

January Newsletter

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From the Pastor

As I write this note, Christmas is almost here! The homes are bright with decorations, the family and friend gatherings have already begun, the baking is complete, and only the most last of the last minute preparations remain. And amidst all the hooplah, amidst all the hustle and bustle of the season ~ I wonder Where is God?

And I am sure that question is on the tips of tongues of people everywhere. Where is God for the victims of acts of terror? Where is God as the world seems like it might slip into another nuclear arms race? Where is God for the families who have had loved ones gunned down in the city streets of the U.S.? Where is God for those who have lost loved ones to tragic accidents? Where is God for those who go to bed at night hungry? Where is God for those who are suffering from terrible addictions? Oh, the questions could fill this page!!!

Where is God? Well, God is with us. At least that is what scripture says. Immanuel, God is With Us, came many years ago in the form of the Child of Bethlehem. And while it is appropriate for us to celebrate that event of long ago, it is also important for us to remember that Immanuel means God IS with us, not that God WAS with us, or that God WILL BE with us. Christmas reminds us that while Jesus was born long ago in a stable near Bethlehem, that while Jesus grew in spirit and stature and delivered Good News to the lame, the blind, the deaf, the mute, the diseased, the distressed, the poor and the oppressed, and that while he was crucified for our sake and the sake of the world, He also was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven and will one day return to claim all believers. And His parting words were: "Lo, I AM WITH you ALWAYS!" God With Us!

So when you find yourself asking "Where is God?" or if you hear others asking "Where is God?" you have the answer - He is here, in our midst, amongst us, leading us into the future where he already is. And there indeed is nothing in all creation that can separate us from God With Us - Jesus the babe of Bethlehem, the Christ of the Cross, the Lord of all the earth.

May we enter 2017 with the assurance of God's presence with us and forever!

Thought of the Month

"We are never far from home because Christ is as near to us as our own breath or our own pulse. So, whenever you find yourself this year, dear church, remember that Jesus is with you, and you are home.

Bible Trivia of the Month

Who does Paul thank God for because their faith and love grew exceedingly?

Answer on page 8

Thank You

To all who donated food, time, effort & love to our family when Naomi passed. Thank you all so much.

Steve, Jodie, Herbert Wildermuth & families

*Additional thank you on the bulletin board in office area: ELCA Global Church Sponsorship Team



Christmas for Kids Fundraiser

The Christmas for Kids was a successful fundraiser because four local churches and community members donated their time and gently used Christmas decorations. We raised \$620 from The “Christmas decoration rummage sale” that is being split evenly among the four churches. St. Jacob will be using the donation in three areas: Shelby Hills Child Development-Sidney, Ohio for at risk children, Oesterlen Services for Youth, Springfield, Ohio, and Global Barnyard for vaccinations of children in developing countries. Immanuel Church in Kettlersville had planned on assisting the family of Anna Eisert whom was battling Cancer and only 2 years old. Just prior to the fundraiser, Anna passed away. The money received will be given to the family of Anna Eisert - Parents- Craig and Erin Eisert to assist and offset costs they have encountered over the past year and the cost of other services for Anna. The Anna United Methodist church will help families that don’t have the means to have Christmas and then work to make sure they do. The Sacred Heart Parish in McCartyville will be helping the Children on the Salvation Army tree. The left-over decorations will be distributed for free to families who would have no Christmas decorations at all by Covenant Lutheran Church in St. Paris, Ohio.



So many families and childrens’ Christmas may be a little brighter because of the service contribution of others.

Sincerely,

Brenda Littlefield

WELCA News

On December 5th the WELCA held their annual Christmas Party. We had a Christmas prayer and snacks were in enjoyed by all. Everyone enjoyed making a Christmas ornament and the revealing of our 2016 Prayer Partners. If you would like to be included in the **2017 Prayer Partner**—forms are on the back table. We will start drawing names on Sunday, January 8th. Please let Nancy Martin know what name you have drawn, so we can keep a master copy.



Christmas Decorating Team

The Christmas Decorating team is looking ahead to 2017 Christmas decorating. They are asking for members to donate any pine cones they may have. If you have any questions, please see Gary Strasser 394-7510.

Sunday Morning Servants

	January 1	January 8	January 15	January 22	January 29
Readers (8am)		Steve Elsass	Mike Bertsch	Jan Elsass	Velma Billing
Readers (10am)	Nancy Martin	Rick Ike	Sharon Schnell	Emily Cavinder	Lisa Brady
Acolytes	Deacons	Wyatt Fogt	Piper Kipp	Justin Krites	Macy Wahl
Crucifer			Elliott Davis		Ryan Ely
Greeters	N-Jean	N-Roger Lentz	N-Matt & Lindsay	N-Karen Sayre	N-Jason & Laura
	Wildermuth		Homan		Fogt
	S-Betty Miars	S-Nancy Spence	S-Mike & Sharon	S-Bill	S-Ike & Mitzi
			Schnell	Helmlinger	Eisenhardt
Communion Asst	Kathy Fogt		Jenni Shoffner		
Blood Pressure Ck					

Offering Envelopes & EFT for 2017



Offering envelopes are available in the back of the sanctuary . Also, now is a good time to think about starting your Electronic Funds Transfer for 2017. This is a paperless transaction option for making your church contributions. Forms are available on the back table of the sanctuary at anytime.

Covenant Packets—If you did not receive a Covenant Packet, please pick one up from the back table. We would like every church member to participate in the Covenant process even if you don't use offering envelopes. Covenant Sunday is **January 8th**. You are welcome to drop your Covenant Packet in the basket on the altar that day or anytime after.

Communion Assistants for 2017



If you wish to serve as a Communion Assistant for the 10 a.m. worship services for 2017 or want to be taken off the list, please contact Nancy Martin 492-1584 by **January 8th**. We are in need of Communion Assistants for the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month.

New Communion Bread Option

St. Jacob will now be offering gluten free wafers for those who require a gluten free diet. Please indicate by holding up one finger during communion distribution if you require this special wafer.



Special Congregational Meeting

December 11, 2016

The special Congregational Meeting was called to order in two sessions at 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. by President Jim Brandt on December 11, 2016. Both sessions were opened by Pastor Althausser with prayer.

The President entertained questions concerning the following items of business being brought before the congregation for a vote by paper ballot:

Proposed 2017 Church Budget.

A slate of proposed Council Members was also presented as follows:

Trustees: Jerry Pleiman (1st Term)
Dave Bell (1st Term)

Deacons: Carol Bodenhorn (2nd Term)
Rick Ike (2nd Term)
Ann Huffman (2nd Term)
Keith Elsass (1st Term)
Dave Fogt (1st Term)

Dave Fogt moved and Mark Wahl seconded to approve the 2017 budget as presented. Paper ballots were distributed.

Don Eisenhardt moved and Jason Fogt seconded to accept the slate of 2017 officers as presented. Motion passed.

At this point in the 9:00 a.m. session, Steve Elsass moved to recess the meeting until the 10:00 a.m. session and Jan Elsass seconded. Motion passed.

Mike Schnell moved and Gary Strasser seconded to approve the 2017 budget as presented. Paper ballots were distributed.

Fred Pulfer moved and John Fahnestock seconded to accept the slate of 2017 officers as presented. Motion passed.

Darrell Heintz moved to adjourn the meeting and Fred Pulfer seconded. Motion passed.

Paper ballots counted following both the 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. sessions of the special Congregational Meeting reported the following: a total of 91 “yes” and 2 “no” for the proposed 2017 Budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Brady
Secretary

Upstair pew benches

We are looking for anyone who would be interested in 2 pew benches from the upstairs. They are in need of some repair. If you are interested, please see Jerry Pleiman or let the church office know by **February 1, 2017**.



Church Council Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2016

Members in attendance:

Pastor Althaus	Lisa Brady	Keith Elsass	Rick Ike
Cheryl Pulfer	Jerry Pleiman	Charles Elsass	Dave Greer
Jim Brandt	Deb Christman	Carol Bodenhorn	

Excused Members:

Ann Huffman	Kim Klopfleisch
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Gathering Hymn “Joy to the World”

LBW #39 vs 1-2

Listening for God’s Guidance

Luke 2:1-20

Theme: Christmas

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Brandt.

Secretary’s Report

Roll Call was taken. The minutes from the November 21, 2016 meeting were reviewed. Keith Elsass moved and Dave Greer seconded to accept the Secretary’s Report. Motion passed.

The minutes from the special congregational meeting held on December 11, 2016 were also reviewed. Carol Bodenhorn moved and Jerry Pleiman seconded to accept these minutes. Motion passed.

Financial Secretary’s Report

For November, 2016, the Current Offering was \$17,664.80 and the Benevolence Offering was \$1,875.00. The Capital Campaign collected \$935.00. Jerry Pleiman moved and Charles Elsass seconded to accept the Financial Secretary’s report. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report

For November, 2016 the receipts were \$17,829.99 and expenses were \$16,172.93 for a positive difference of \$1,657.06. This brings the Year-to-Date receipts to \$202,079.23 and the expenses to \$184,413.72 for a positive difference of \$17,665.51. Keith Elsass moved and Rick Ike seconded to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Motion passed.

Offering Our Gifts and Talents

Trustee’s Report

Jerry Pleiman reported that the Trustees received 2 quotes from TESCO outlining suggested repairs to the church bus. One quote is for \$7,160 and the second quote is for \$7,360. The higher quote includes new doors versus reworking the old doors. Both quotes include removing the windows and re-caulking them, removing the old graphics and replacing with new graphics, replacing the rear bumper, and repairing the fiberglass near the bumper. TESCO would buff the bus as needed to bring back the shine. Payment is not required up front. The bus only has 32,000 miles on it and it runs good. We need to make it look better. After discussion, the consensus was to ask the congregation to approve the quote that includes the new doors. Jerry Pleiman made a motion to recommend the quote with the new doors to the congregation at the annual meeting in January for a dollar amount not to exceed \$7,600. Seconded by Keith Elsass. Motion passed. No further action has been taken on repairing the basement door, the water fountain upstairs has been replaced and we are still waiting on the memorial plaques for the trees recently planted. The Trustees were notified that the elevator is not working properly

(again). The elevator company will need to be contacted. The telephone in the elevator was also discussed. The telephone company will need to be contacted to install a separate line for the elevator phone.

Carol Bodenhorn moved and Keith Elsass seconded to accept the Trustees' Report. Motion passed.

Deacon's Reports

The Parish Ed committee reported that the Sunday School kids are working on the Christmas Program. Kids of the Kingdom and Luther League went caroling 2 weeks ago. The Luther League kids are taking care of the live nativity and the late service on Christmas Eve. Senior quilts will be presented on May 21st.

The Worship Team reported that an on-call pastor has been secured. Christmas Eve activities will include the live nativity at 6:00pm, children's hour at 7:00pm, Concert of Joy at 10:30pm and Candlelight, Carol & Communion at 11:00pm. There will be one service on Christmas Day (10:00am) and New Years' Day (10:00am). And it was decided to serve communion on Pastor's last day (January 29th).

The Vision Development Team reported they have begun talking about the transition that will be happening with Pastor's retirement. More info will be shared later as the process evolves.

The Benevolence/Christian Action Team reported that they donated money to the two local families who recently suffered house fires (Montra and Botkins). They also decided to donate \$2,000 to the Southern Ohio Synod. They will also be making donations of \$1,400 each to Hospice, LOMO, Wernle, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Alpha Center.

The Evangelism Team reported that the holiday schedule postcards were sent out last month. They will be meeting soon to discuss upcoming projects.

Charles Elsass moved and Dave Greer seconded to accept the Deacon's Reports. Motion passed.

Pastor's Report

Pastor reported that the average attendance through November, 2016 for worship was 172 compared with 176.2 for 2015. The average attendance for Sunday School was 55.3 compared with 54 for 2015. Keith Elsass moved and Dave Greer seconded the transfer of several members from active to inactive status. Motion passed.

Charles Elsass moved and Jerry Pleiman seconded to accept the Pastor's report. Motion passed.

Continuing Business

The annual meeting will be held at 9:00am and 10:00pm on January 22nd.

Council members will be installed on January 8th and it will also be covenant Sunday on the 8th.

There will be a farewell lunch for Pastor and Sue on January 29th around noon at the Anna Elementary School. Two pews have been removed in the balcony to make room for the bell choir. An announcement will be placed in the bulletin that if anyone from the congregation would like the pews, they can let Jerry Pleiman know. The pews will need some rework/repair. If nobody expresses interest by January 31st, the pews will be disposed of.

Envisioning Business

The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday, January 16, 2016 at 7:30pm.

Sending Forth "Joy to the World" LBW #39, vs 3-4

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Brady

Jan 1 Abigail Berner, Nathan Berner, Tony Berner
 Jan 3 Ruby Sibert, Greg Wilt
 Jan 4 Breonna Tribbett, Owen Wilt
 Jan 6 Steve Elsass, Vickey Greer, Bekah Holsapple, Zach Zimpher
 Jan 7 Damon Huffman
 Jan 8 Michael Rickert
 Jan 9 Sara Bertsch, Matt Greer
 Jan 10 Robert Gregg, Mindy Stombaugh
 Jan 11 Derek Brady, Jared Line
 Jan 12 Rob Current, Linda Kies
 Jan 13 Anderson Fisher, Marah Miller
 Jan 14 Kreg Elsass, David Jensvold, Angela Wildermuth, Nolan Wilt
 Jan 15 Gina Fogt, Elly Hoewischer
 Jan 16 Sebastian Harshbarger, Paul Quatman, Joe Yinger
 Jan 17 Hank Zimpher
 Jan 18 Jan Elsass, Sharon Van Fossen
 Jan 20 Howard Huffman, Violet Taylor
 Jan 21 Katina Shaffer
 Jan 22 Eli Edwards, Kris Kies
 Jan 23 Judy Frilling
 Jan 24 Roy Baker Jr, Ross Pulfer
 Jan 25 Brady Heitkamp, Anita Miller
 Jan 27 Sally Fogt
 Jan 29 Brylee Shoemaker
 Jan 30 Kevin Berner, June Billing, Logan Cathcart, Carolyn Jensvold
 Jan 31 Michael Billing



Jan 25 Tim & Tamara Bowman



2017 Flower Chart



The 2017 Flower Chart is on the window in the back. You may start marking your Sunday's you would like to put flowers on the altar, music cabinet, or organ. Please specify which one when marking your Sunday's. Please contact the church office the week before the date (s) you have chosen, so we can put the information in that week's bulletin.

GROWING AND SHARING; INVITING AND CARING

RETIREMENT DINNER AND RECEPTION



On **Sunday Jan.29 2017** Rev.Micheal Althausser will be preaching his farewell sermon to the St.Jacob congregation after 24+ years in Anna and 40+ years in the ministry. With his retirement we are planning a celebration with a dinner to be provided by the church to be held at the Anna Elementary School beginning at approximately 12:00 p.m. All members are invited and we ask that you let the church office know your intentions.

Thank You,
Jim Brandt
Council President

Upcoming Events

- Jan 1 Happy New Year! Worship at 10 a.m. only with communion
- Jan 8 Covenant Sunday/Installation of Council members
Kids of the Kingdom 3pm
Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
- Jan 9 Brotherhood 7:00 p.m.
- Jan 11 ALL Annual Reports due to the church office
Teen Scene 6pm
- Jan 15 Men's Prayer Breakfast 7:15am
Luther League -Tubing 1pm
Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
- Jan 18 Hannah Circle 12:30pm
Teen Scene 6pm
- Jan 22 Annual Congregational Meeting 9 & 10am
Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
- Jan 23 Brazil Task Force 6:30pm
Teen Scene 6pm
- Jan 29 Pastor's Luncheon noon @ Anna Elementary
Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
- Jan 30 Vision Dev. Meeting 7pm