



Church Of the Reformation - Lutheran

The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

With Christ at the Heart

7910 Mackenzie Road, St. Louis, MO 63123-2721

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How to Be a Subversive Christian in a Deck-the-Halls World

With December we come into the evening of the year, when the days shorten and the covers of evening are pulled up around our ears. Ever since the 4th and 5th centuries, Christians have used the weeks before Christmas as time of preparation for our Lord's return on the Last Day. From that same time onward Christians have struggled to be *in* the world without being *of* the world as Christmas decorations crowd out those of Halloween even as they can crowd Christ out of Christmas.

Here are some ways that may help you in your Advent preparations for our Lord's return.

1. Since Advent is a time of watchful prayer and devotion, spend some time on Wednesdays in worship that includes Scripture reading and prayer, such as our Wednesday prayer service at church at 11:00 a.m. and Evening Prayer at 7:00 p.m.
2. If you have missed the opportunities for daily devotional Bible reading, Advent is a good time to start. You could use Daily Lectionary for the Time of Christmas that begins on page 303 of *Lutheran Service Book*. You could also call the church office to obtain a devotional book for Advent.
3. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. A new year suggests cleaning out the old and beginning with the new. Since Advent begins a new Church Year, why not clean house. Besides the guest of our Lord Jesus at your dinner table, you may also be expecting other guests for the holidays. While you scrub and sweep, you could sing "Prepare the royal highway; the King of Kings is near!" (LSB 343). Cleaning out closets and cupboards will help you find clothing and stuff that may help others through the local Goodwill Store. It's another way to make those rough places smooth and those crooked places straight.
4. Everybody else has had Christmas decorations up since November 1. You can take your time, setting out a few things at a time, enjoying them and the memories they

hold. If you do put out your nativity scene, leave out the Christ Child figure until Christmas Eve when you read the Christmas story from Luke's Gospel (2:1-20). You could place the Magi and camels in another room (moving them closer during the twelve days of Christmas until you get to Epiphany, January 6).

5. Let the Advent wreath be the dominant symbol of Advent. In other words, hold off about getting the Christmas tree (or at least bringing it into the house) until its close to Christmas Eve. Again you could decorate the tree in stages and light it for the first time on Christmas Eve. After all, we don't light birthday cake candles three weeks before the birthday, do we? You'll be amazed at how decorating in stages relieves some of the holiday pressure.

6. If you put up lights on the outside of your house, don't light them up until the week before Christmas. Keep the lights going through January 6, the Epiphany of our Lord. How can you make your outside decorations proclaim the birth of our Savior, the Light of the World?

7. Stores got in a lot of trouble in the past few years when they insisted that their workers greet customers with "Happy Holidays." Many of them have learned a hard lesson and are now willing to let their workers greet with "Merry Christmas." If you really want to start a conversation, try responding with "Blessed Advent" or "Blessed Christmas." By the way, those store clerks have worked some long, tiring hours; they could use a blessing.

8. As you go through the stores, why not sing out loud some of the carols that are being played? It will help those around you learn the words and be ready to sing them in church on Christmas. While you're at it, learn some of the great Advent hymns of anticipation and hope.

9. Why not spread the Christmas gift-giving out over the Twelve Days of Christmas? It may strengthen the discipline of delayed gratification and provide the opportunity to reflect thankfully on the gift and the giver.

10. One agency sums it all up by encouraging us to worship fully, to spend less, to give more, and to love all.





DECEMBER NEWS & NOTES

ADVENT DEVOTIONS



An Advent Devotion from Lutheran Hour Ministries, *Home for the Holidays*, is now available on the church welcome stand.

In *Home for the Holidays*, personal reflections and pleasant memories weave together with Scriptural narrative to tell how God is at *home with us* in His Word, Baptism, and the Sacraments all the days of our lives. And through the salvation won by Christ on Calvary, a future and indescribable home awaits believers.

A limited number of these devotions are available. Also, you can opt to receive devotions on a daily basis thru email by signing up at www.adventdevotions.net.

SPECIAL UPCOMING SERVICES

Wednesday Advent Services

"Away in the Manger"

December 1st, 8th, and 15th
11:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.



Christmas Eve – December 24th
5:00 p.m.

Candlelight Service of Carols & Readings
11:00 p.m. – Divine Service

Christmas Day – December 25th
Divine Service - 10:00 a.m.



Sunday, December 26th
10:15 a.m. (*one service only*)

New Year's Eve – December 31st
Evening Prayer - 7:00 p.m.

New Year's Day – January 1st
Divine Service - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 2nd
10:15 a.m. (*one service only*)

VOTER'S MEETING



On Sunday, December 5th, immediately following the late service (12:00 noon). This meeting includes election of new council members and elders as well as discussion and approval of the 2011 church budget. Drinks and sandwiches provided, please bring an appetizer or snack to share.



WOMEN'S GUILD

THE WOMEN'S GUILD CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON is Tuesday, December 7th. The ladies are going to the Lafayette Engine House #1 Restaurant, 1801 Park Ave., for the December Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, December 7th. If you wish to carpool, meet at church at 11:00 a.m. The food is great, you can even eat breakfast until 2p.m. if you so desire. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. Please plan on attending – Carol Abbott and I have a great small program for everyone.

Brenda Hargett



THE GIVING TREE is now displayed in the narthex. Please consider helping make someone's holiday a little brighter with a gift for Feed My People to distribute to those in need. We need the help and support of generous people like you to make the Spirit of Christmas a happy and glorious time for some of our less fortunate friends.

The Ladies Guild



POINSETTIAS TO BEAUTIFY THE ALTAR during the Christmas Season have been ordered. Each 6.5" red poinsettia has 5+ booms and costs \$6.00. Order forms for the poinsettias are in the narthex.



CHRISTMAS DECORATING

On Saturday, December 11th at 9:00 a.m. all members of the congregation, both young, old and in between are invited to



help decorate the church for Christmas. The Men's Club has once again graciously offered to make breakfast for all workers. Please sign-up on the sheet on the bulletin board if you plan to help. Thanks!



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Sunday School will have their Christmas Program on **Sunday, December 19th at 10:45 a.m.** Please join them in worship!! Everyone is invited!

Rehearsals: We will have two rehearsals for the Christmas program. The first one is **Sunday, December 5th at 12:00 noon** (during the Voter's Meeting). Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches will be served. The second rehearsal is **Saturday, December 18th at 9:30 a.m.** Immediately following rehearsal we will have a Christmas celebration with Little Caesar pizzas and soda provided.



GIFTS FOR THE KING



Every Advent through Epiphany in memory of the Gentile Magi's gifts to the Christ Child, we at Reformation, gather a special offering to be used for mission work. A special "Gifts for the King" envelope will be included in the December 5th bulletin.



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please be sure you have all items/articles for the January newsletter into the church office by no later than **Monday, December 20th**. Articles may be e-mailed to secretary@reformationstl.org, faxed (314-352-7652), or placed in the church secretary's mailbox.



RING IN THE NEW YEAR!!



What better way to celebrate New Year's Eve than to worship and have fellowship with your church family. After the 7:00 pm service there will be a New Year's Eve Gathering for all ages. Come for

a little while or stay to ring in the New Year. Drinks provided, bring a snack item or appetizer to share. Holiday Trivia - part III, attendance prizes, activities for children and music. Look for more information in Sunday's announcements.

Julia Graudin, Board of Church Fellowship



DECEMBER FEED MY PEOPLE MEAL-A-MONTH



Canned ham, brown rice or plain instant mashed potatoes, low sodium or no salt canned green vegetable, canned fruit in light syrup or own juices, and powdered milk or shelf stable boxed milk or soy milk. Additional Items: Baby Food Month – no glass jars. Baby fruits, baby vegetables or baby cereal.

We now have two locations for food collection!! A new basket is located in the narthex and the shopping cart has been moved to the parish hall. A half sheet insert listing the above items is located by the basket in the narthex to take along with you to the grocery store. Return the bag of groceries to the basket or shopping cart. Please - no glass containers or clothing. Thank you for your donations!



THANK YOU

The Woman's Guild is sending a special thank you for your generous show of support and giving for our Bake Sale fund raiser for the Terry Jones family. There were so many baked goods that I couldn't see the table cloth! We made a total of \$1,485.00, which includes the \$400 in matching funds from Thrivent. FANTASTIC!!! Also, I would like to thank Debra Klemme for all her help at the table. Thanks again and way to go!

Brenda Hargett & the Woman's Guild Ladies



BACH AT THE SEM

Concordia Seminary invites the public to a *Bach at the Sem* concert at **3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 5th**, in the Seminary's Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus. The American Kantorei conclude Bach's masterpiece, the Mass in B Minor. What a glorious way to enrich and prepare your spirit for Advent and Christmastide. No tickets are issued and admission is free.



LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL SOUTH ACTIVITIES

ADVENT BAND CONCERT on **Saturday, December 11th at 7:00 p.m.** and will be performed in the Concordia Center at Concordia Lutheran Church in Kirkwood.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR CONCERT will take place in the Kuhlmann Center at LHSS on **Saturday, December 18th at 7:00 p.m.**

The community is invited to both performances and a free will donation will be collected.

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THE LHSS FALL CRAFT SHOW will be held **Saturday, December 11th, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.** at LHSS, 9515 Tesson Ferry Road. For more information call Marge at 314.918.7301 or Lynne at 314.638.9186.



NATIONAL LUTHERAN CHOIR CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL EMMANUEL: GOD WITH US

The National Lutheran Choir, based in Minneapolis, MN, returns to St. Louis' Christ Church Cathedral for two afternoon performances of their annual Christmas Festival on **Saturday, December 18th at 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.**

Surrounded by the sacred ambience of Christ Church Cathedral, let the soul-stirring music performed by the Choir fill your heart with joy! Well-loved carols sung by all, readings, choral music both familiar and new weave together to form an experience that deepens the meaning of Christ's birth

Tickets for the Choir's concerts are available in advance for \$20 (general admission) by calling 1-888-747-4589 or online at www.nlca.com. Doors open 45 minutes prior to performance.

Christ Church Cathedral is located at 1210 Locust Street in downtown St. Louis. The Choir's St. Louis concerts are sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, KFYO-AM 850 and Concordia Publishing House, as well as the contributions of many individual supporters in the St. Louis area.



ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS

The Church of St. Michael & St. George located at 6345 Wydown Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. 63105 (314-721-1502) invite you to join them on **Sunday, December 5 at 5:00 p.m.** for the annual candlelight Advent Lessons and Carols. This liturgy, composed by The Very Reverend Eric Milner-White for use at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, proclaims in word and song the promise of God to redeem the world through the Advent of His Son. The readings and music symbolize a great procession—from darkness into light—and are intended to prepare the worshiper for the coming of the true Light, Jesus Christ. All are welcome!

A SERVICE OF SACRED MUSIC

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 12345 Manchester Road, Des Peres, MO invite you to join them on **Saturday, December 11th at 5:00 p.m. or Sunday, December 12th at 4:00 p.m.** for "A Service of Sacred Music for the Time of Christmas."



Merry Christmas and have a Blessed New Year!