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DON'T BE SPOOFED!

Have you been spoofed? I have! Here's how it works. You get a call on your phone and the caller ID identifies the call as coming from a local number. It has happened to me. I answered the phone and the caller ID said it was coming from a 927 number. What I heard was a recording offering to lower my credit card interest rate. That's called "spoofing." Scam artists have found a way to get your phone to display false information. There is one word to describe what they are doing. That word is the word lying.

Jesus tells us who the father of lies is. The father of lies is the devil (John 8:44). The devil can use people to spread his lies. Sometimes those people are you and me. He tempts us to spread on untruth and we do. Sometimes the people the devil uses to spread his lies are people who are pretending to be something they are not, just like those spoofing telemarketers.

They may be popular "preachers" who have a national following and yet they spread untruths, teaching things opposite of the way the Bible teaches those things. They are asked if someone can go to heaven without believing in Jesus and instead of quoting a clear passage like John 14:6, where Jesus says, "**I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,**" they say "Maybe?"

Other of these preachers doesn't want to offend anyone by pointing to the cross of Jesus. So, he has stopped displaying a cross in his church. He has also stopped using words like damnation and wrath, hell and sin, and even mercy and salvation.

Or, what about those preachers who preach what is called "the gospel of prosperity." They don't preach what the Bible says when it tells us that sometimes we have to suffer for the gospel. Instead they tell people that if they following God, He will make them rich.

People believe these preachers! We could say that they have been spoofed. We had better be careful that we are not spoofed. Jesus is the only way to heaven. To clear that way, He was born, lived, and died on the cross to take upon Himself the wrath of God we deserve for our sin. In Him we have salvation. In Him we have help in those times in our lives when we suffer. That's what God's Word teaches.



NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE

This year New Year's Day falls on a Monday. We will have our New Year's Day Service with Holy Communion at 9 am.

ANNUAL VOTERS' MEETING SCHEDULED

The quarterly Voters' Meeting for St. John's is scheduled for Sunday, January 21st following our 9 am service. All confirmed members, age 19 or older, are eligible to become voting members. Come and be part of the decision making process of this church. The Church Council will meet on Thursday, January 4th at 6:00 pm to finalize the agenda for the Voters' Meeting.

BECKERS SAY THANK YOU

Pastor & Mrs. Becker wish to say "Thank You" to all who came to "Christmas with the Beckers." Thanks to all who remembered them this past Christmas season with cards, gifts, and food.



THANKS TO ALL WHO SERVED THIS PAST CHRISTMAS SEASON

Thanks to all who worked so hard to get done all that needed to be done this past Christmas Season. We especially thank:

those who worked to decorate the church, inside and out.

those who took the food donations to the Food Shelf.

the Borseths, the Men's Bible Study Group, and the Beckers for preparing and serving our Advent suppers this past month and everyone else who pitched in to help them in serving and cleanup.

those who prepared and served the Christmas dinner following the Children's Christmas service.

Debbie Schultz and everyone else who assisted in working with the Sunday School children to prepare for the Children Christmas service.

Paul Zenke and St. John's Choir and others for providing special music for our services.

all others, too numerous to name, who served in the Advent and Christmas seasons and who will continue to serve their Lord and St. John's congregation in the coming new year.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY TO STUDY THE SMALL CATECHISM

On Sunday, January 7th, the Sunday morning Bible Study will be studying Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation using the most recent edition that just came out from Concordia Publishing House. New to this edition are: a "Central Thought" section which will guide the group through simple Bible study and reflection question, "Connections and Applications" sections which relates Scripture to important issues in today's culture, and expanded appendices which provide helpful articles and reference materials. So, after worship, grab a cup of coffee and something to eat and come join our group in this study.

2017 ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE



Those writing reports for the Annual Report of the congregation are asked to get them in as soon as possible. The deadline for reports is Sunday, January 1. Reports can be turned into the church secretary.

LUTHERAN WITNESS SUBSCRIPTION DUE

Anyone wishing to subscribe to the Lutheran Witness for the coming year are asked to place in the offering plate an envelope with \$22 enclosed. Please be sure to mark on the outside of the envelope "For Lutheran Witness" along with your name and address.

FOR SAFETY REASONS WE NEED TO BE NUT AWARE

One of the children who attends church and Sunday School regularly has an allergy to nuts and nut products (i.e. peanut butter). This allergy can be serious and at times life-threatening. For this reason we need to be "nut aware." If you are bringing treats to share that have nuts in them, please make it clear that there are nuts in them. This is true especially when serving the Sunday School children, but there may be others with a nut allergy that we do not know about.

AITKIN FOOD SHELF SAYS THANK YOU

The first part of November we received a very large food donation from your parishioners. Then again the end of November we received another very large donation in conjunction with Thrivent. We are so appreciative of all you do for our food shelf. Thank you so much! Rita, Lee, and Janice

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...

Fred Kiphuth	January 01	Vicki Patrick	January 21
Kathy Badger	January 01	Dominick Patrick	January 21
Jeff Butler	January 04	Greg Rono	January 21
Brandon Perrine	January 04	Jeff Schlagel	January 21
Belinda Hammond	January 06	David J. Wilke	January 21
Rachel Converse	January 07	Diane Robak	January 22
Tanner Wold	January 09	Keith Ahonen	January 24
Vickie Fossum	January 10	Kathryn Futhey	January 24
Nicole Fuller	January 10	Terry Lenzen	January 24
Andrew Gage	January 10	Robert Haugly	January 26
Aaron Lind-Pashina	January 12	Stephanie Tell	January 28
Mary Peterson	January 13	Heather Radtke	January 30
Ron Harmon	January 13	Ashley Kuehn	January 30
Mary Mikes	January 16	Brooke Peysar	January 30
Maclay Beck	January 17	Frederick Elling	January 31
Tim Scharrer	January 17		
Melissa Bleeker	January 18		
Elsie Specht	January 18		
Joseph Weimer	January 18		
Sabin Christian	January 19		
Stella Sterling	January 20		
Steven Holm	January 20		
Julie Lemire	January 20		

*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.

January Ushers

*Henry Torgerson
John Arness
Mike Johnson
Stan Van Epps
Dan Borseth

Deacon: Dan Borseth

Communion Fillers

1/1: Jane Kiphuth
1/7:Linda Bauer
1/21: Faye Torgerson

Communion Cleaners

1/1: Jane Kiphuth
1/3: Jane Kiphuth
1/21: Joy Janzen & Linda Bakken

Altar Care: Erin Rom

NEWS FROM PUERTO RICO

According to a recent Puerto Rico Update Newsletter:

“The electrical grid is still not up and running at 100%, so safe drinking water is still not universally available. Rural areas of the island are still the most affected. Temporary repairs to roofs and structures can still be seen easily from the air. Flattened trees and buildings still dot the countryside.

Many businesses have been forced to close, greatly increasing an already high unemployment rate. While food, water and children's goods are readily available, more Puerto Ricans than ever before simply cannot afford them.

Many doctors and teachers have left the commonwealth, putting increased strain on the medical system and on schools. It is estimated that over 100,000 Puerto Ricans have left the island so far, over 3% of the population.

The Rev. Richard Schuller and his wife Gema are still hard at work in Ponce. They are working at leasing a building that can be used as a mercy and worship center.

Mr. Gustavo Maita and his wife Ruth, both Lutherans with mission experience and fluidity in Spanish, are coordinating efforts and working in Mayaguez. Mr. William Torres, a longtime member and musician at Prince of Peace Lutheran in Mayaguez, will be serving alongside them showing Christ's mercy and proclaiming the Gospel. With the assistance of Mr. Bill Lohmeyer, they are close to acquiring a house next door to the church building in Mayaguez that can be used as a mercy center there.

The Rev. Charles St-Onge is giving overall direction and looking after communications as area facilitator for Puerto Rico. Emails, such as this one, are part of his efforts. He is also working on the details that will enable all of this work to move forward.”

Please remember in your prayers our brothers and sister in Christ in Puerto Rico. Pray that they will have opportunities to share the good news of Jesus and that they will be blessed in reaching out to others. At our January Voters' Meeting we will be making a decision on who will be our next Together in Mission missionary.