



St. John's Newsletter

December 2019



The Songs of Christmas

Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind." (Luke 2:13-14 –EHV)

The Christmas season is one filled with songs—there are purely secular songs, hymns filled with rich doctrinal, and everything in between. Songs have always had a strong presence at Christmas. Mary sang a song of thanksgiving when she visited her relative Elizabeth after the angel Gabriel told her that she would give birth to the Son of God (Luke 1:46-55). Zechariah sang that the Lord has fulfilled his promises in saving his people after receiving back his speech—he was made silent for nine months because he doubted that his wife, Elizabeth, could have a child (Luke 1:67-79). 40 days after Jesus birth, when he was taken into the temple, an old man, named Simeon, took Jesus into his arms and sang that the Lord would take him home to heaven now that he had seen his salvation in the face of God's own Son (Luke 2:29-32). Of course, there is the song of the angels (quoted above—from Luke 2:13-14). This song announced to the shepherds that the new-born Savior would bring to the world the peace of forgiveness and the good favor of God (since he sent his Son to save us).

What do you notice about these four songs that surround Christ's birth in the Holy Scriptures? They were all sung for a purpose—they all teach us something! That is what makes a good Christmas song; it teaches us about Jesus and why the Lord humbled himself and gave up the glories and riches of heaven to be born as one of us. As the angel Gabrielle told Joseph, **he will save his people from their sins.** That, of course, is what Christmas is all about. It's about the birth of our Savior!

All of our Christmas hymns do this to one extent or another (some are better than others). Take for example, "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful." In the second stanza we confess that Jesus is God from true God, eternal, born of a virgin, and the only begotten of the Father. In "Silent Night" we confess the Virgin birth, that Jesus is the Son of God whose birth brings about the beginning of our redemption. In "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" we confess that Jesus is our king who brings peace on earth, in him God and sinners are reconciled, and that in his flesh we see the veiled God-head. (As an aside, have you ever closely read the words to "Joy to the World?" It is a fine hymn, but it's not necessarily about Christmas—it's more about Christ's second return than the first!) One final hymn: "Oh, Rejoice, All Christians Loudly;" it may not be the most beloved of Christmas hymns, but it is one of the most comforting and uplifting. In the second stanza we sing, *See, my soul, your Savior chooses poverty and weakness, too; in such love he comes to you. Neither crib nor cross refuses, all he suffers for your good to redeem you by his blood.* How we are filled with joy and gladness as we hear that the little baby born in Bethlehem chose, out of love, to become one of us—just as he, over 30 years later, chose, again out of love, to bear his cross so that he could purchase us with his own blood! How can we not rejoice and sing along with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest!" May all these hymns—and others—fill you with joy, excitement, and comfort this Christmas season as we join in singing the glorious gospel of our Savior's birth!

Pastor Frey

December 2019

ALTAR GUILD

Rose Miller	716-1379
Jane Cleven	830-4163
Sarah Cleven	833-7245
Jeanne Hennes	833-7329
Diane Schabo	733-4337

GREETERS

8:00	Jon & Chris Coenen	12/1
10:30	Betty Randall & Diane Schabo	
8:00	Bob Griffiths and Joe & Ann Probst	12/8
10:30	Janice Bates & Sheryl Hill	
8:00	Dan & Kathy Kreutzman	12/15
10:30	Nancy Bruhn & Eileen Defferding	
8:00	Mitch & Ginger Kobussen	12/22
9:30	Kristine Thomas & Linda Sipple	
11:00	Larry & Rosalie Greenley	
3:00 pm	Dennis & Kris Neumann	12/24
5:00 pm	Cathy Puls & Pat Schabo	
7:00 pm	Ken & Lorraine Ziegler	
9:00 am	Gary & Kathy Schabo	12/25
8:00	Gordon & Jean Schroeder	12/29
10:30	Phyllis Gresens & Sheryll Techlin	
6:30 pm	Elaine Springstroh & Marilyn Wilson	12/31

BAPTISM Brinley Rae Presteen, daughter of Chad and Danielle Presteen was baptized November 3, 2019 at St. John. ***"Be baptized and wash away your sins."*** Acts 22:16

MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICES Our Advent mid-week services will be on **December 4, 11, and 18** at **10:30 am** and **6:30 pm**. Plan to attend these mid-week services during Advent.

WOMEN OF FAITH BIBLE STUDY & LWMS All ladies of the congregation are welcome to come for a potluck lunch, Bible study and LWMS updates on Tuesday, December 10 at **12:00 pm** at the home of Gary and Kathy Schabo, W3989 Wege Road, Appleton, WI 54913. Please sign up on the sheet in the back of church if you plan to come.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE The Children's Christmas services will be **Sunday, December 22 at 9:30 am and 11:00 am**. All the children (3K-8th grade) from St. John can participate. The practices will be on Saturdays, December 7, 14, and 21 from 8:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m. Our regular worship services will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 22 and at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, December 23.

TIMES OF WORSHIP FOR CHRISTMAS

Sunday 12/22	<u>8:00 am</u>	Advent 4 Service
	<u>9:30 am</u>	Children's Christmas Service
	<u>11:00 am</u>	Children's Christmas Service
Monday 12/23	<u>6:30 pm</u>	Advent 4 Service
Tuesday 12/24	<u>3:00 pm</u>	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
	<u>5:00 pm</u>	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
	<u>7:00 pm</u>	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Wed. 12/25	<u>9:00 am</u>	Christmas Day with Lord's Supper
Sunday 12/29	<u>8:00 am</u>	Worship Service w/Lord's Supper
	<u>10:30 am</u>	Worship Service w/Lord's Supper
Monday 12/30	<u>6:30 pm</u>	Worship Service w/Lord's Supper
Tuesday 12/31	<u>6:30 pm</u>	New Year's Eve w/Lord's Supper

CHRISTMAS CARDS Beginning November 3, the Women of Faith have boxed Christmas cards for sale in the narthex. The boxes are all marked with their price and it is self-service. There are also a few individual cards for sale in the card rack for those who don't need a full box.

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS Our **Christmas for Kids** event will be held after the second children's Christmas practice on **Saturday, December 14**. All children and families are invited to this event from **9:30 am-11:00 am**. The true meaning of Christmas will be taught, snacks will be served, and cookies will be decorated.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING We will decorate the church for Christmas on **Saturday, December 14 at 9:30 am**. All are welcome to come and help.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING We will be caroling to shut-ins on **Saturday, December 14**. We will meet at church at **1:00 pm**. Please sign up in the entryway.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY All men of the congregation are invited and encouraged to attend a Bible study and fellowship on **Tuesday, December 17 at 9:00 am**.

December 2019

ADOPT-A-FAMILY Our congregation will be adopting families for Christmas from our congregation. If you would like to give a monetary gift, the money will be used to purchase appropriate gifts. Please give any money to Pastor Frey or Pastor Gartner by **Monday, December 2.**

POINSETTIAS If you would like to purchase a poinsettia to decorate the church, please sign the sheet in the entryway. The poinsettias are available in red, white, pink and marble. The price is \$14.00 per plant and Riverside by Reynebeau Floral will deliver them to church. You may take yours home after the Christmas Day worship. Sign up by **Sunday, December 1.**

WELS APPLE VALLEY FOOD PANTRY The pantry collection will be **Sunday, December 1.** Items needed include personal care products such as lotions, body washes, deodorants, hamburger helper meals, all canned soups, pork n beans, rice, rice and noodle side dishes, canned pasta, canned fruits, boxed/bagged/canned potatoes, canned meats such as tuna, SPAM and chicken, jam and household cleaning products.

Also, if you wish to direct monetary donations to the pantry, please make checks payable to Apple Valley Food Pantry and place them in the offering plate. Please keep the food pantry in your prayers and thank you for your continued support.

SHUT-INS Following is a list of St. John shut-in members if you would like to send them a Christmas greeting card.

Carol Dalke, Parkside Senior Living, 2330 Bruce St. #16, Neenah, WI 54956

Arlene Hahn, 5800 Pennsylvania Ave. #238, Appleton, WI 54914

Marvin Kamke, 5117 N Cherryvale Ave #19, Appleton, WI 54913

James Main, N5086 Rexford Road, Shiocton, WI 54170

Phyllis Nelson, 131 E North Water St, #4414, Neenah, WI 54956

Sandra Peterson, W6298 Midway Road, Hortonville, WI 54944

David Rahmlow, N4135 Meade St., Appleton, WI 54913

Elaine Schabo, W7098 Buttercup Court, Greenville, WI 54942

Doris Scheibe, N3254 County Road A, Black Creek, WI 54106

Nancy Schroeder, 1781 Copperstone Pl, Neenah, WI 54956

William and Darlene Schroeder, W3497 County Road O, Freedom, WI 54913

Roland Stuedemann, 131 E North Water St, #4413, Neenah, WI 54956

Marcie Wright, W4271 Wege Road, Appleton, WI 54913

ELECTRONIC GIVING Looking for an easy way to regularly contribute monetary gifts to St. John? If so, check out electronic giving. Go to www.stjohn-appleton.org and select *Giving* **ELECTRONIC GIVING**. Complete the Online Donation form and create your online profile. If you have questions, contact the church office at 920-733-1307.

GOD BLESS YOU, AND HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16