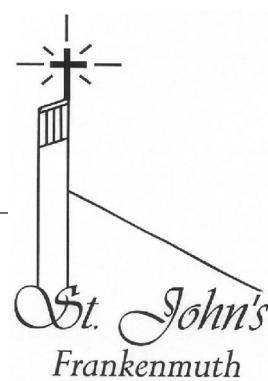


# THE VICTORY



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Newsletter

December 2021

## IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TEST OF THE YEAR

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (Matthew 16:13-16)

By the time Christmas gets here, most people are done with tests for the year. Students are on a break. Work projects have been wrapped up. The performance of the past year might have given you a bonus or a game plan to do better. The test of getting all the gifts and arranging the meals is, by and large, over.

However, Christmas gives us each an individual test for the end of the year. It's far more important than grades or bonuses or the right gift. And it's only one question long. As we celebrate his birth, Jesus asks each of us, "Who do you say that I am?"

It's not a trick question, and this exam is an open-book test. Peter gave the right answer, not because he was so clever. He gave the right answer because all of scripture is about Jesus and Peter took Jesus himself at his word: Jesus is the Christ, the one God chose and anointed to save us. He is the Son of the living [read "only true"] God: Jesus said, "The works

that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me" (John 5:36). Jesus calls God the father "my father" in a very real way (Matthew 10:32).

The works Jesus came to do were for you and your good, as the Nicene Creed says, "For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human." What were the greatest works of Christ that the Father sent him to do? The next lines of the creed jump ahead to them. "For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures." Our sinful humanity was punished in Christ, his perfect life is given to us as a gift, and his resurrection is the power that raises us each day to new life through the forgiveness of our sins. The creed brings us back to the great Christmas answer-key: all this happened "in accordance with the Scriptures." Those words of God promise and deliver peace amid guilt and conflict, joy amid deep darkness, and love in a harsh and brutal world. Answer Jesus' question incorrectly, and Christmas is just a big party for no reason. Answer from the scriptures, and Christmas is a party for the one, righteous king who stoops down to live with us and extend his power to our hearts and homes.

~ *Pastor Patrick Ernst*

### Worship Service

Sunday at 10 a.m.

**Youth Sunday  
School 9 a.m.**

**Bible Classes**  
Sunday: 9 a.m.  
Wednesday: 6:30 a.m.

### Service Broadcast

- ♦ Sunday 8 a.m.  
Radio WKCCQ  
98.1 FM
- ♦ Monday 7 p.m.  
Charter Cable TV  
channel 191

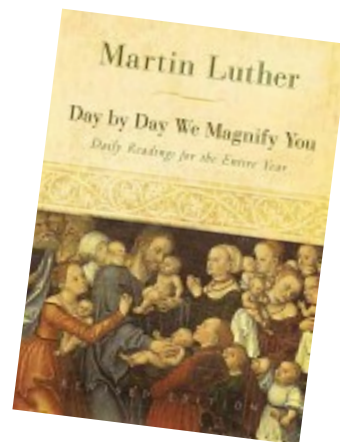
**Church Office Hours**  
Monday—Friday  
10 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

**Office Phone**  
(989) 652-6201

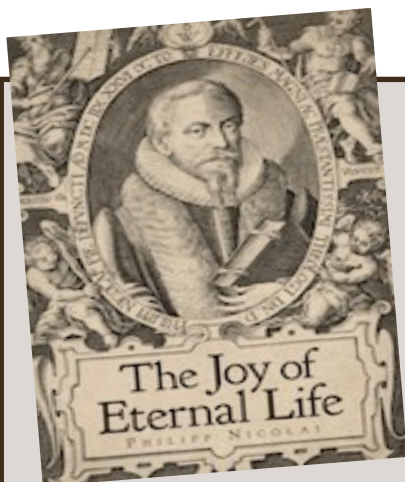
**Pastor Patrick Ernst**  
(612) 845-9162

As you start 2022 consider adding daily devotionals into your busy life. Reading is a great way to begin your day or settle down in the evening. Last month I wrote about being mindful ~ the concept of mindfulness is simple, but becoming a more mindful person requires commitment and practice. Take a moment and consider mindfulness. Here are some tips to help you get started:

A great way to mediate and relax as you focus on these readings from Martin Luther's sermons and ministries. This profound collection of rich devotions based on the writings of Martin Luther is beautifully offered in a durable soft cover with a sturdy cover and flaps making it a perfect bedside devotional or gift. Themes of grace, redemption, justice, compassion and truth are all drawn from Martin Luther's sermons and other works.



*A great reminder of the importance of our Lutheran faith in our lives.*



**December's book recommendation:**  
*By Jeremy Aiello*

**The Joy of Eternal Life**  
**by Philipp Nicolai**  
**Translated by Matthew Carver**

As Christians, hanging onto the promise of eternal life with our Savior can bring an infinite well of hope to our lives. This is true today and was especially true during Philipp Nicolai's (1556-1608) time. While he was serving as a pastor at Unna in Westphalia, a horrible plague broke out. More than one thousand people died in 1597 alone, and Rev. Nicolai had to watch as his friends, parishioners, and family were all struck by the plague. By some miracle, he never became sick.

During this time of devastation, Rev. Nicolai began preaching and writing on eternal life to bring hope and optimism to his congregation. Read this collection of his sermons to find your own hope and comfort in knowing that eternal life waits for you. This monumental work is the first complete English translation of Nicolai's work.

**Matthew Carver**, MFA, is a translator of German and classical literature. He resides in Nashville, TN, with his wife Amanda and their two sons, where they pursue interests in art, orthodox Lutheran theology, liturgy, and hymnody.

You can order this book at [cph.org](http://cph.org), at [issuesetc.org](http://issuesetc.org), or you can see Jeremy Aiello for more information

# Confessions Corner

## Eighth Commandment

### Small Catechism

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not lie about, betray or slander our neighbor, but excuse him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

### Large Catechism

Over and above our own body, spouse, and temporal possessions, we still have another treasure—honor and good reputation [Proverbs 22:1, “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.”]. We cannot do without these. For it is intolerable to live among people in open shame and general contempt. Therefore, God does not want the reputation, good name, and upright character of our neighbor to be taken away or diminished, just as with his money or possessions. He wants everyone to stand in his integrity before wife, children, servants, and neighbors.

In the first place, we must consider the plainest meaning of this commandment. According to the words “You shall not bear false witness,” this commandment pertains to public courts of justice, where one may accuse and malign a poor, innocent man and crush him by means of false witness, so that consequently he may suffer punishment in body, property, or honor.

The first application of this commandment, then, is that all people should help their neighbors maintain their legal rights.

Next, it extends much further when it is applied to spiritual jurisdiction or administration. Wherever there are upright preachers and Christians, they must endure having the world call them heretics, apostates, even seditious and desperate scoundrels. Moreover, the

Word of God is contradicted, perverted, misused, and misinterpreted. But let this pass; it is the blind world’s nature to condemn and persecute the truth and the children of God and yet consider this no sin.



BEARING FALSE WITNESS  
AGAINST SUSANNA (SUSANNA 34–41)

The third aspect of this commandment, which applies to all of us, forbids all sins of the tongue by which we may injure or offend our neighbor. It applies especially to the detestable, shameless vice of backbiting or slander by which the devil rides us [i.e., controls us like the rider of a horse]. Of this much could be said. It is a common, pernicious plague that everyone would rather hear evil than good about their neighbors. Even though we ourselves are evil, we cannot tolerate it when anyone speaks evil of us; instead, we want to hear the whole world say golden things of us. Yet we cannot bear it when someone says the best things about others.

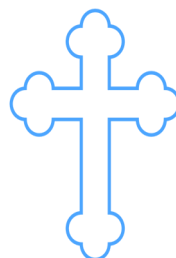
So you see that we are absolutely forbidden to speak evil of our neighbor. Exception is made, however, of civil magistrates, preachers, and fathers and mothers [and others in authority] in order that evil does not go unpunished.

## Advent. Season of Waiting. Season of Hope. Season of Peace.

The four Sundays preceding Christmas, which is when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, are recognized for four virtues. The candles on the Advent wreath symbolize hope, love, joy and peace. The candles are lit in that order. The circle traditionally made of evergreens symbolizes eternal life.



## Thoughts and Prayers



*I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone~ for kings and all those in authority.  
1 Timothy 2:1-2*

The family and friends of Llorys Bosquet, Wallace Schluckebier, and Margaret Jorgensen, who have fallen asleep in Jesus, have given memorials in their memory. May God's comfort surround them and give them peace in knowing that their loved one has found eternal peace.

December Memorials and Donations:

General Fund:	\$265.00
Altar Guild:	\$50.00

## Did you Know?

Most Christian historians put Mary at the age of 13-16 when she gives birth to Jesus.

There is no snow or ice in the Bible Christmas story, however, Israel can be very cold in the months of November through August, Jesus may have seen some snow in his life!

Although we celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25th, early Christians, have no knowledge of the exact day or year in which he was born.

The modern Christmas tree tradition probably began in Germany in the 18th century, though some argue that Martin Luther began the tradition in the 16th century.



Christian tradition associates the holly tree with the crown of thorns, and say the leaves were white until stained red by the blood of Christ.

Most Christian historians say Joseph was about 18-20 years old at the time of Jesus' birth.



# St. John's Fall Festival



**Thank You!**

To our sponsors and every one who helped with our 1st Annual Fall Festival!

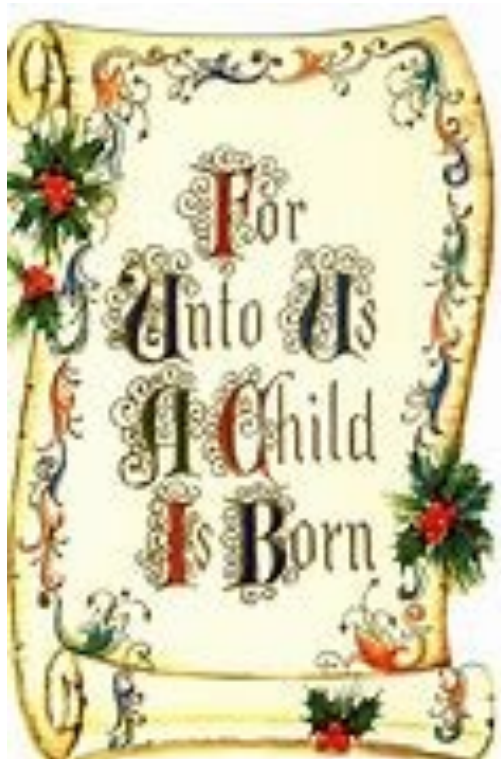


# CHRISTMAS 2021



ANGELS  
BETHLEHEM  
BIRTH  
CAESAR AUGUSTUS  
CENSUS  
CITY OF DAVID  
FLOCKS  
FANKENCENCE  
GALILEE  
GABRIEL  
GLOY TO GOD  
GOLD  
GOOD WILL  
GOSPEL  
HEROD  
HOPE  
HOST  
MMANUEL  
JESUS

INN  
JEWS  
JOSEPH  
JOY  
LIGHT  
LUKE  
LOVE  
MANGER  
MAGI  
MARY  
MESSIAH  
MIRACLE  
MRYAH  
PEACE  
ROOM  
SHEPHERDS  
SON  
STABLE  
STAR



**Birth of Christ**

**DOWN**

- Who were tending their flocks by night
- Who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds
- The wise men bowed down to Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ him
- Jesus was born in this town
- "The \_\_\_\_\_ of peace" - one of the titles of Jesus
- mother of Jesus
- Jesus was born in a \_\_\_\_\_
- The shepherds were in the \_\_\_\_\_ when they saw an angel

**ACROSS**

- The wise men followed a \_\_\_\_\_ that led them to Jesus
- human father of Jesus
- There was no \_\_\_\_\_ at the inn for Jesus
- one of the gifts of the three wise men
- Jesus could not stay at the \_\_\_\_\_ because it was full
- and on earth \_\_\_\_\_, goodwill toward men (Luke 2:14)