

Good Shepherd News & Notes

Circumcision & Naming of Jesus: Dec. 31, 2023

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KNNA radio: 95.7FM or www.thecross957.org
Services broadcast live Sundays at 8 am & 10:30 am
and Wednesdays at 6:30 pm



GAUDETE SUNDAY: BREAKING THE RULES *by Rev. Roberto Rojas Jr*

Jesus Speaks

How does Jesus respond? He didn't simply say "yes" or "no." Rather, he answered with His works. He pointed them to see and hear what kings and prophets longed for. He answered them: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended (scandalized) by me" (Matt. 11: 4-6). He proved Himself by His works and words. He taught them to observe that He fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament; only the Promised One could do that.

Now John, the greatest preacher, was being preached to! John, the greatest man born of a woman and more than a prophet (Matt. 11:10-11), was now hearing the one born of a virgin and the one who fulfilled all prophecies. Jesus blessed John in jail. He blessed all those who believe what the preacher has preached. Even though John couldn't observe or measure the success or church growth from his preaching, Jesus blessed him beyond measure.

Even though John would remain in prison and eventually be beheaded (Matt. 14:1-12), Jesus' blessing gave him a reason to rejoice in the Lord always. With these words, it wasn't just that John's mission and purpose in life were validated but that his salvation was made even more certain! It's as if Jesus said, "John, while you sit in prison accomplishing nothing, do you know what's happening? I, the one you preached about, am restoring all creation. I am undoing what sin, death, and the devil have done. I'm preaching forgiveness freely to the poor. Though you are persecuted and poor now, rejoice, for great is your reward in heaven. Therefore, My son, be comforted and be happy. Do not be frightened. If this is true for all of those who hear the Word of God, then, it is true for you as well."

Upside down and backwards

That is what we learn on Gaudete Sunday! Gaudete breaks the rules because Jesus breaks the rules. He makes the blind see, the mute speak and the dead rise. He even causes the persecuted to rejoice. He brings joy in times of sadness. He does this by fulfilling His own promises and speaking words of eternal life.

He broke the "rules" we have for God and our expectations of Him. God, whom the heavens and earth cannot contain, lays Himself down in a manger. The Holy One of Israel, who knew no sin, became sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21). The author of life dies on a cross and lays Himself down in the grave. The one who humbled Himself unto death is resurrected from the dead.

(see page 2)

In doing this, He doesn't seek your punishment but your joy by forgiving all your sins. He breaks the rule of sin and sadness over you, and He gives you joy that cannot be taken away. In breaking all of the rules, He's only doing what He promised from long ago. You need look no further. Look to no one else: He is the promised One who has come to bring you joy.

Gaudete teaches us to repent from finding joy in health, wealth and success. It teaches us to repent from measuring the "growth" of the church through finances, attendance and demographics. It teaches us to repent from doubting God's promises and searching for happiness in the things in this world and to find true joy in His Word. Gaudete forms and shapes our understanding of Advent and Christmas by teaching us that true joy is found only in Christ.

Because of this, we can rejoice even in the midst of grief and sadness, even if we are persecuted, even if there is no restoration, even if there is no healing or cure for a sickness. It teaches us to rest from trying to find joy, know that joy has found us. The "joy" of this world is for a moment, but joy in Christ is everlasting. Therefore, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say: Rejoice!" (Phil. 4: 4).

The Lutheran Witness (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO) Dec. 2015, pg. 14-15

LUTHERAN FOOD PANTRY

We continue to collect toiletry items for the Lutheran Food Pantry. The following items are on the list of preferred items:

Family size toothpaste Family size shampoo
Family size soap
Toothbrushes (no battery or electric, please)

You may also bring travel sizes of these items for the collection box. The box is located by the south balcony stairs on the round table. Thank you for your help in filling this need.

MISSION PROJECT FOR JANUARY

Lutherans for Life is Good Shepherd's mission project for the month of January. Christmas – and a new year – offers opportunity for the joys of looking forward. Simeon and Anna exemplify and inspire faith that finds strength and celebration in anticipating. The Heavenly Father who escorted us thus far will also usher us ever onward. Neighbors facing surprise pregnancies or suffering terminal diagnoses need to know. For their sake, please do not keep silent (Psalm 62:1)! We will be celebrating Life Sunday, January 14.

DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

Lutheran Bible Translators has produced a daily Bible reading plan which covers the New Testament minus Revelations and portions of the Old Testament including Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Nehemiah and Esther. If you would like to follow this plan for 2024 and journey through most of the Bible, you can pick up a copy from the clipboard at the Information Center.

CHANGE OF INFORMATION CARDS

There are yellow cards on the information center to fill out if you have recently changed address, email address or phone contact number. The church office staff would appreciate it if everyone would assist us in keeping our information current.



PRAYERS FOR THE WEEK

If you have a prayer request, please contact the church office at (402) 423-7639. Your request will appear for 6 weeks. If you would like to keep it on the prayer list, you may

call during the 6th week to renew it.

- **Barb Poppe**, with short-term memory issues (3)
- **Pastor Luke Russert**, for a successful adjustment of his medication (1)
- **Sharon Burke**, dealing with Parkinson's disease (6)
- **Jeremy Janssen**, friend of Rich Lichtenfeld, recovering from a stroke (6)
- **Joannie Michel**, recovering at home (6)
- **Georgeson family**, dealing with the stress of family issues (6)
- **Leena Mackey**, grand-daughter of Linda Clark, with continued medical issues (5)
- **Linda Clark**, undergoing medical tests (5)
- **Tom Vontz**, brother-in-law of Dee Indgjer, recovering from a kidney transplant on Nov. 15th (6)
- **Glenn**, friend of Karen Kammann, diagnosed with untreatable cancer, Pray for peace and comfort (4)
- **Jack Walker**, hospitalized (1)
- **Taylor**, grand-daughter of Holly Herrod, for continued healing (3)
- **John Reigle**, for successful back surgery and recovery (2)
- **Robert Zook**, moved to The Waterford (6)
- **Lynn Oshner**, friend of Marilyn Meyer, recovering from heart surgery (3)
- **Don Wiese**, moved to hospice care (5)
- **Terry Meier**, friend of Terry Fitzgerald, undergoing medical testing (4)
- **Shari**, sister of Tish Loomis, having a medical procedure (4)
- **Gail Stachura**, for recovery from neck surgery and successful healing (2)

- **The son of Jordan**, friend of Michael Jensen, who is having seizures (2)
- **Ellie Anderson**, friend of Grace Marshall, dealing with worsening pain that is incapacitating her (5)
- **Gary Chura**, brother-in-law of Maureen Marshall, in hospice care with pancreatic cancer. (5)
- **Kelli Stott**, daughter of Bob & Elaine Van Valkenburg, recovering from a knee replacement (3)
- **Elaine Egner**, having medical issues (5)
- **Chris**, son of Elaine Egner, in rehab at Brookside (5)
- **Tish Loomis**, having a medical procedure on Dec. 19th (5)
- **Elaine Van Valkenburg**, in rehab at Tabitha (2)
- **Bennett & Corbin**, friends of Karen Kammann, dealing with severe health issues (4)
- **The Goodrich family**, neighbors of the Knauses, on the disappearance of their son, Tyler (4)
- **Hudson Dewey**, 2 yr. old great-grandson of Sandie Trvz, thanksgiving for recovery from Covid (2)
- **Thanksgiving for the birth of Lucy Marie Kranz**, daughter of Rev. Mark & Bethany Kranz, brother-in-law and sister of Jeana Wood (2)

SOUP COOKOFF

Reserve the date to participate! Good Shepherd will be having a soup cook-off on Sunday, January 21st following the 10:30 am service. The soup makers will be vying for your vote and to earn the coveted golden ladle trophy. More details to follow.

OWLS

Good Shepherd's OWLS (Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors) will be meeting for games and fun on the first Friday of each month. The next gathering will be on Friday, Jan. 5th at 2 pm in the fellowship hall.

Good Shepherd News & Notes

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT— Psalm 8:2 – “Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength.” Jesus pointed to a little child as the image of faith. Infants and children show us a living picture of the sort of trust and dependence we should have on our Heavenly Father. The good works of our Christian life flow forth from that trust

“A little child will lead them.”

Isaiah 11:6, NIV



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES (Dec. 29 thru Jan. 2)

People celebrating birthdays are:

Alexander Dlouhy	Mark Duer
Frank Densberger	Anna Wilkens
Jayme Fitzsimmons	Tammy Bohlender
Tonya Pierson	Maverick Schultz

Couples celebrating anniversaries are:

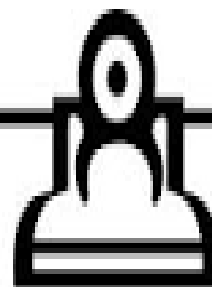
No anniversary celebrations this week.

LIFE MOMENT

“While it is true that we need to be good stewards of God’s earthly gifts, it is sinful to think that we are in full control of preserving this world. It is sinful to fret about the destruction of this world before the Last Day. This world will not run out of natural resources. We will not be wiped out by climate change, a world-wide pandemic, or a meteor shower if and when those things happen. God says that as long as this earth endures—until Judgment Day—seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. God is in control. God will protect, provide, and preserve this world. Trust in God and see His grace and mercy, especially when sin affects this world. Trust that He gives you what you don’t deserve and more than you could imagine.” *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutherans-forlife.org*

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

If you have not already had your photo taken for Good Shepherd’s new pictorial directory, watch for another date in January when photos will be taken. We want to include as many members and regular attenders as possible.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION
DECEMBER 25, 2023

WEEKLY BUDGET NEED:
\$ 11,184.00

ATTENDANCE:
WED., DEC. 20: 96
MATINS, DEC. 21: 30
SUN., DEC. 24: 184
CHRISTMAS EVE: 262
MON., DEC. 25: 58

GENERAL FUND OFFERING:
\$ 29,013.75

OUR OUTSTANDING MORT-
GAGE: \$ 1,665,667.46

Our goal is to pay off the mort-
gage by 2030. We need \$2,300
per week donated in principal
only payments to accomplish this.

Between Oct. 1 and Dec. 25, 2023
We have received
\$ 9,813.50
in principal only gifts.

Principle Only Gifts from
October 2022– Oct. 1, 2023
\$ 197,307.69

Vicarage Fund 12/25: \$ 15,350.00

SERVING AT GOOD SHEPHERD THIS WEEK:

DOORKEEPERS: (Sun., Dec. 31): 8 am: Scott Indiger
10:30 am: Jerry Sidlo

ELDER TODAY: (Sun., Dec. 31): Mark Reinke
(Wed., Jan. 3): Mark Reinke

USHERS: (Sun., Dec. 31) 8 am: Graphenteen/Higgins/ A. Von Busches
10:30 am: Fitzgerald/Keller/D. Von Busches
(Wed., Jan. 3): Klutzes/Eckhoff/Civic

ACOLYTES: (Sun., Dec. 31) 8 am: Aaden Von Busch
10:30 am: Swayer Shubkagel
(Wed., Jan. 3): RJ Huff

ALTAR GUILD ASSISTANT: (Sun., Dec. 31): Claire Moline
(Wed., Jan. 3): Chloe Lichtenfeld

COMMUNION SET-UP: (Sun., Dec. 31): Deb Burow
(Wed., Jan. 3): Marilyn Meyer

COMMUNION CLEAN-UP: (Sun., Dec. 31): Sue Znamenacek
(Wed., Jan. 3): Marilyn Meyer

COFFEE SERVERS: (Sun., Dec. 24): Dale & Marilyn Meyer

VOTERS' MEETING

Good Shepherd's semi-annual voters' meeting will be held in the sanctuary on Tuesday, January 30th at 7 pm. Come for information about the decision to request a vicar for the August 2024 — July 2025 year. We will also hear some up-to-date information about other important coming events and opportunities. See you there!

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" . . . the Christian is in a different position from other people who are trying hard to be good. They hope, by being good, to please God if there is one, or – if they think there is not – at least they hope to deserve approval from good men. But the Christian thinks any good he does comes from the Christ-life inside him. He does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because he loves us.."

– C. S. Lewis –

GOOD SHEPHERD SHUT-IN MEMBERS:

Several of our shut-in members have requested to be listed in the News & Notes in order that members might pray for them.

Ron Amack (at home)
Betty Bluhm (at The Grand Lodge)
Joe & Sharon Burke (at home)
Jim & Peggy Cather (at home)
Elaine Egner (at home)
Shirley Kalina (Pemberly Place)
Janet Kniep (at home)
Tish Loomis (at home)
Dorian Merritt (at home)
Cindi Olson (Country House)
Dean Posner (Holmes Lake Rehab)
Alice Urbach (at home)

Anita Armitstead (at home)
Irma Brandt (Yankee Hill Village)
Jim & Marilyn Carr (at home)
Georgene Duer (at home)
Verneda Gerdes (at home)
Arlyss Ketelsen (at home)
Jerry Kohl (The Woodlands)
Lynda Mahloch (Legacy Estates)

Francine Poppe (Azria Health, Central City)
Marvin & Joyce Thompson (The Landing)
Don Wiese (Southlake Village)

On the tall table next to the pro-life display is a way for you to send birthday and anniversary greetings to our shut-in members. There are cards to sign or you may write a short note to those having birthdays and anniversaries in the current month. **There are currently no birthdays or anniversaries to celebrate among our shut-in members.** Thank you to everyone who has taken advantage of these opportunities to stay in touch with our shut-in members.



KNNA-LP 95.7 FM VOLUNTEER

The Cross is always looking for volunteers to help, but currently we have a very specific need. We would like to update our radio station website or perhaps completely rebuild it. We have hundreds of hours of programming that needs to be properly archived for easier access. If you have computer/website experience and can help with this project, please contact Curt Christiansen or Pastor Moline. Thank you.

KNNA-LP 95.7 PROGRAMMING

There have been many changes recently regarding the programming on KNNA. There have been a few programs that have ended production and a few new programs that have been added. These changes are now being formalized and a new schedule should be available mid-January. Look for it on the table in the narthex. Thanks for listening!