

## Advent and Christmas Thoughts

Pastor Barry Hildebrandt

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David ...” Most, if not all, of our efforts during the month of December will be done in anticipation of these very familiar words.

The many activities – the rush of gift buying, the preparations for family gatherings, the additional practices for choir and children’s program, the decoration of houses and trees, the extra worship services – will all place added pressure on already-busy schedules. Consequently, the season of Advent with its emphasis on patient waiting and hopeful expectation can provide an important break from all our rushing around.

Advent (with its special daily devotions and contemplative services) is meant to gradually reveal the meaning of Christ’s coming into our world, so that we can comprehend the mercy and grace of His original arrival and prepare for the glory of His return. This can be seen clearly in the Scripture readings for the next four Sundays: with the first set focusing on the temporal and eternal consequences of Jesus’ return as Judge, the next two underscoring John the Baptist’s call to repentance and prayer in preparation for the Messiah’s arrival, and only the fourth set of lessons directing our attention to the historical event we know as Christmas. Unfortunately, in today’s culture with its emphasis on instant gratification of material needs and desires, there is no place for waiting patiently and so the secular celebration of Christmas as a time to “buy...buy...buy” is already in full swing. The only somber note in the rush to December 25 is the jaded, commercial naming of the day after Thanksgiving as “Black” Friday!

Despite all of this, my prayer is that our Cross of Christ family will allow “Advent to be Advent” and remember that patient and hope filled expectation has always been a mark of God’s people. In both the Old Testament and New Testament contexts faith was understood as the steadfast holding on to the promises of God as He worked out His will from the perspective of His own timetable. Therefore, a true sense of expectation and patient waiting is a gift that our Heavenly Father seeks to share with us as we move through the Advent season a bit more slowly than Madison Avenue suggests in its frantic ads. May this time together in worship and devotional reading increase our yearning for the arrival of the King of Kings in our hearts and lives.



*Help trim the tree and decorate the church on Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 pm*

## Our Vision Statement

We see ourselves as a loving, joy-filled family of believers gathered in celebration and praise around our Lord Jesus Christ. As Bible-based Christians, we seek to share God’s word of salvation and to live daily in His healing, hope and guidance. We are committed to reaching out to the whole community, as we embrace and nurture new brothers and sisters with our Savior’s own forgiveness and love.



### Advent Fellowship & Worship

Join us for Advent meals and worship services on the following Wednesdays in December:

December 2<sup>nd</sup>  
December 9<sup>th</sup>  
December 16<sup>th</sup>

Meals begin at 5:30 pm in the fellowship hall, with worship immediately following at 7:00 pm.

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# Crossties

DECEMBER 2009

## Birthdays

- 1 Jim Little, Sr.
- 8 Brittany Beadle  
Rich Jaske
- 9 Jordan Halabrin
- 10 Amanda Eby
- 13 Sarah Clemmons  
Maddox Garden  
Matthew Hamilton  
Eileen Shefveland
- 14 Scott Fiddler  
Emily Zehnder
- 15 Kenneth Hall
- 19 Esther Hunt  
John Musser
- 21 Eve Hildebrandt  
Hannah Peiffer
- 23 Donald Burrow
- 24 Garrett Price
- 25 Mary Alspaugh  
Emily Clemmons
- 26 Diane Kerr
- 28 Zoe Grosskreutz
- 29 Justin Eldred  
Grace Fite
- 31 Scott Kukendall  
Ed Pickett  
Dan Shefveland

## Anniversaries

- 17 Jim & Jann Little, Sr.
- 28 Ron & Elsie Schmidt
- 30 Donald & Donna Murray

## From the Vicar

Vicar Jake Allstaedt

I own a lot of CDs. The problem is, I don't take as good of care of my CD's as I ought. CD's get thrown around my car, tossed around my desk, and they never seem to find their way back to their cases. When that happens, my CD's gets deep scratches and they become unplayable.

My CD's aren't the only things that are scratched. What about you and I? Because of our sin, we come "out of the case" already scratched. Right out of the "wrapping"—right away at birth we are born scratched. Sin scratches us in every way. Sin scratches our bodies. Sin also scratches our thinking. When life comes crumbling down around us, when we are afraid that our jobs are at risk and when we're wondering how to fix a problem, we scratch ourselves when we turn anywhere except to our Father in heaven.

Sin has cut our lives and left ugly marks—just like my CD's! My CD's are unplayable. They have been scratched and smeared so badly that they don't play the way they were supposed to, but my CDs were not supposed to be scratched and smeared—and you know what? Neither were you and I.

One year at Christmas I received an amazing present. I got a CD scratch remover! It was great! That device restored my scratched CD's. All of my previously scratched CD's were now restored. My CD's needed to be restored and so do we, so it's a good thing that God is in the business of restoration.

In a little town called Bethlehem, in a stable full of animals, a baby was born to a virgin, wrapped in cloths, and placed in a wooden manger. This baby is the power of our restoration. Who would have thought? Jesus is the power of our restoration—a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger—a baby that was born with you in mind. A baby that would grow up to be a man, be scorned by the world, be nailed to a tree, suffer, die, and be raised from the dead after three days—all for you! Jesus came!

In the season of Advent, we anxiously wait that Christmas morning when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, our restoration; but we also look ahead to the day when Jesus will return again and we will be restored in full. These scratches, our sin, the world, the devil, not even death can take this restoration away from us.

Jesus will come again, and this time not as a baby wrapped in cloths, but in full glory and might, and all flesh will see it. Just as his body will return perfectly restored, so this very body will be restored. We will be restored in body and soul—and without a single scratch! No more tears will be shed and no more pain. No more scratches! Let us look ahead and wait anxiously at the coming of our Lord. We wait our restoration from Jesus, who was, is, and is to come.



### Hamilton Place Mall WRAP!

Join the **Wrapping Team** for  
CHATTANOOGA'S KIDS ON THE BLOCK

@ Hamilton Place Mall, Upper Floor

December 15, 2009 (Tuesday)

6:00 p.m.—10:00 p.m.

Service project of the *Lutheran Women's Missionary League*

Please sign up on the sheet in the hallway.

If you have questions, call Sherry Reed, 843-1249.

# Crossties

D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

## Christmas Schedule

### December 20

Traditional Worship 8:30 am  
Sunday School 9:45 am  
Contemporary Worship 11:00 am  
Children's Program 6:00 pm

### December 24

German Service 7:00 pm  
Candlelight Service 10:30 pm

### December 25

Christmas Carol Service 10:00 am

### December 27

Traditional Worship 8:30 am  
Sunday School 9:45 am  
Contemporary Worship 11:00 am

### December 31

New Years Eve Service 7:00 pm

*<sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.*

*<sup>11</sup>Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.  
– Luke 2:10-11*

## Commitment Cards

### Stewardship Committee

You may still turn yours in. You can find extras out on the table in the Narthex or ask Julia or Pastor. Please prayerfully consider making a financial commitment as well as a commitment of your time and talents. We all are facing hard times with the economy as it is. This affects churches as well and we want to be able to support Cross of Christ and its many ministries. We have 46 cards in with a total commitment of \$170,238.

## Bringing Good News of Great Joy to All People

### *Fan into Flame*

Bob Allen, Mid-South District Director of World Missions

We are overwhelmed with bad news daily. Hearing good news is so rare. News that brings us great joy seems almost nonexistent. Read the verse again, doesn't it bring joy to your heart? We have heard the verses above for years during the Christmas season and how comforting this message is to us. It is encouraging, uplifting and inspiring. Yet in some areas of Tanzania this message has not been heard in the home because the parents have no Bibles to read it to their family. This Good News is not heard in a church because no church is near enough to their home to attend.

Through the partnership of the Mid-South District with the East of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the Gospel message is beginning to be heard. In the last 6 months, almost 5000 members of the Sukuma tribe have been baptized. One of the current training objectives of the diocese is teaching 500 leaders of local villages to evangelize the members of their village and to plant 200 churches in the next 10 years. Almost 500,000 people live in these villages and 94% of them have never heard the Gospel message. We have distributed hundreds of Bibles in their native language. Since there is usually at least one person in the family unit who can read, they are now experiencing the sound of the Good News in their homes, something we take for granted they now treasure as well.

You can be part of this exciting ministry of "Bringing Good News of Great Joy to all People" through your support of **Fan into Flame**.

## Advent Calendars

Irma Pinkerton

Advent Calendars Since 1983, Advent Calendars have been made by the LWML and other ladies of the congregation. They are given to members of our congregation to use year after year in preparation for Christmas. This year we added 15 more recipients. We wish to thank the following people who have worked hard on this project: Mary Alspaugh, Nancy Daffinson, Sophie Gallo, Nancy MacLean, Karen Miller, Joan Musser, Jo Parham, Joan Peiffer, Sherry Reed, Mary Sedrick, Doris Shirk, Eunice Timm and Bob and Irma Pinkerton. It takes many busy hands to get the work completed.

If you have any suggestions or comments regarding the Crossties format or content, please contact:  
Christina Sedrick (423)316-2220, [newsletter@cocluth.com](mailto:newsletter@cocluth.com)

# Crossties

DECEMBER 2009

## Those Who Serve

Date	6	13	20	27
Greeters 8:30	Dave Murray	John & Joan Musser	Richard & Lanette Bagley	Julia Edmunson
Readers 8:30	Connie Hamilton	Dennis & Karen Savor	Nancy Allen	Tom & Sue Manthey
Ushers	Dick Allen, Dave Murray, Bob Pinkerton, Chip Zehnder			
Greeters 11:00	Jim & Sandi Reisen- buechler	Jim Walpert	Ton & Elsie Schmidt	
Readers 11:00	Ann Hunt	Scott & Allison Brewster	Ken Maury	Dave & Cara Welsh



### CROSS OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Chattanooga, TN 37415

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