



VOL. XXX No. 11
DECEMBER 2017

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Not long ago, I drove past a church building that I had driven by many times before. This time, however, I noticed that they had added solar panels to the roof. The neat thing was that when they installed the panels they had done it in a way that the entire roof was covered with the exception of a cross shape.

From a symbolic point of view, I wish it was the other way around. I wish the panels themselves were a cross shape. I am sure they did it the way they did it so that they could maximize the power obtained through the solar panels.

If it were the other way I could make the point to the power that is in the cross. (I am sorry if you think that is a bad pun.) Truth is: I am going to make that point anyway because that is a point that Scripture makes. It is in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 1, verse 18 that it says, **"The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."**

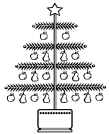
God doesn't want anyone to perish. In fact, 1 Timothy 2:4 says that God **"desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."** To save God, God sent His Son into the world. This month, we celebrate that coming as we celebrate Christmas. The sad thing is: there are many who celebrate Christmas who think that the truth that we are saved by the cross of Jesus **"is folly."** They **"are perishing."** That's the clear witness of Scripture. They **"are perishing"** because they are going to continue to be burdened by a guilty conscience, filled with anger and frustration. They are always searching for a way to rid themselves of all this.

There are times when we have the same burdens, but we don't have to. Because there is power in the Word of the cross, we know that our guilt has been taken away. Jesus suffered and died to do that. With faith in our hearts we know the truth that Jesus' cross saves us. And, we want others to know this truth, too. That's why we share the word of the cross with others. It is not folly; it is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. May God help us to share His Word this Advent and Christmas seasons and into the New Year.



Baptized on November 26th was Aidan Cody Lovsness and Taya Renae Lovsness, children of Brendan & Heather (nee Link) Lovsness. Aidan was born October 2, 2013 and Taya was born on July 27th, 2015. May God continue to bless these His children.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN DECORATING TREES



This year the Sunday School children will help decorate the trees for Christmas on Sunday, December 3rd. That day they will place personalized ornaments on the trees and will be singing a song. Also, on that Sunday we will have a special guest, Missionary Natalie Howard, who will be soon going to the Dominican Republic to serve as support staff for other missionaries.

ADVENT SERVICES BEGIN DECEMBER 6th

This year the theme of our Midweek Advent Services will be "Behold the Light." Individual dates, time, themes and texts are as follows:

Wed. December 6, 7 pm – Put on the Light! (Romans 13:11-14)

Wed. December 13, 7 pm – Many Lights are Brighter – Together! (Romans 15:4-7)

Wed. December 20, 7 pm – A Light with a Special Purpose! (Romans 1:1-7)

Please take advantage of these opportunities to prepare your heart for the coming of our Lord. Prior to each Advent service, supper will be served starting around 5:30 pm. The Borseths will serve on Dec. 6th; the Men's Bible Study Group will serve on Dec. 13; and the Beckers will serve on Dec. 20th.

EVENING CIRCLE CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Evening Circle Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 7th, at 12:00 noon in the fellowship hall. All the women of the congregation are invited. A pot-luck meal of appetizers, salads and desserts will be served. There will be entertainment, fellowship, and an opportunity to sing favorite Christmas carols. Bring your red stocking and items for a donation to the Aitkin Food Shelf. All the women of the congregation are invited. If you would like a ride call Linda Bauer or Debbie Schultz. Come and enjoy a fun time!

CHRISTMAS WITH THE BECKERS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 10th

This year, Christmas with the Beckers will be after Sunday morning service on December 10th, during the fellowship hour. Please plan to come and enjoy some Christmas goodies provided by Pastor and Tracie Becker.

HOLIDAY
SERVICE
SCHEDULE

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE



Christmas Program

This year's Sunday School Christmas service will be on Sunday, December 17th at 11 am. The theme of the service will be "A Reason to Celebrate." Following the service, a Christmas Dinner will be served. A free will offering will be taken for the dinner. A sign-up sheet for the Christmas dinner is on the bulletin board by the kitchen. Please plan to come and hear the children share their faith in Jesus and stay for dinner. Practices for the service will be on Sundays, December 3rd & 10th. More information about this will be sent out to the children. Following the dinner, current plans are to go caroling.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Once again, this year our Christmas Eve service will feature special music by our Adult Choir. This year the Christmas Eve service will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 24th.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

Plan to come Christmas Day for service which begins at 9:00 a.m. Come and celebrate His birth. Come and sing His praises.

NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE

Don't forget our New Year's Day Service with Holy Communion which is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Monday, January 1, 2018.

2017 ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

All written reports for the 2017 Annual Report should be into the church office by December 15. All financial reports should be in as soon as possible after January 1.

LUTHERAN WITNESS SUBSCRIPTIONS

Its time to start thinking about renewing and/or signing up for the 2018 year of *The Lutheran Witness* magazine. Subscriptions cost only \$22 for the year. On the table in the entry of the church are envelopes you can use to subscribe.

CAN YOU HELP PROVIDE ADDRESSES?

The church office is trying to update the church mailing list. There are a number of names for which we have no address. Here is a list of some of the names: Michael Anderson, Steve Banks, David Bartel, Tanja Braden, Rachel Converse, Zachary Converse, Jacob Converse, Steven Elling, Maleah Gow, Shelli Graham, Douglas Hamdorf, Eric Hanson, Joni Larson, Michael Larson, Peter Larson, Brenda Latvala, Aaron Lind-Pashina, Craig Lund, Robert Nixon, Inta Nixon, Andrew Nixon, Diane Robak, Sarah Salmon, Kenneth Siemers, Jeff Sterling, Susan Swanson, Rick Swanson, Verda Tate, David Tate, Sarah Warriner, Heidi Warriner, Thomas Warriner, Jennifer Weimer, Thomas Weimer, Sean Weimer, Travis Weimer, Jody Weimer. If you have the address of any of these, please pass it on to the church office.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO...

Beverly Kemmet	December 01	Melissa Bleeker	December 18
Richard O'Neil	December 01	Thomas Grulke	December 20
Bryan Zenke	December 01	Christopher Maloney	December 21
Kathy Larson	December 02	Judy Larson	December 22
Hannah Slette	December 04	Erica Smith	December 22
David Tate	December 05	Gerda Frost	December 23
McKenzie Wolf	December 06	Linda Levercom	December 23
Kinzer Hill	December 06	John Woodrow	December 24
Derald Landrus	December 06	Brian Rom	December 25
Forrest Kobs	December 07	Ronald Christian	December 26
Carolyn Pagels	December 07	Steven Elling	December 27
Kimberlee Gruhlke	December 08	Deelia Emmons	December 27
Frank Kingsley	December 08	Dorothy Anderson	December 28
Lyle Orr	December 08	Sandra Bartel	December 29
Tony Anderson	December 10	Evyone Ruschmeier	December 29
Chris Kemmet	December 10	Lee Ann Christian	December 30
Marlene Linn	December 10	Ray Williams	December 30
Inta Nixon	December 11		
Larry Borgman	December 12		
Aaron Elmquist	December 16		
Brian Sell	December 16		
Amanda Rom	December 17		

*The birthdays listed are from our church records. Any mistakes are unintentional. Please notify the office of any mistakes, deletions, or if you do not want your birthday listed.

NEWS FROM PUERTO RICO & OUR SISTER CONGREGATION, PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN, MAYAGUEZ, PUERTO RICO

Pastor Matthew Ruesch has accepted a call to serve as pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Kingsford, MI. On Sunday, December 3rd, Missionary Natalie Howard will be visiting St. John's as she looks for support so that she can serve as missionary support staff in the Dominican Republic.

Our relationship with the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico continues. The following is an excerpt from a newsletter prepared by the Rev. Charles St. Onge, area coordinator for Puerto Rico and the Caribbean:

“Bill Lohmeyer, formerly a missionary in the Dominican Republic, will be helping get things up and running in Puerto Rico for two months starting in December.

Gustavo Maita, [a recent graduate of a sister seminary in Venezuela] will be serving as Disaster Response Coordinator out of Mayaguez for the next year or two.

The Puerto Rico team is currently working to assess short term needs in the areas surrounding Principe de Paz congregation in Mayaguez, as well as in Ponce. A new mercy house will be established in Ponce, as well as in Mayaguez, to assist with distribution of goods but also with spiritual care for the populations of both cities.

Plans have also been established to take spiritual care of Principe de Paz, Mayaguez during the congregation's vacancy.”

Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are member of Principe de Paz (Prince of Peace) Lutheran Church in Mayaguez.

We will continue to gather funds for our Together in Mission Missionary. A new one will be selected in the near future.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
324 3rd Street NW, Aitkin, MN 56431
218-927-3170

December Ushers

*Jeff Schlagel
Larry Borgman
Jason Plekkenpol
Frank Kingsley
Bruce Sanvig

Deacon: Marcus Marsh

Communion Fillers

12/3: Shirley Klitzke
12/17: Linda Bauer

Communion Cleaners

12/3: Joy Janzen &
Linda Bakken
12/17: Cathy Wilke

Altar Care:

Debbie Schultz