

December 2024

BROADCASTER

A magazine of Worship Anew

Regifting

WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN US

Being Good Stewards of Our God-given Gifts



Matthew F. Leighty
Matthew F. Leighty
Executive Director

Growing up, my family often faced financial challenges. Despite this, my dad had a knack for finding what he considered “treasures” at flea markets or garage sales, which he would then give as gifts. One memorable instance was when he found a reel-to-reel projector and gifted it to my uncle, allowing us to watch old family recordings. Seeing those videos of our family from when I was very little brought immense joy and laughter.

Perhaps my dad’s resourcefulness influenced me back then. I recall a Christmas during my sixth-grade year when my classmates were bringing gifts for our teacher. Not having anything new to give, I gifted a Christian wall plaque that had been hanging in my bedroom. Whether or not she truly appreciated it, she seemed grateful at the time, and that

moment taught me a lesson about gift-giving that I still carry to this day.

Gift-giving is indeed an art, and I must admit, I’m not always the best at picking out the perfect present for Christmas or birthdays. My wife can certainly attest to that! However, I am grateful that God has endowed each of us with unique gifts and talents, enabling us to give in various ways beyond material presents.

Recently, our team had the privilege of participating in a strengths assessment workshop. We explored our individual strengths — the unique gifts that God has woven into each of us — and discussed how we can harness these strengths to advance the mission of Worship Anew and expand God’s kingdom.



December 2024 | Vol 2 Issue 12

Worship Anew
5 Martin Luther Drive
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
(888) 286-8002

EDITORIAL STAFF

MATTHEW LEIGHTY
Executive Director

ASHLEY WIEHE
Director of Communications

THOMAS MOLL
Director of Content & Innovation

SHEILA BANKS
Communications Specialist

ELIZABETH PULS
Copy Editor

PEYTON SWEET
Content Specialist

Worship Anew engages and equips aging adults with resources to live a full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.



“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV

This exercise was a powerful reminder of the scripture passage from 1 Peter 4:10-11 (ESV), which had been on my heart: “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Reflecting on this passage, I am reminded that God has bestowed upon us diverse gifts to be used in service to others. These gifts are to be utilized according to His will, and through this lesson from scripture, we are moved to dedicate everything we have — even our very lives — to serve the church and our neighbors.

As we journey through life, especially in our later years, it is essential to recognize and embrace the gifts God has given us. Whether it’s a talent for listening, a knack for organizing, or a heart for hospitality, each gift plays a vital role in building up the body of Christ.

One of the most beautiful aspects of aging is the accumulation of wisdom and experience. These are gifts in themselves, which can be shared with younger generations. Mentoring, offering guidance, and simply being a listening ear can have profound impacts on those around us. Our life stories, filled with lessons learned and faith tested, can inspire and encourage others in their own walk with Christ.

Moreover, serving others doesn’t always require grand gestures. Small

acts of kindness, such as a phone call to check on a friend, sharing a Worship Anew care package, volunteering at a local food bank, or sharing a devotion and praying with someone in need, are powerful ways to use our gifts. These actions, though seemingly small, can make a significant difference in someone’s life and bring glory to God.

What gifts has God given you to serve Him and others? It is my prayer that God may continue to use our unique strengths to further His kingdom and help aging adults live an abundant life in Christ.

May we all strive to be good stewards of our God-given gifts, glorifying Him in all that we do.

In This Issue

4 Merry Christmas
Worship Anew to show a special Christmas Day program.

6 Helping Those in Need
Church shares impact of Operation Christmas Child Donations.

9 Program Summaries
See what is on Worship Anew for December.

12 Regifting
Passing on what God has given us.

20 A Lesson on Regifting
A Bible study on regifting the gifts that God has given us.

22 Traditions
A worksheet to pass on your favorite Christmas traditions.



Celebrating Christmas with Worship Anew

Guest Pastor Jonathan Meyer to lead the program



The Christmas Day program will be available through our online and streaming options. Watch our program on our website at WorshipAnew.org or streaming on YouTube, Roku, AppleTV, GoogleTV, or the Amazon Firestick. Also, please tune in to see our special Christmas Eve Choir Program. To learn more about Worship Anew's digital offerings, please visit worshipanew.org/app

Merry Christmas from Worship Anew! This season, we are bringing a special program to you on Christmas Day. While we have offered Christmas programs in the past (and many have fallen on a Christmas Day that was a Sunday), we have not done a Christmas Day worship program when it has fallen on another day of the week.

As we are expanding the ways that we are able to bring Worship Anew into your homes, we are offering a digital-only broadcast of our Christmas Day program, featuring guest pastor, the Rev. Jonathan Meyer.

Rev. Meyer serves as the Shepherd of the School for Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School in Fort Wayne, Ind., and is in his second year at the school, which offers preschool through 8th grade.

His position in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) is unique as only a few serve in this pastoral role.

“My purpose is to serve as a singular pastoral presence for the 450 students and the 81 faculty and staff that make up Emmanuel-St. Michael Lutheran School,” he explained. “I do that by working with the pastors of Emmanuel and St. Michael, and I do that by working one-on-one and in groups with all the kids.”

Rev. Meyer brings his exceptional talents to Worship Anew in his first time on the program. His Christmas Day program speaks to the “Mundane and Beautiful” view of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The inspiration for his sermon comes from the hymn “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt,” which tells of the birth of Jesus from the perspective of the people in Bethlehem. It tells of how the people were in the city for the census and had no idea that nothing would ever be the same.

“I had never even thought about that. It probably



looked normal — looked like any other baby boy, right? But, the world had changed overnight, and that is a beautiful thing to think about,” he said. “It also then ends up speaking to us about the preconceived notions we have about God. ... It reminds us that God works in a way that’s different, which is, I think, one of the best things about how He works.”

The sermon will focus on the text from John 1:14 (ESV): “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Rev. Meyer is a graduate of Concordia University-Chicago and the Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. He served as a pastor in Hartford, Wis., and O’Fallon, Mo., before coming to Emmanuel-St. Michael in 2023. He and his wife, Carolyn, have three girls.

Where Shepherds Lately Kneled LSB 369

1. Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,
I come in half belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred,
but there is room and welcome there for me,
but there is room and welcome there for me.
2. In that unlikely place I find him as they said:
sweet newborn babe, how frail!
and in a manger bed,
a still, small voice to cry one day for me,
a still, small voice to cry one day for me.
3. How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,
his prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare:
a child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
a child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.
4. Can I, will I forget how love was born, and burned
its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
to die, to live, and not alone for me,
to die, to live, and not alone for me?



Christmas Cheer at home & abroad

Church brings together members to pack shoeboxes for children in need

By Sheila Banks
Communications Specialist

Each year, the festive red and green shoeboxes fill churches around the Christmas season — the impact being made at home and abroad.

Since the early 1990s, Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, has been collecting and distributing shoebox gifts, filled with small toys, personal care items, and school supplies to children around the world.

Delivered into the hands of children through local churches, every shoebox gift is an opportunity to share about Jesus Christ and God's love.

For Fellowship of Faith Lutheran Church in McHenry, Ill., it's been a way to make a global impact as well as grow their members in sharing the Gospel.

The program at Fellowship began in 2017 with one excited parishioner sharing her passion with the NextGen director, and then eventually branched out to the rest of the congregation.

"So when (the parishioner) was passionate about it, and I knew a little bit about it, it just made sense to kind of do something with that," said Gwen Johnson, NextGen director at Fellowship. "We had a packing party at our Sunday night Boulder meeting, which is our big youth meeting of the week. Every year, we would pack about 50 to 100 boxes together as a student ministry, and then it transferred to the mornings when



Photo Courtesy of Fellowship of Faith Lutheran Church
Fellowship of Faith Lutheran Church in McHenry, Ill., has been packing shoeboxes for children in need since 2017.

the children were doing it."

By 2021, it had spread church wide. They stacked the shoeboxes up in the worship space each Sunday and asked people to take boxes home and pack them on their own. The festive stacking of shoeboxes coupled with promotional videos provided by Operation Christmas Child garnered excitement among the congregation. The first year of the churchwide involvement, they packed around 150 boxes altogether.

"It dovetailed into some packing parties on Sunday morning, not just in the children's area, but out into the adult area, as well," Senior Pastor David Gaddini said.

The following year, they challenged themselves to double their goal. They reached it by packing 300 shoeboxes.

"The big impact that we love hearing about and seeing is that the Good

News is shared to (children in other countries)," Johnson said. "The gift is just a tool to get them the Gospel."

While the boxes are making a great impact for children all over the world, they are also making a difference within their church at Fellowship of Faith.

"(Our children are) impacted by the idea that there are kids that have never been given a gift," Johnson said. "We pray for (the shoeboxes) during the service. When we pack with the kids, we all put hands on boxes and pray for the boxes then, too. So more than once, they're prayed over by our church. (When) they bring the box that they packed and put it on the pile and put their hands on it and are praying for it, that is a really cool moment to experience for them."

"I appreciate the simplicity of it," Gaddini said. "You're sharing the Gospel through a Christmas present

to someone in need. Here's a box to do it in. Here's the supply list. It works every time."

According to Operation Christmas Child, more than 84,000 churches collected shoeboxes last year, including what was done at Fellowship of Faith.

"We wouldn't be able to collect and distribute these gifts without our church partners and volunteers around the world," said Lizette Miller, media relations manager at Operation Christmas Child. "Church partners like Fellowship of Faith are crucial in reaching more children with the Gospel."

Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child, the world's largest Christmas project of its kind, has collected and delivered more than 220 million shoebox gifts to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

"Our mission is to provide local partners around the world with shoebox gifts as a means of reaching out to children in their own communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ," Miller said. "We ship these simple gifts outside the United States to children affected by war, poverty, disease, and disaster."

Anyone can pack a shoebox. Individuals, families, churches, and groups fill empty shoeboxes with school supplies, personal care items, and fun toys, such as dolls or soccer balls.

To find out how to get involved, please visit SamaritansPurse.org/OCC.

Photos Courtesy of Samaritan's Purse Children from Suriname and Antigua smile with the Operation Christmas Child boxes that they have received.





Incarnation

Coming to Earth as a Baby

Incarnation is a beautiful word. It's almost ornate in the way it sounds. But what does it mean exactly?

Our Christmas Day message, delivered by the Rev. Jonathan Meyer digs into the ordinary and the extraordinary of the incarnation. He encourages us to imagine looking at the manger where Jesus had just been placed:

If you closed your eyes right now and pictured it in your head, what is the sight that greets you when you look at it? Would it be some sort of beaming light? Some glory shining forth in the midst of all of that hay?

No, in all likelihood, that's not what it was. But maybe it was a cute, cuddly, and utterly unremarkable baby boy. Something we see all the time.

If God's Word is to be believed, Jesus was a baby just like you, me, any other. And in this moment, that's actually a bit odd.

Listening to John's Gospel, we hear some amazing things. It starts off, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It talks about the light shining in the darkness, this creator coming to His own. And it caps off with, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." That is a humongous thing!

This isn't just anyone there in that manger. It's the same one Who hovered over the face of the deep, there in the beginning, Who spoke into the darkness, the void; said, "Let there be light." and created everything. That Word, becoming flesh, is absolutely no small deal!

As you look forward to celebrating Christmas, may you remember that our God became man so that He could die for us. He became man so that we could see that unremarkable baby, knowing that He became unremarkable so that we might have a life that's marked by Him, a new eternal life in our Savior Jesus Christ.



Worship Anew in December

Year 2025 | Series C



Your Coming King

December 1, 2024 – First Sunday in Advent ~ Rev. Shayne Jonker

Your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation. He comes to establish His reign, not on earth, but in the hearts of men and women, turning hearts in faith toward Him and to the Father.

Sermon Text: Zechariah 9:9

Readings: Psalm 89:6, 14-16, 18 and Antiphon from Zechariah 9:9; Jeremiah 33:14-16; Luke 19:28-40



Prepare the Way

December 8, 2024 – Second Sunday in Advent ~ Rev. Paul Shoemaker

John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament (old covenant) prophets, even though he appears in the New Testament. He calls upon people to prepare the way of the Lord. We, too, need to prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts and lives.

Sermon Text: Luke 3:1-20

Readings: Psalm 66:1-12; Malachi 3:1-7b; Luke 3:1-20



Advent is for Rejoicing

December 15, 2024 – Third Sunday in Advent ~ Rev. William Mueller

Our Lord invites us through His message, by way of Zephaniah, both to rejoice and to know why it is we rejoice!

Sermon Text: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Readings: Psalm 85; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 7:18-28



One of Us

December 22, 2024 – The Nativity of Our Lord ~ Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

The Old Testament gives our newborn Savior the title, “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” We have everyday and eternal peace and joy by having a God who is One of Us.

Sermon Text: Matthew 1:21

Readings: Psalm 110; 1 John 4:7-16; Matthew 1:18-25



Mundane and Beautiful

December 25, 2024 – Christmas Day ~ Rev. Jonathan Meyer (Guest Pastor)

God works things out so beautifully. We see that particularly in the Christmas story, but not in the places where you would think.

Sermon Text: John 1:14

Readings: Psalm 2; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-14



Anna

December 29, 2024 – First Sunday After Christmas

Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

Anna had experienced great grief at a young age when her husband died. But God sustained her in her time of sadness and preserved her in saving faith through his Word.

Sermon Text: Luke 2:36-38

Readings: Psalm 111; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-38

Born into Christmas Traditions

Family shares their pie recipe, spanning 80 years

By Sonya Eggold

You don't choose the traditions you're born into. They are woven into your life years before you're born. They are a gift that comes without asking.

My grandmother, Ella Altevogt, found a pie recipe on the back of a Gold Medal Flour bag in the late 1940s, back when Betty Crocker recipes appeared on packaging before there was a Betty Crocker cookbook. Ella cut out the recipe and tried it using McNess extracts from a traveling salesman.

The pie was called *White Christmas Pie*, and without knowing it, she started a tradition. It was served every Christmas for as long as her daughter, my mother, Marilyn Helmer, can remember. Marilyn served *White Christmas Pie* on her Christmas table, and now, my sister (Tashia Dieckhoff), and I carry on the tradition on our Christmas tables — a tradition spanning more than 80 years!

I would like to share this recipe with you with hopes that it will create great traditions in your home this Christmas.

Sonya and her family reside in Fort Wayne, Ind.



The Eggold family smiles while sharing a picture of their *White Christmas Pie*.





White Christmas Pie

(serves 8)

1 cup sugar (divided)
¼ cup Gold Medal flour
1 envelope (1 Tablespoon) unflavored gelatin
½ tsp salt
1 ¾ cup whole milk
3 egg whites
¼ tsp cream of tartar
½ cup heavy whipping cream, whipped. Or 8 oz Cool Whip.
1 cup shredded coconut (extra for garnish)
¼ tsp coconut extract
¼ tsp almond extract
1 tsp vanilla extract
9" Baked Pie shell cooled
Red and Green Maraschino Cherries

Make the pudding: Combine ½ cup sugar, ¼ cup flour, gelatin, and salt in a sauce pan. Add the milk and whisk over low heat constantly until mixture boils. Boil one minute. Remove from stove and cool until thickened enough to hold its shape when spooned. Stir in ¼ tsp coconut extract, ¼ tsp almond extract, and 1 tsp vanilla extract after cooled.

Make the Meringue: In a mixer, add egg whites and cream of tartar and beat until frothy. Gradually add ½ cup sugar and beat until stiff and glossy. Do not under beat - sugar should be dissolved.

Fold Together: Once the pudding has fully cooled, gently fold in the meringue and then fold in the cool whip and 1 cup coconut.

Make the pie: Pour pie mixture into a baked and cooled 9-inch pie shell. Garnish the top of pie with coconut and decorate each slice with a poinsettia. Do this by using the Maraschino Cherries. Slice red cherries to form petals (5 slices per flower) and green cherries to form the leaves (2 slices per flower).

Cover and refrigerate several hours and serve cold.

The White Christmas Pie recipe was printed in the Betty Crocker Cookbook: 1950. It is described in the cookbook as a "Pure white heavenly concoction."

At right is a photo of Sonya Eggold's grandmother, Ella Altevogt, baking her pie in her kitchen.





Regifting what God has given us

AN EXERCISE IN FAITH

IN ALL THINGS I HAVE SHOWN YOU THAT BY
WORKING HARD IN THIS WAY WE MUST HELP THE
WEAK AND REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE LORD
JESUS, HOW HE HIMSELF SAID, 'IT IS MORE
BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.'"
ACTS 20:35 (ESV)

*By Ashley Wiehe
Director of Communications*

How do you share your faith with your family? Do you pray with your grandchildren? Do you attend church with your children? Do you read from your Bible with your family? Do you share your faith through giving?

In Worship Anew's research with Barna Group, "Data shows many seniors have a strong desire to grow spiritually and feel responsible to pass on their faith," but many don't know how.

In a recent study through Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, they found that people go about their daily lives giving, volunteering, serving on boards, and going on mission trips, but they are not sharing the way that they give — a way they demonstrate their faith — with their family.

"They might just send the check or just do the online transaction. They might just say, 'I'm going out' and they're going to a board meeting or they're going to the fundraising committee meeting," said Dr. Tyrone



Freeman, Glenn Family Chair in Philanthropy at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. “Our research shows that you should pause for a moment and highlight it, bring it to the attention of your children and your grandchildren, saying, ‘Hey, did you know that our family regularly supports XYZ? And this is what that support looks like. We make a monthly donation of XYZ, or we always participate in their charity walk/run. We always show up for them whenever they ask for volunteers.’”

Freeman goes on to explain that in order to pass on those values you should involve them in your giving — volunteer as a family or even have them sit down next to you while you process the online transaction or write the check.

“The biggest way to transfer (those values) is to start that conversation and make it visible for those generations so that now they can make those connections,” he said.

You might be hearing this and say, “Great, but I’m not giving much.”

“I hope my legacy is that [my grandchildren] live Christian lives—and some of them do. At Christmas, I always write them a letter and tell them how much I love being their grandmother. I try to end it with scripture or something to encourage them to live a life where they love Jesus. I don’t overwhelm them, [but] I pray for them every single day.”

A quote from the Barna research with Worship Anew, called “Aging Well.”

continued on page 14



continued from page 13

“I think there’s a tendency to think of philanthropy, or charitable giving, as something that only the wealthy do. Or maybe, if I’m not wealthy, I shouldn’t be concerned because there’s other folks who are doing that,” Freeman said. “We know that people all across the socio-economic spectrum give. ... You don’t have to have a certain amount of money in order to give. All you need is the willingness to give, and that’s sufficient.”

Giving is an exercise of our faith, and sometimes it takes time to reach our exercise goals.

“There’s nothing wrong with starting with where you are,” Freeman said. “It’s like when you’re trying to develop a new habit, or you’re trying to lose weight, get started with a small step. Just go for a walk for 10 minutes. Don’t worry about walking for an hour right now. Just get in the habit of walking for 10 minutes. And eventually, over time, you may work yourself up to an hour. I think it’s the same thing with giving. Start with what you can do right now, and then you always have opportunities

to scale up and go up as time and resources allow in the future.”

In the Gospel of Mark, the Apostle writes of the “Widow’s Mite.” It was the smallest currency of the time. He tells of the woman who came to give her offering (two small coins) after others had thrown in large sums of money.

Imagine yourself in the church pew as the offering plate is passed. Imagine all you have to put in are two pennies. You may feel ashamed that this is all that you can give. But, what does Christ tell us? “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box” (Mark 12:43 ESV).

Jesus teaches us that giving is a matter of sacrifice, but that sacrifice differs from person to person. Two mites may be all that you have today. We are called to give generously, but also to give in trust that God will take care of our needs.

“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly

Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:31–33 ESV).

We are called to care for those in our community — the sick, the poor, the orphans, the widows, the weak, and all who are in need. Giving is a way to build His kingdom, and by doing that, we prepare the next generation to do the same.

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. ~ Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

GIVING THROUGH PRAYER

For Ruth Von Deylen, giving from her family always starts with prayer.

Von Deylen, of Fort Wayne, Ind., says that throughout her marriage to her late husband, Tom, everything that they did started with prayer. When he became sick, they stayed faithful in prayer. When her daughter received a cancer diagnosis, Ruth stayed faithful in prayer.

“My prayer life has been a lot with praying to God for helping us get through all these different situations,” she said. “We pray that God will help us get through this trial now, and hopefully that He knows all our prayers can be answered if it is His will.”

But as she has faced trials in her life, she knows that God is always there because she is continuing that conversation with Him. Because of that foundation of prayer, that practice has continued in all aspects of her life, especially in the ways that she gives.

For organizations that she loves, such as Worship Anew, everything starts with prayer.

When her husband was sick, they discovered Worship Anew since they were unable to go to church, and that love and support soon grew into volunteering by stuffing mailings and then monetary donations to the ministry. At every point, though, she is turning to God for guidance.

“We prayed about it for a couple of years and decided how much to give,” she said. “I’ve been doing that now for the past couple years and asking God to help me decide what to give.”

She continues in her prayer life daily — through the trials but through the faith and love that she has for God’s ministry.

GIVING THROUGH TIME

For Beth Myers, giving means making an investment in the ministry.

From the beginning of Worship Anew (then called Worship for Shut-Ins), Myers, of Fort Wayne, Ind., was and has been pivotal to the success of the ministry. She was there from the beginning as Worship for Shut-Ins was re-established at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in 1980.

“It was just a labor of love for everybody that was involved,” she said.

And since that time, she has continued to support the ministry through her time, talents, and treasures. Myers was the one who decorated the atrium during various seasons of the year — bringing a smile to all who came through the doors.

“It’s really quite easy when it has something to do with spreading the Good News of the Gospel and anything that is an extension of our beliefs or our church,” she said. “When you get involved with an organization like Worship Anew, and

when you start to volunteer and take an interest in what’s going on, you begin to see readily the needs and how you can do even more.”

And while her health has not permitted to her to decorate or to come and volunteer in recent years, she is still a faithful supporter of the ministry.

“The money that is donated is certainly returned in so many ways with the growth of the ministry and just how much it means to people that are viewing and perhaps souls that are saved,” she said. “We don’t see the people oftentimes that we’re serving, but we know they’re there, and we hear from them. When you have a commitment to Christ, you just look for ways to spread the Gospel, and I think that’s what it’s all about.”

GIVING BECAUSE ‘GOD BLESSED US’

For Susan Tweeton, giving is so important in her life that she has ensured that it is something that has been passed down to her children and grandchildren.

For her, it’s a matter of passing on a gift that God has given to her.

The importance of giving began with her late husband, John, who instilled those values in their relationship and their family. As he became sick, Worship Anew became a “lifeline” for them, she explained. It was then that he saw the importance of supporting the ministry. After he died, Tweeton wanted to continue giving because of the blessings that

she had seen in her life.

“I wanted to continue with the giving because I realized how much God had blessed me and was taking care of me,” said Tweeton, who lives in Sacramento, Calif. “I really depended on the service from Worship Anew. It kept me going through COVID, through my husband’s death, through the transition of leaving a place where we had lived for 18 years to moving here and getting to know a whole bunch of new people.”

Over the years of watching Worship Anew, she commented how she has felt like she has grown with the pastors as well as the choir children who returned to the program time and time again.

“Worship Anew has made a big difference in my life, and for that reason, I give now,” she said.

For Tweeton, this is just one of the many ways that she demonstrates her faith to her family. She ensures that they know the importance of faith in their lives, the importance of protecting the Lord’s Day, and the importance of returning the blessings bestowed upon them.

“You do it out of joy because of how God has blessed you,” she said.

“I want [my family] to know that we serve God, we love God and we love them. If there’s something that we can do to help them in any way with their life and leading them back to God, that’s what we’re there for.”

A quote from the Barna research with Worship Anew, called “Aging Well.”



Your final testament provides peace

*By Renee Schuller
Care Ministry Specialist*

Chances are that you have put things in place to ensure your loved ones are taken care of when you go on to your heavenly home. You likely have a life insurance policy, a will, and other such documents. You have these because you care for your family and want to be good stewards of the possessions that you leave behind.

As a Christian, you have the greatest possession to give your loved ones — one that surpasses all other gifts you could leave them and one that is steadfast and everlasting. You have not just a will but a testament. A testament is an expression of what you believe. Your testament is your faith.

When Lazarus died, Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Martha replied with a testament of her faith. “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” (John 11:26–27 ESV).

At the Last Supper, Jesus shared His final testament saying “Drink of it all of you; this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (from Luther's Small Catechism). Each time you partake of this promise, you proclaim Christ. By this



“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?’”

John 11:25-26 ESV

testament, you leave your loved ones with a consolation that the world cannot give. When they receive Holy Communion, your loved ones will be comforted in knowing that you are there with them communing in God’s grace in the company of all the saints and angels, and one day they will join you at the heavenly banquet.

You may write it down, such as in a Christian preamble to your will (see the September issue of the *Broadcaster* magazine to learn more about Christian preambles). However, simply living your life in Christ is the greatest gift you can give. By going to church, singing praises to the Lord, praying with and for your loved ones, and otherwise daily living and sharing your faith, you are leaving proof of your confession that Jesus is your Savior.

The evidence of your faith leaves those who mourn your death without doubt that you have gone to your heavenly home. This assurance leaves them with not only peace of mind, but peace in spirit. Though they will still grieve, they will do so with hope. (reference 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

In this earthly life, you have received the abundance of God’s mercy and love. Depart in peace knowing that through your testament of faith you are leaving everyone that you love with a comfort and peace that surpasses all else.

What does it mean that my church is in series C?

Many Christian churches use a set lectionary to select the readings for each worship service. The most popular lectionary in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod is the Three-Year Series which labels each year in the rotation of A, B, and C. The beginning of the new church year in 2025 is Sunday, December 1. Each church year begins with Advent, and this year we are kicking off series C, which will focus on gospel readings from Luke.

Who is Anna in the Bible?

Anna was well advanced in years. Depending on how you interpret the original Greek text, Anna could be 84 years old, or as old as 106 years (listen to Dr. Maier’s message on December 29 to learn more). Anna was daily at the temple, worshiping, praying, and fasting. She is an inspiration to us as someone who faithfully prayed to God for the Messiah to come. She was blessed with the gift of her prayers being fulfilled when Jesus was brought to the temple to be presented. For us, we continue to pray, “Come, Lord Jesus!” as we await our Savior’s return and the end of our suffering. Until then, Anna reminds us that prayer is powerful and that we have purpose in Christ no matter what our age or stage.

What does “Immanuel” mean and is it supposed to start with an “E” or an “I”? I’ve seen both.

“Immanuel” means “God with us.” When it comes to translating something from one language to another, you usually have options. If translating from Hebrew, the spelling would be “Immanuel.” When passages, such as Isaiah 7:14, were first translated into Greek, the word was transliterated with an “E” to make “Emmanuel.” That’s what we find in Matthew 1:23 in some translations such as the King James Version. Either way you spell it, this word is a reminder that God continues to be with us.

A note from the Editor ...

In our letters to the editor section, we would like to answer any and all questions that you have about scripture, aging well, and our ministry. Please send your questions to editor@worshipanew.org. Please know that we will try to answer as many questions as we can. Thank you and enjoy!



How to Ease the *Winter Blues*

*By Jim Miller
Savvy Living*

If you feel depressed during the winter but feel better in spring and summer, you may have seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a seasonal depression that affects approximately 5 percent of Americans. In most cases, SAD is related to the decreased amount of sunlight during the winter months. Reduced sunlight can disturb natural sleep-wake cycles and other circadian rhythms that affect the body. It also causes a drop in the brain chemical serotonin, which affects mood, while increasing the levels of melatonin, which can make you feel more tired and lethargic.

If you think you may have SAD, you should schedule an appointment with your health care provider to discuss your concerns. You may also take a SAD “self-assessment” test which is readily available online or provided by health organizations. While these self-assessment tests offer some insights, they are not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you find that you have SAD, here are several treatment options and some non-prescription remedies that can help.

Light therapy: One possible treatment for SAD involves sitting in front of a specialized light therapy box for 20 to 30 minutes a day within the first hour of waking up in the morning. Light therapy mimics sunlight and affects brain chemicals linked to mood.

While you can buy a light box without a prescription, it is advisable to use it under the supervision of a healthcare provider and closely follow the manufacturer’s guidelines. Most health insurance plans typically do not cover the cost.

Some light therapy lamps provide 10,000 lux of illumination, stronger than typical indoor lights. These lamps also offer



a diffuser screen that filters out ultraviolet rays and projects downward from the eyes. To find the most suitable light therapy option for your needs, consult with your healthcare provider for recommendations or conduct online research.

Cognitive behavioral therapy: While SAD is considered a biological issue, identifying and changing thought and behavior patterns can also contribute to symptom relief. There are therapists you can seek who specialize in cognitive behavioral therapy and have experience in treating SAD. To locate a local therapist, you can ask your healthcare provider for a referral or search online for reputable therapists in your area.

Lifestyle remedies: Some other things you can do to help alleviate your SAD symptoms include making your environment sunnier and brighter. Open your blinds, sit closer to bright windows and go outside as much as you can. Even on cold or cloudy days, outdoor light can help, especially if you spend some time outside within two

hours of getting up in the morning. Moderate exercise such as walking, swimming, yoga and tai chi can also help alleviate SAD symptoms, as can social activities.

If you sense that your symptoms extend beyond typical SAD, consult your healthcare provider to ensure it is not indicative of a more serious condition. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues, do not hesitate to seek professional help or call the National Alliance on Mental Illness HelpLine at (800) 950-6264.

Savvy Living is written by Jim Miller, a regular contributor to the NBC Today Show and author of "The Savvy Living" book. Any links in this article are offered as a service and there is no endorsement of any product. These articles are offered as a helpful and informative service to our friends and may not always reflect this organization's official position on some topics. Jim invites you to send your senior questions to: Savvy Living, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.



Regifting what God has given us

By Sarah Koch

Have you ever regifted a gift? (Don't be embarrassed! We have all done it!) Regifts are usually unwanted gifts that you might pull out for a white elephant exchange as a joke.

Sometimes we keep a stash of unopened "rejects" for use in an emergency when we realize we need to reciprocate a gift to someone not on our shopping list.

In my family, we've passed around a gaudy leather rooster wine decanter for decades after the ugly gift was unveiled one gift exchange in a desperate Christmas Eve shopping attempt. It seems to get uglier every time it gets passed on and always brings a laugh.

I think that God smiled when we named a skill or talent a "gift" in English. It really is a gift that originates from God.

Have you ever thought about the fact that we are actually regifting our God-given talents and abilities when we use them? God doesn't want our gifts to stay wrapped in a closet and unused. Our gifts come from God and were meant to be shared!

So, regift your gifts with boldness and joy! Share His love by using your gifts! This is the best regift ever!



This month's study text:

Made Alive in Christ

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV)

Reflection:

Think of a talent you have been given that you can share with others this week. Don't be embarrassed to regift your gifts! God wants it that way!

Activity:

Discuss with the people around you the gifts God has given you. Remind your family or friends about the gifts you see in them that they may not realize they have.

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for the gifts you have given me to share with others. Help me to remember to use those gifts to your glory. Amen.



Passing on your Christmas Traditions

As you have read throughout this issue, there are many ways to pass on your faith to the next generation. One way is to pass on your Christmas traditions. Below is a worksheet to help document important Christmas traditions for your children, grandchildren, and generations to come.



What is your favorite Christmas Eve service (that you attend today or in years past)?



What is your favorite Christmas hymn?



What is the best gift you have given?



What is the best gift you have received?



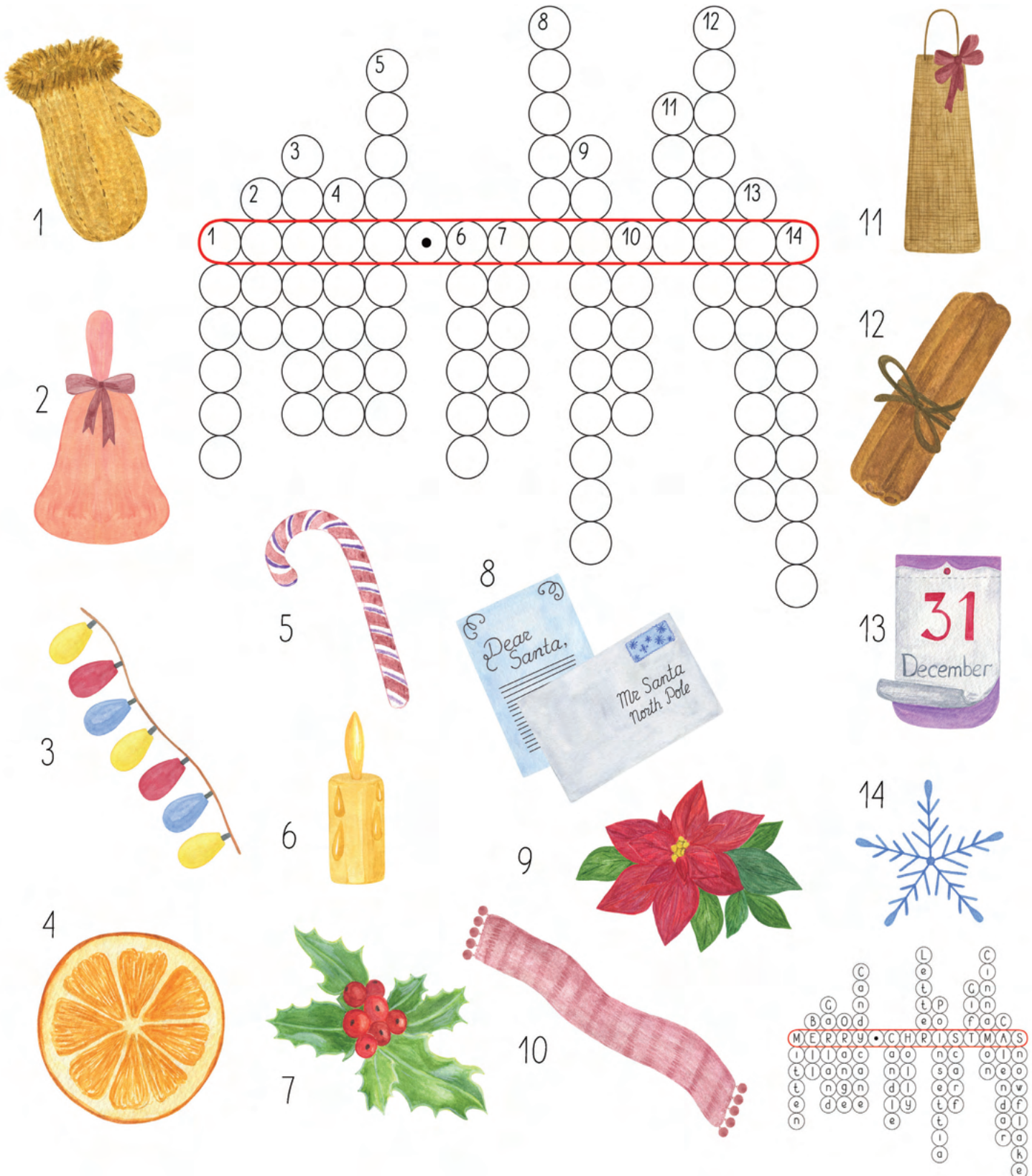
What was Christmas morning like for you growing up?



Share about your favorite Christmas tradition with your family.



Christmas Crossword



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Merry Christmas

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy
that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this
day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby
wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:10-12 ESV

