until next time....



- Rhonda Sutherlin
Sunday School Director

VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

NOVEMBER 12, 2017



Thank you to the Carlsbad Cub Pack 740 for presenting the flag at our 8:30am service!



DATE NIGHT DROP 'N SHOP SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH, 12-4PM

Drop'n Shop is an opportunity for parents to have some time alone to shop in peace, wrap gifts or take a break from all the Christmas preparations. Enjoy a few hours to yourselves while your kids have fun

Min. Age - 1 year. Cost: \$10 for one child, \$20 for 2 children, \$30 for 3 or more children

For more information, or to reserve a place, please contact Clare Donovan: [760-496-8088](tel:760-496-8088) Email: clareanddeclan@yahoo.co.uk

- Clare Donovan

PRESCHOOL

With Thanksgiving behind us, the Christmas Season is upon us and a time to remember the real "reason for the season" —the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is also a time to open our hearts and help those who are less fortunate. To all the Redeemer Families, we wish you a very Blessed Merry Christmas &

Preschool Christmas Performance Schedule

December 21st: 9:30 am AM 3's & PM 3's
*NO LUNCH BUNCH OR ENRICHMENT

December 22nd:
9:30 am AM 4's
12:30 pm Kindergarten, PM 4's & Bonus

YOUTH BOWLING!

DECEMBER 24TH, GRADES 5TH—12TH

Spend some time over Christmas break with all your friends bowling! December 28th starting at 5pm we will be at the Bowlero in San Marcos – the cost is \$10 and includes 1.5 hours of bowling, shoes, 1 slice of pizza, and unlimited soda. Payment is due by Sunday, December 24th to reserve the lanes. **Grades 5th – 12th** are invited and you will be grouped on the lanes by age groups.

- Karen Heiser and Pastor Augie

5TH & 6TH GRADE RETREAT



Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 14, 2018. This is a 1 day retreat that has teaching, worship, and a service project! It will be at Crean Lutheran High School again this year. Watch for registration details in 2018!



The 5th & 6th grade Sunday School class—join us at 9:45am on Sundays!



The 5th & 6th grade class making clay ziggurats.



7TH & 8TH GRADE RETREAT

The Jr High DYG will be at the Irvine Ranch Outdoor Educational Center. This center has it all: worship space, activity space, great hiking and camp activities, and sleeping accommodations.

The theme for this year's Jr. High Gathering is "Follow" based on three lessons from the books of Daniel and Esther. Three speakers will walk us through three narratives, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from Daniel 3, Daniel and the Lion's Den from Daniel 6, and Esther's story from Esther 1-8. All three narratives will center on the verse Daniel 3:29b "There is no other god who is able to rescue in this way."

Our Jr High kids are being led in so many different directions in this day and age, by peers, our culture, even family, they are being told to "follow" so many different things, people and beliefs. This year our three speakers will help our kids discern who they are following, and who they are allowing themselves to be led by, and will learn why they should be following the One True God rather than things that don't last.

The speakers are:

Dominic Rivkin

Pastor Domini J. Rivkin serves as the Executive Director of LINC Los Angeles, a mission organization dedicated to empowering local leaders to start new

ministries that impact communities for the Gospel.

Shelli Haynes

Shelli Haynes has been a DCE in Southern CA for 21 years. Currently she is serving children and high school students at Red Hill Lutheran in Tustin. She is a graduate from Concordia Irvine and has a MA from Concordia Seward, NE.

Kyle Blake

Pastor Kyle Blake serves as the pastor at The Gathering Lutheran Church in Long Beach. He has been in the ministry for 17 years. Once at a youth event, Pastor Kyle chewed a wad of gum that was comprised of ABC (already been chewed) gum from about 50 kids.

Registration materials will be available mid-December with payment due by January 28th.

*Confirmation students enjoying their class...
Can you spot the teacher?*



GROWTH GROUP UPDATES

Our Growth Groups provide people an opportunity to connect with other believers and do life together in a supportive and faith-nurturing cluster of friends. Visit our web site at RedeemerbytheSea.org for a complete listing and information concerning our Growth Groups.

SALT & LIGHT

The Salt & Light Ministry believes that you should understand Christian Citizenship, which includes (1) be knowledgeable on the important issues (2) know the position of your representatives on those issues (3) vote. That is why when the Mayor of Carlsbad called Redeemer and asked to speak, the Salt & Light group was glad to accept the opportunity to host. But why get involved in the operations of government? We now live in a nation that allows what had been forbidden. In fact, it is now common for those who stand up for the sanctity of life over abortion, traditional marriage over same sex unions, protest the erosion of 1st Amendment religious liberties, to be persecuted with job or business loss, threats for safety, labeled as 'haters', and more. The ungodly stains in our society are not in biblical Christianity but in the failure to put it into action. If you don't have a standard of Truth upon which to base society, the result for America will be whoever gains the most political power will rule the rest of us.

Time and again many of our Founding Fathers are quoted on the belief that our form of government requires a moral people. The Founders recognized that the best teacher of morality is the Bible and the Christian religion. George Washington said, "Religion and morality are the essential pillars of civil society." "The great pillars of all government and of social life are virtue, morality, and religion. This is the armor, my friend, and this alone, that renders us invincible", said Patrick Henry. This sentiment has been echoed by dozens of presidents and famous American leaders. Thomas Paine made it clear that God not government is supreme when he said, "The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Where, some say, is the king of America? I'll tell you, friend, He reigns above." The Bible tells us the purpose of government is to be God's servant to restrain evil and reward good (Romans 13: 1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14). But what if government does not act in Godly ways, what should we do, if anything? The Bible tells us of Peter and the

apostles preaching against the wishes of the authorities. The disciple's response was, "*We must obey God rather than men...*" (Acts 5:29). So, Peter made it clear that we cannot have political views outside of our Christian faith. Anytime a government requires Christians to do what God forbids or forbids what God commands then we must follow God's laws not man's.

What would America be like if every Christian prayed for God's guidance and voted their conscience? It would be a positive thing, would it not? Besides praying for our leaders and nation, voting is the best way we Christians can influence the path our nation follows. When we have an opportunity to elect our leaders, we should take advantage by voting for

those who best demonstrate Christian values.

"Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear

God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be the rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens." (Exodus 18:21).

Your Salt & Light Co-Leader,
- Jerry Meyer



MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

Do you want to make a difference by bringing the love of Christ to your neighborhood and our community? Join us once a month on the first Thursday of the month from 6:30-8pm (6pm if you want to join us for dinner!) Our next dates are December 7th and January 4th. We will gather to share our experiences from community service and Christian witness. We'll enjoy each other's company, encourage each other, open God's Word and pray for what God is doing.

- Pastor Augie

HOLY HACKERS

We are taking a break until January. If you want information about our monthly golf outings, email Dianne Haarmeyer at di.haarmeyer@icloud.com or call her at 936-537-2122

- Di Haarmeyer

GROWTH GROUPS, *CONT.*

BIRTHDAY GROUP

We celebrated the November birthdays of Faye Bacon, Bill Barnes and Mavis and Dale Ward on FRIDAY, November 10, (which just happens to be the birthday of Martin Luther) at La Costa Glen. Thank you again, Dave Berrier, for making the arrangements for us to enjoy lunch in a quiet secluded room with superb service and excellent food presented graciously.

Good food, good fellowship, ambience and we donated one hundred forty-five (\$145) dollars to the Salvation Army.

Our next lunch will be FRIDAY, December 15 at 11:30 a.m. at Macaroni Grill, 2655 Vista Way in Oceanside (next to Barnes and Noble) and we'll celebrate with John Bacon, Cordelia Degner, Otis Haarmeyer, Suzanne Hughes, Norma Russell, Carol Scoffin, Jo Voertman, Frank Wallner and Joan Wilson.

In addition to your lunch, we request a one dollar per celebrant donation which will go to Brother Benno's, helping the hungry and homeless in Oceanside.

Everyone is welcome to join us but you do need a reservation with the Birthday Coordinator, Jo Voertman, jvbythesea@cox.net, 760-721-6674.

- Jo Voertman

BRIDGE GROUP

A beautiful bowl of fresh Fruit, Cookies, Coffee and Tea set the stage for an afternoon of bridge play at the home of Jo Voertman, on November 17, and it was good! Thank you, Jo. Chloe, the beagle, welcomed us, too!

After 18 hands of bidding and playing Marie Voien was high scorer with George Ann Barnes in second place. Jo Voertman accepted the low score position, the perfect hostess.

Bridge will resume on the 4th Friday of the month, January 26, 2018, 12:30 PM, and if you are interested as a regular player, or as a substitute, please let me know. You will be royally welcomed as a member. Phone: 760.707.6677; e-mail: baconfaye3@gmail.com

We acknowledge God's Son, Jesus, the baby born in

the manger, as our Lord and Savior, and we say, God is Good! Thanks be to God!

From the heart we say, Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

May the Peace of God dwell in your hearts!

- Faye Bacon

CHOIR

Greetings from the choir loft and your Choir Director:

We are busy finalizing our work on our Christmas Cantata, "Night of Miracles," written by John Peterson. We can't wait to present the Christmas story through this beautiful Cantata, featuring singers from our Chancel Choir, Contemporary singers, piano, and a string trio. This year the Cantata will be presented on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 7:00pm. Please plan to attend this traditional candle lighting service, also featuring our singers, instrumentalists, and soloists. Bring your entire family.

Our Chancel Choir has had a successful year, learning new anthems, featuring quartets, duets, soloists, and a variety of anthems throughout the year. We have added some new members, and are still looking for a few more to add to our choir. Why not start a New Year's Resolution to join the Chancel Choir and reap the benefits of devotion, working together as a team, singing praises to our Lord? This is such a rewarding experience of giving beautiful music back to our congregation and those who visit our church for worship. I personally invite you to try us out. Come during the month of January, on Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:00pm as we rehearse in our beautiful sanctuary. We would love to have you. We also have an optional devotional from 6:15-6:30pm You are welcome to join us before choir rehearsal.

The Children's Choir will be starting up again in January. Please bring your child during the second service to rehearse downstairs during Sunday School. We love to share learning new praise songs, old traditional children's songs, and new contemporary sounds. The Children's Choir is open to kids Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. For more information, contact Gary Wilson, 858 864-3491.

All of our church musicians want to wish everyone a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In His Service,

- Gary Wilson

GROWTH GROUPS, *CONT.*

GRIEF GROUP

Thursday, December 21st, 1:30 P.M. is our monthly Grief Support meeting. We will be discussing the last chapter of our book "Grieving with Hope." We will also discuss our plans for next year. Look forward to seeing you! Contact Norma at 760-931-1947 for more information.

- Norma Russell

SUNDAY AM STUDY

For the Sundays in December, we will be going through a series on Advent. Grab a cup of coffee and join us at 9:45am in the Fellowship Hall.

- Don Howard



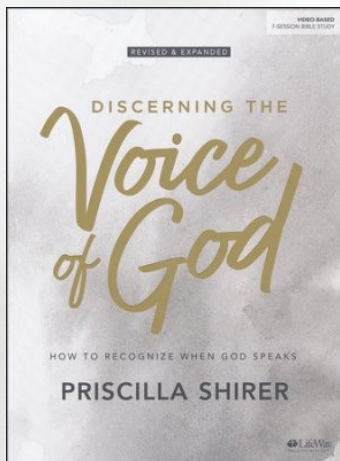
LADIES WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Priscilla Shirer's "Discerning the Voice of God" begins Jan24, 9:15 in Fellowship Hall

Child Care provided, Study Books are \$15. Please check sign up sheet in lobby.

"If hearing God has seemed challenging, we are exploring a more intimate relationship with Him, one that can make hearing Him - His will, His Heart and His Voice- your going experience. Discover how you can listen with greater confidence, clarity, and discernment."

contact: evelyn10meyer@gmail.com 760-704-6476
-Evelyn Meyer



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION



CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 12TH AT 6PM

Barbara Gehring's Home: 6603 Fiona Pl, Carlsbad
760 929 1926

Come Celebrate with your fellow sisters in Christ Please sign up in the lobby. We will have a appetizers & wine and a delicious Italian dinner. It will be a wonderful time to celebrate your Secret Sister for the year. We will exchange gifts and choose new Secret Sisters for 2018.

If you don't have a secret sister, just bring a gift valued \$25 and exchange with another Christian sister. Carpooling is recommended.

- Barbara Gehring

NOVEMBER SERVICE PROJECT

Thank you to everyone who came out on November 14th to serve! We did the following projects:

1. Painted 40 Faith Journey Boxes which are used to store items that don't fit into a photo album.
2. Provided sack lunches for 20 homeless men at InterFaith in Carlsbad before they went to their work assignments.



CHRISTMAS OFFERING

“Giving Sacrificially to God’s Work”...Christmas is the time when we think of the “gifts” we give to our friends and loved ones. Shouldn’t this also be true that this is a time when we give “gift” to our Lord? This year the Christmas Offering will be divided equally to three areas:

- 1. Got Your Back San Diego (GYB)** – This is a weekend food assistance program developed specifically for children who depend on school lunch programs for their primary source of nutrition Monday



through Friday and have little to nothing of any nutritional value to eat on weekends. Each week throughout the school year, volunteers come together to fill backpacks with 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners, and a few healthy snacks, enough food to sustain a child through the weekend. The backpacks are discretely distributed to the children in need by a designated GYB liaison.

- 2. Concordia Seminary “Adopt-A-Student”**– Your gifts will be used to prepare future pastors and missionaries.



- 3. Redeemer’s Benevolent Fund** – This will help replenish our fund to assist those in need (both within our congregation and outside). Additional funds enable us to assist more people.

You can make contribution using your Christmas offering envelope or the green envelope in the pew, or online.

Christmas Offering envelopes can be placed in the offering plate on any Sunday in December.



Thank you for your generosity!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Jason Sylvester	Dec 2
Sam Russell	Dec 3
Suzanne Hughes	Dec 4
Tom Shanahan	Dec 5
Bryan Oliver	Dec 5
Ralph Krogfoss	Dec 9
Gretchen Bolton	Dec 12
Kevan Bustillos	Dec 14
Chuck Denton	Dec 15
John Bacon	Dec 16
Carole Gomez	Dec 17
Eileen Erickson	Dec 18
Jeanne Robinson	Dec 18
Otis Haarmeyer	Dec 21
Jo Voertman	Dec 22
Kellie Granito	Dec 22
Sara Oliver	Dec 23
Monique Russell	Dec 24
Kim Glassman	Dec 29
Nona Isaacson	Dec 29
Aaron Redl	Dec 29
Joan Wilson	Dec 29
Norma Russell	Dec 30
Frank Wallner	Dec 31

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Carl & Barbara Gehring	Dec 4
Hugh & Kathy Morris	Dec 20
Otis & Di Haarmeyer	Dec 20
Kathy & Robert Seemann	Dec 21
Jan & Greg Bishop	Dec 27
Buck & Alice Lehmann	Dec 31

ADVENT DEVOTIONS

Pick up your Advent Devotional book --



"Love Came Down" in the lobby. If you prefer to download them to your e-reader, read or listen to them online, visit www.lhm.org/advent. Devotions start on Dec. 3rd.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

You are invited to celebrate our volunteers at 9:45am on December 10th. We appreciate all that you do to make Redeemer the great place that it is! This includes Church Council, Music teams, Refreshments, Fellowship, Elders, Facilities, Growth Group Leaders, Office Staff & Assistants, Youth Leaders, Women's Ministry, Sunday School & Nursery, Counters, PowerPoint, VBS, Readers, Greeters, Ushers, Preschool Board, Date Night, Communion Prep, Church Decorators, and so many more! AND WE THANK YOU!

There will be special refreshments and a thank you gift!

Thank You

ALTAR FLOWERS

We have a great group of volunteers that make our altar flower arrangements each week. There is a need for at least one more volunteer. This involves doing an arrangement one Sunday per month. Training will be provided. I was once told "there is no such thing as an ugly flower arrangement". You do not need to be an expert but just like flowers and arranging them. Contact Di Haarmeyer at di.haarmeyer@icloud.com or 936-537-2122 .

- Di Haarmeyer

CURRENT SERMON SERIES



Join us on an unforgettable journey this season to experience Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace

Over two thousand years ago, a star burst through the darkness and signaled the long-awaited, yet still unexpected birth of a Savior.

Christmas can still truly give us a taste of the most wonderful time of world history. Jesus—the Messiah, the Savior—came as the light into the darkness and stress and pain of the world—our world. That world then, just like our world now, including our lives, needs the light to illuminate, clarify, guide, and heal. Christ's coming brings that ultimate light through hope, love, joy, and peace. This is the journey of following the star to Christmas—and beyond!

This Advent season, you are invited to follow the star. It's not just about the destination, but also about a journey we can take together to experience God's love and grace in the midst of real life.

Nov. 29 Wednesday 6:30pm A Journey of HOPE
Dec 3 A Journey of JOY
Dec 17 A Journey of PEACE
Dec 24 10am A Journey of LOVE
Dec 24 5 & 7pm A Journey to CHRISTMAS

CHURCH COUNCIL

As Vice President of the RBTS council, one of my main responsibilities is to fill vacant seats on the council to ensure our mission. Currently, the church is in need of leadership in the areas of: Education and Stewardship. Please see the "job descriptions" in the brochure rack in the lobby for more information and let me know if you are interested.



- Melanie Burkholder

VOTERS MEETING

Please plan to attend our next regularly scheduled Voters' meeting at 9:45am on December 10th. This is the opportunity for your elected Council Members to provide you the details of what is going on in the various Ministry areas. We will also be voting on new council members.

- Kris Urdahl

PARENTING CHRISTIAN KIDS: NURTURE GENEROUS HEARTS

"Store your treasures in heaven Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will be also." —Matthew 6:20-21

Jesus gave us the best guidance for living in a culture that overflows with materialism. In Matthew 6:33 (NLT), he challenges us to "seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." When we trust Jesus to provide, we can be generous and find joy in giving to others. Helping children develop a heart of gratitude is the best cure for a sense of entitlement. Gratitude moves the focus off ourselves so we can consider other people's needs and act generously in response. Start by talking with your children about sharing. Then discuss why God wants us to be generous—and how sharing our blessings with others becomes a blessing for them. Try these ideas to nurture generosity and a giving spirit this Christmas.

Hearts for Jesus Make a big stocking with the name "Jesus" in glitter. Let children make felt or paper hearts with their names on them and give their "hearts" to Jesus. (After all, that's what he wants the most at Christmas!)

12 Days of Serving As a family, come up with 12 acts of service you can perform together during December. For example, shovel snow for a neighbor, donate extra blankets to a homeless shelter, and deliver cookies and hot cocoa to homebound senior citizens.

Try Tithing When children receive money for Christmas, have them use 10 percent to help someone else,

whether they donate it or buy a small gift. Together, keep a journal detailing how children use that 10 percent—and see how the blessings add up!

Adopt a Family Purchase gifts and a holiday meal for a family in need. Then deliver everything on (or right before) Christmas Eve. You can do this anonymously.

All-Night Anticipation Curl up in sleeping bags beneath your tree on Christmas Eve. Before going to sleep, talk about what Mary and Joseph experienced on the journey to Bethlehem and in the stable. Before opening gifts in the morning, emphasize that Jesus is the first—and best—Christmas gift.

Baby Blessings Older kids can throw a baby shower (complete with birth announcements!) for Jesus and then donate items to a local crisis-pregnancy center.

ASK GOD:

1. To bless your family's Christmas preparations and reflections.
2. To help your children feel satisfied with what they have.
3. To show your family the value of spiritual things rather than material things.

Anonymous Angels On Christmas morning, have family members draw names. During each of the next 12 days, angels should anonymously do something special for their person (do a chore, leave a note or drawing, make a treat, etc.). On January 6 (Epiphany), have an Angel Party and reveal your identities. Serve angel food cake and discuss what it was like to bless others—and to be blessed by others.

Bearing Gifts Fill lunch sacks with small treats and tape them shut. Read aloud Matthew 2:1-12 and say: "After Jesus was born, wise men traveled a long way to bring him gifts. Let's pretend to be wise men and camels!" Take turns being wise men who guide camels on all fours—carrying a sack on their back. Then talk about what gifts the wise men gave Jesus and what gifts we can give him.

SHARING YOUR STORY

Have you been impacted by the ministry at Redeemer by the Sea? Got a story to share about how you have seen God at work in your life? We are compiling a resource to share with our congregation in January, and are looking for people to share some thoughts about how God still works in hearts and lives. Contact Pastor Augie if you are interested!

- Pastor Augie

CHRISTMAS EVE REFRESHMENTS

Christmas Eve services (10 a.m., 5 P.M. & 7 P.M.) are a special time for everyone at RBTS, including our many guests.

Help is needed:

- Set out refreshments for each of the services
- Clean up after each of the 3 services
- Cookie bakers

Sign - up sheet will be on the Fellowship table by the stairway in the lobby.

Questions contact: BJ Campbell-Lahr, 760-945-3750 or bjclahr@cox.net

- BJ Lahr

ANGEL TREE

We have been providing Christmas gifts for children of our local Marines for 10 years now. What a blessing it is to be part of this wonderful mission. It brings joy to the families who receive the gifts. I past years we have received many thank you cards and pictures from them. They are grateful for our generosity. Please take one or more Angels from the tree in the lobby.

Very Important to sign up on the sheet next to the tree! Buy the gift of the child's choice for up to \$25, wrap it and make sure the angel is securely attached to the gift. Please put it back under the tree ASAP. Sunday, Dec. 17th is the last day to return Angels. Questions: Hilda Kalaidjian 805 304-1275/Barbara Gehring 760 929-1926

STEWARDSHIP

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14)!

We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger, but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God's people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deut. 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14)

His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas, but throughout all the year.

We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us.

We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us.

Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.



A JOURNEY TO CHRISTMAS CONT. FROM PG 1



Our journey centers on the Star as our guiding light. The Star of Bethlehem, that burst through the darkness over two thousand years ago and signaled the long-awaited birth of a Savior, has taken a central place in the Christmas story, but its mention in the Bible is really very brief. The record of wise men from the East who followed a star is only mentioned in Matthew's Gospel account of Christ's

coming (Matthew 2). And there is much discussion by scholars and scientists about what the Star actually was, who the wise men (Magi) were, and when the cosmic event of its appearance took place. But apart from the debates, there remains the truth that the light of a star led people to Jesus – even if they were still on their journey the night Jesus was born. (Most scholars place the wise men showing up a few months to a year after Jesus's birth.) And maybe that's a good metaphor for anyone's spiritual journey ... we don't always come to Jesus the minute He reveals himself ... it's a process.

The Advent season is about the journey as much as the destination. As we'll explore, it is a time to prepare, maybe to pause and to ponder, to breathe deeply and turn our eyes to the true meaning of this time of

year—a season that can seem so hectic and stressful in our culture. Let's be honest – sometimes the journey of life can get long and difficult. And this busy time of year can pile on more challenges and stress. The good news is – there is hope!

No matter where you find yourself today, you are invited into this journey. Will you say yes to the journey? Will you peer through the darkness of your life, no matter what that may be, and look for the Star ... a glimmer of hope? Will you journey toward Bethlehem, drawn by hope for the love, joy, and peace that await you?

Is that hard for you to imagine? Is your Christmas season overwhelmed already by any number of struggles: financial stresses, relational dysfunctions, loss of a loved one? I think we all have one or the other ... But let me encourage you—that's exactly where hope shines brightest.

Christmas can still give us a taste of the most wonderful time of world history. Jesus, the Messiah and Savior, came as the Light into the darkness, stress and pain of the world. And He still shines His Light for us today as He did that first Christmas. He fills our lives' journeys with hope, love, joy, and peace. Join us this Advent and Christmas at Redeemer. We have much to share with you as we follow our Lord together.

In Christ's Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace,

Pastor Augie



WHO ARE YOUR ELDERS?

Head Elder, Otis Haarmeyer
elders@redeemerbythesea.org
(936) 537-4256

Your elders are a resource to you for your spiritual and ministry needs. Feel free to contact them with any needs or concerns – or just to say hello!

They are: Dave Berrier, Jim Brunner, Tom Burke, Matt Busch, Wayne Chapman, Carl Gehring, Otis Haarmeyer, Ed Meinardus, Jerry Meyer, Lyle Meyer, Joel Rabe, Ken Swick, Charles Um

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