

Called by Christ to Serve
St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church & Lighthouse Preschool
Aberdeen, SD December 2023

Immanuel- God With Us

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

One of the difficulties on knowing some of the Christmas prophecies so well is that we lose how amazing and special they are. I mean printed above is one of Isaiah's famous prophecies that we hear every single year at Christmas. Yet, we don't often think twice about it besides to move straight to Jesus laying in a manger, and in some ways that is perfectly normal and fine to do. However, notice that when we do that, we lose an important aspect of the prophecy, namely, how God works.

When we pause to simply reflect and chew on this verse without moving straight to Christmas, we begin to see that God works in mysterious ways. First, a virgin is going to conceive! That in and of itself is miraculous and dare I say scandalous. We all know how quickly word spreads even without modern technology and you would know that a virgin conceiving would be newsworthy. Without a doubt everyone would be talking about it and would be talking about her.

So, then, why would God work this way? Why would he work through a virgin that would have to escape scrutiny or even move away?

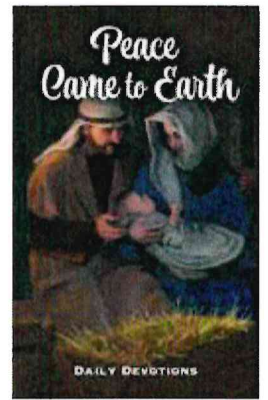
First, as a reminder to us his creation, that his way is not our way. This is so important to remember time and time again because we either think that we have God figured out or we think we know what he should be doing and thus think that we know better than him. Yet here he is reminding us that how he works is by far different than we could ever imagine. That he is going to send down his son to be born of a virgin and not to a virgin who is mighty in stature, power, or wealth but instead to a virgin who is humble, faithful, and God fearing. We would never expect God to work in this way for that is not the way of the world. Yet, this is exactly how he works, and it is a reminder that God knows better than we do and that we should simply trust in him.

This Christmas and Advent season simply rest in that simple truth that God works in mysterious ways. He worked through a humble virgin to bring about his plan of salvation and what a wonderful blessing that is for us as his people! So, even if we do not always understand why God does what he does go back to what we do understand and that is what we see at Christmas. We see his love for us by sending down his son to be born of a virgin all so that one day he would hang on a cross to die for you. All so that he could take the punishment we deserve and put it on his son. Rest in that reality and that truth. That even during hard times like Christmas as you mourn a loved one not being there remember that God is with us and that because of his son our tears of sorrow will soon turn to tears of joy because of this baby who has come for you and me.

May God bless you this Christmas and Advent season by turning our focus off the things of this world and onto his son who died and rose for us so that we can be with him forever!

In Christ,
Pastor Smith

DECEMBER EVENTS



- December 2:** Circuit youth retreat at St. Paul's—9am-3pm
- December 6:** Advent Worship at 12:15 pm followed by soup and sandwiches
Five Loaves Soup Supper at 5:15pm
Advent Worship at 6:15 pm
- December 10:** Music Sunday—only one service at 10:00am No Sunday School. No Bible class.
Potluck lunch following the service—meatballs and mashed potatoes.
- December 13:** Advent Worship at 12:15 pm followed by soup and sandwiches
Soup & sandwiches at 5:15pm
Advent Worship at 6:15 pm
- December 17:** Sunday School Christmas Program at 9:30am.
- December 18:** Lighthouse Preschool Christmas Program at 6:30 pm
- December 20:** Advent Worship at 12:15 pm followed by soup and sandwiches
Soup & sandwiches at 5:30pm
Advent Worship at 6:15 pm
- December 24:** Worship at 9:30am—One service only. No Sunday School. No Bible Study.
Christmas Eve service at 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm.
- December 25:** Christmas Day service at 9:30 am.
- December 27:** No 10:00 am Bible Study. No 6:15 pm service. No confirmation classes.

Lighthouse Preschool News

Teaching God's children about their Creator, Savior, and Friend while preparing them for a lifetime of wonder, learning, and service.

Dec/Jan 2023-24

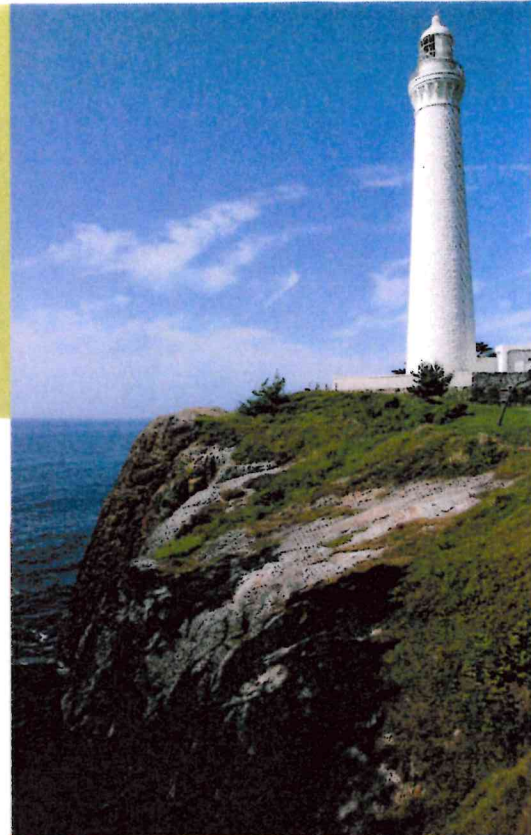
Merry Christmas!

This time of year we are busy thinking of the perfect gifts to give to our loved ones. In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, it is easy to forget why we even give gifts in the first place. We give gifts at Christmas to remind us of the perfect gift that God gave to us, to set us free from sin, Jesus!

Throughout the month of December there will be a preschool "Angel Tree" in the narthex. Please consider helping continue the ministry here by choosing an ornament off the tree. Pick a dollar amount you are comfortable donating, return your gift in the supplied envelope to Jenelle or Cindy, and keep the ornament as a thank you!

Also, please note for yourself or for a family that you know, that registration for the 2023-2024 school year will be open in January.

Please also pray that as we tell these little ones about how the Lord of the Universe came into creation as a baby, they would know that they are dearly loved children of the Heavenly Father!



Upcoming Dates:

**December 1-31- Angel Tree
Preschool Fundraiser**

**December 18th-
6:15pm
Christmas Program**

**December 22-Jan 4
Christmas Break!**

**Reminders:
Save those
grocery receipts and
pop tabs!**



Our first field trip to the fire station was a huge hit!

Check It Out!

DCE Leapley took Harrison and Charlotte Bode to Marshall, MN on October 28th for a Jesus Door-2-Door event hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. 4 teams of 3 people each went out and canvassed the surrounding neighborhood. Please keep the people who heard the gospel proclaimed in your prayers.

The youth group half-nighter occurred on October 20th. We had 14 youth and 5 adults in attendance! We enjoyed our time at the Retrocade and playing games. We also watched *The Incredibles* to learn about the cardinal virtues (prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude). Thank you to everyone who donated snacks and quarters! It was a great event.



Events and Information

- Circuit Youth Retreat on Saturday, December 2nd
 - 9 AM to 3 PM
 - \$5 registration fee
 - Please contact the church office to register your child.
- Christmas Bible Study at 7 PM
 - In-person and livestreamed on December 6th, 13th, & 20th
- Sunday School Christmas Program on December 17th
 - 9:30 AM
 - Our Sunday School children will be sharing their talents with us through song. All are invited to come and celebrate the birth of Christ.



December

Every Sunday
Divine Service @ 8am
Bible Study @ 9:30 am
Divine Service @ 10:45 am

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2 9am - 3pm Youth Retreat
3	4	5	6 10am Bible Study 12:15pm Advent Worship Soup & Sandwiches 5pm Women's Bible Study 5:15 Five Loaves Supper 6:15pm Advent Worship 7pm Confirmation 7pm Christmas Bible Study	7 9:00 am Good Cheer Circle	8 Wedding Rehearsal	9 Wedding
Coin Banks		7:00 pm Elder's mtg.				
10 10am Music Sunday Potluck Dinner	11	12	13 10am Bible Study 12:15pm Advent Worship Soup & Sandwiches 5pm Women's Bible Study 5:15 Soup/Sandwiches 6:15pm Advent Worship 7pm Confirmation 7pm Christmas Bible Study	14 9am Quilting	15	16
5-7pm Youth Group						
17 9:30 am Sunday School Christmas Program	18 6:30 pm Lighthouse Preschool Christmas Program	19	20 10am Bible Study 12:15pm Advent Worship Soup & Sandwiches 5pm Women's Bible Study 5:15 Soup & Sandwiches 6:15pm Advent Worship 7pm Confirmation 7pm Christmas Bible Study	21	22	23
	25 9:30 am Christmas Day Worship	26	27 No Bible Studies or Confirmation	28	29	30
24 9:30 am Worship 3:00 & 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Services						
31						