

St. John's Lutheran Church  
65033 220<sup>th</sup> St.  
Elkton, MN 55933



# The Messenger

## St. John's Lutheran Church

Pastor Kris Ferkin

**December 2020**  
Vol. 24, No. 11

## Christmas greetings from the pastor

Greetings to you in the name of Jesus!

The great news of Advent is the Incarnation; God becomes flesh and dwells among us in Jesus Christ. The season of Advent is a time for reflection and preparation, a time in which it will bring the comfort and reassurance of the season as we hear that God is near; with us. In our brokenness, God comes to us as the light of the world. Ever-increasing light is a metaphor for this season. This ever-increasing light points us beyond Christmas to Easter morning and we see that this baby Jesus is the resurrected Christ. Advent points to the resurrection and brings us back to the theme: Here with Us. God Immanuel!!

Christmas is a time to celebrate God's great gift to us – through the leading of the brightest light of all - Jesus Christ, our Savior, the Messiah, the Light of the World.

Jesus is the light we all need in our lives. With Jesus, we know whatever darkness we encounter; we have been given the Messiah, the Light of the World, who dwells among us. We

still long for and look forward to the day when Christ will come again, fulfilling God's promise of justice and peace, but we also know that our Lord comes to us each day through the Scriptures, the waters of our Baptism, the bread and wine of Communion and in the community of faith. In all of these ways and more, we experience the Light of the World. May the Light of the World shine through your lives as you prepare for Christ's coming.

Let us pray: Stir up your power, O Lord Jesus, and come. Take away the hindrance the darkness our sins have cloaked us with, and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you the light of the world in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Remind us of the verse, "O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth. Amen.

From my family to yours, may God's Blessings be unto you and your family this Advent Season and a Very Merry Christmas!

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# **Grab a backpack; fill a backpack**

We have all heard about people going hungry, not knowing where their next meal is coming from...food insecurity. And COVID-19 has only compounded the issue. ABC News on Tuesday, the 24<sup>th</sup> stated that 24 million people in the US are experiencing food insecurity. Many parents are having to choose between medicine and food for their families; sometimes parents are going with only one meal a day so they have food to give their children.

Well, we can help! And right here in our own area. Yeah, I know, it doesn't happen in our backyard, right? It certainly does; especially now that schools are doing hybrids and distance learning. Many schools are no longer providing 2 meals during every school day.

Mower County, through its United Way, has been operating a backpack program for about the last 10 years. They provide backpacks filled with food items for the weekend, food that is nutritious and easy to prepare even for most elementary children.

This is a community-wide program. Previously, the backpacks were filled at schools to then send home with children

in need. Currently, the food is packed at the First Congregational Church in Austin.

How can we help? Down the road, St. John's members may want to volunteer to help pack the bags or deliver them to schools on Fridays. Or maybe St. John's could offer its plentiful space for packing to occur here. But that's probably down the road.

Right now, we can donate money to help purchase food for the program, some of it being purchased in area grocery stores and some of it being purchased through Channel One in Rochester. Channel One is the agency from which Southland Area Faith Community Foodshelf purchases much of its food. (Ask Bubba for more details on Channel One and how it operates)

Starting in December, look for envelopes on the narthex table, labeled with a picture of a backpack. Then insert a five, a ten, or even a twenty. Place it in the offering plate in the narthex. Then know you have helped a child and probably a family to be more food secure. Thank you!

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## **Mission Moments**

### **God's work, our hands**

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# **Prayer Partner Party revisited**

With such an unusual year, is it a surprise that our annual prayer partner party has to have a new kink to it? After collaborating about possibilities, getting an update concerning COVID-19 from both the church council and Governor Walz, we will cancel the prayer partner revealing for 2020.

That doesn't mean we are discontinuing this valuable fellowship, this important support to women in our congregation. Instead, we will continue supporting a prayer partner in 2021,

## **Pastor Kris's contact info and schedule**

Listed below are Pastor Kris's contact information and anticipated schedule.

307-200-4322  
[pastorkris@ferkin.net](mailto:pastorkris@ferkin.net)

He will usually be in the church office on Thursdays from 10-2.

## **Christmas Eve Worship**

Watch for further information about the Christmas Eve worship this year.

continuing with our 2020 prayer partner. And we will look forward to having the usual revealing in December 2021.

So please continue the regular prayers for your prayer partner and sending cards at special times and non-special times, letting her know you are actively praying for regularly.

Remember now, DON'T SPILL THE BEANS! Keep it quiet for another year. If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact Carol Lantow (440-8850) or Linda Johnson (481-5077).

## **Thankoffering Sunday moved to December**

Changes all around, right? Usually the Thankoffering Service is in mid-November. This year it will be celebrated on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>.

All women of the church are encouraged to give a Thankoffering, all of which is sent on to the women's SE MN organization, who in turn sends some of it on the women's churchwide organization. This offering is used for programming, for scholarships, for mission opportunities.

A basket will be available in the narthex, alongside the regular offering plate, for your Thankoffering gift. Thank you, women of St. John's, for your support in this way.