

Buffalo Lutheran and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches

DECEMBER 2015 PARISH POST

Comments from Pastor Chris . . .

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Happy Advent! By the time you read this, we will already be into the season of Advent, which focuses on three things: the Incarnation (that the eternal Son of God became a man), our Lord's presence in his chosen means of grace (absolution, Baptism, and Holy Communion), and his promise to come again. You may notice that the hymns and readings seem to have a theme of preparation. You might notice the Advent wreath, which serves to count Sundays until Christmas.

Being a time of preparation, how can you focus your home devotions on this theme? There are a great number of things a person is free to do in Christ in his or her home devotions. These are but a few suggestions. Firstly, you could make a point to read through one of the four Gospels this Advent. Pick Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, divide the book into sections appropriate to the number of days left in the season and set aside time each day to read your allotted material. You could purchase a home advent wreath, and spend some time each week praying with and for your family and/or singing Advent carols, which can be found in the "Advent" section of Lutheran hymnals. Perhaps you could make it your goal to read through and/ or discuss the Small Catechism in your household (we have copies available for free in the office, just ask!). If you are looking for something more advanced, you could purchase and begin reading the *Book of Concord* (I recommend the *Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* available from www.cph.org)

It is always a good time to start a daily discipline of prayer, and Advent can be a good time to begin setting a period of time aside each day to pray. What should you pray? Again, as Lutherans, the possibilities are varied. You could pray whatever it is that comes on your mind. If you find words to be in short supply (which they often are), you could pray from the book of Psalms, the Creeds, or the Lord's Prayer.

Whatever of these suggestions appeal to you, I hope you take advantage of this time to begin or reinvigorate your devotional time with Christ. Above all, we should always strive to make a point of regular reception of our Lord's gifts, as we sinners desperately need them.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Chris



BUFFALO LUTHERAN CHURCH

Checking Balance as of Nov. 23--\$2680.87 (before Nov. bills were paid). Parish Nurse Account balance is \$393.10 (pd. thru Nov.) Donations to the Buffalo Lutheran Church Parish Nurse Fund should be earmarked on Checks' memo line.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

General fund balance as of Nov. 30-\$3177.42 (All bills are current)

Journey Through Time will be held Dec. 10 & 11 from 7-9 PM at Riverview Drive & Hanna Ave in Valley City. A drive-through Christmas Presentation, take 8th Ave SW to Riverview Drive.

THE COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTRY WILL HOLD A SOUP & SANDWICH LUNCHEON at the Buffalo Community Hall from 11 AM-1:00 PM on Sunday, December 13. This event will be the major fundraiser for 2015 and free will offerings will be accepted. Tickets will be available for a variety of gift baskets. Please join us!

Buffalo Lutheran Church will hold their Annual Church Meeting December 13 at 10 AM. We will not have a pot-luck dinner at the church. we invite everyone to support our Community Health Ministry as noted above.

HUNGER AT HOME In North Dakota, thirteen percent of people live in poverty. Children and seniors are especially vulnerable to living in poverty. The number of children living in poverty in North Dakota increased 25% from 2013-14. Most of these children have a parent who works fulltime year round.

Food insecurity is a common result of poverty. The USDA defines food insecurity as "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways." Hunger can be a result of food insecurity. We can help ensure that our neighbors in rural Cass County don't have to go hungry because the food runs out before worry about having adequate food for themselves and their families.

HOW CAN WE HELP? Throughout the month of December we will be collecting non-perishable food items at every worship service. There will be a basket at the back of Buffalo Lutheran Church. Cash donations are always appreciated too. The items collected will be given to the Rural Cass County Food Pantry in Casselton.



44th Annual Community Christmas Eve Dinner will be held at St. Catherine's Church Dining Hall on December 24 from 5:30 PM – 7 PM. This is a Christmas gathering for people in our community who will be alone at Christmas. A Good Will offering will be appreciated!

Merry Christmas!

I pray that you will enjoy all the peace, joy and wholeness that is Christmas! I hope that you will take time to reflect on God's great gift to us in the Christ Child. I would encourage you to take time to worship and meditate on the incarnation of the Christ child, and how Christ transforms your life.

I also would like to discuss giving ourselves the gift of humor. This gift can help us heal our lives. "A cheerful heart is good medicine...." (Pr. 17:22) Since the beginning of time, man has enjoyed God's gift of humor, but only recently scientists have been studying the healing effects of laughter. Laughter activates healing chemicals called endorphins within the body. Laughter has an anesthetic or pain killing effect. It is a stress reducer and it releases built up tension. Laughter enhances our will to live and fight. And laughter is an internal aerobic work-out.

How can we increase humor in our lives? Well, first of all, thank God for the gift of humor. Second, we can learn not to take ourselves or others too seriously. Sometimes our lack of 'good humor' is based on not being able to relax and appreciate our own gifts as well as our limitations and that of others.

May God bless us all with a glad heart. I wish you a JOYFUL Christmas.

Peace and Joy in Him,

Gwen Fraase RN, Parish Nurse
Community Health Ministry

Seasons of Wellness, Bible

Special Christmas Worship Schedule

Advent Vespers—Each Wednesday night in Advent

7:00 PM at Buffalo Lutheran Church

Christmas Eve, December 24, Worship

5 PM at Buffalo Lutheran Church

7 PM at St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Christmas Day, December 25, Worship

10 AM at Buffalo Lutheran Church



Buffalo & Tower City Lutheran Parish
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UPCOMING DECEMBER EVENTS

Pastoral guidance and individual confession are available by appointment with the pastor. You can contact him at 749-2309 or 701-710-0446. His e-mail address is cbrademeyer@gmail.com

DECEMBER DIVINE SERVICES WILL BE HELD AT BUFFALO LUTHERAN CHURCH SUNDAYS AT 9:00 AM WITH BIBLE STUDY AT 10:30 AM (NO BIBLE STUDY DEC. 13, 20, 27). ADVENT VESPERS SERVICES WILL BE HELD EACH WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT 7 PM AT BUFFALO LUTHERAN CHURCH.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES every Wednesday at 1:41 pm at Maple Valley High School (unless otherwise notified---No classes Dec. 23 or 30).

December 7-8: Pastor Chris away at Continuing Education Event

December 9: Naomi Circle meets at Audrey Grieve home at 1:30 PM. Buffalo Lutheran Church Council meets (check time).

December 13: Buffalo Lutheran Church Annual Meeting at 10 AM, Community Health Ministry Luncheon at Buffalo Community Center from 11 AM-1 PM.

December 20: Sunday School Christmas Program after Divine Service at Buffalo Lutheran Church.

December 24: Divine Service at 5 PM at Buffalo Lutheran Church; Divine Service at 7:00 PM at St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

December 25: Divine Service at 10 AM at Buffalo Lutheran Church.