

December 2025 

BROADCASTER

A magazine of Worship Anew



Precious gifts



Matthew F. Leighty
Matthew F. Leighty
Executive Director

The Joy of Giving

A close friend once shared a recollection from their early days in church work. Around Christmas, a retired couple in the congregation took them to a nice dinner. Afterward, my friend repeatedly offered to pay for their own portion of the meal, but eventually the couple responded wisely by saying, “Don’t diminish our joy of giving. This is where you just say ‘thank you.’” What an important lesson — how to accept a gift with grace.

I have to admit that I love making a gift wish list. I especially make sure it’s updated around my birthday and Christmas to help people know what might bring me joy. That’s because when someone close to me says, “You don’t need to give me anything,” it can feel challenging. Because the joy of giving often rests as much — if not more — on the heart of the giver than the receiver.

I’m pretty particular so gifts for me that are outside of my wish list can be hit or miss. But my wife has taught me

that knowing that someone took joy in giving me that gift should spark joy in my own heart. It’s not about the perfect item; it’s about the love behind it. As is sung in the classic Christmas carol, “Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice!”

At Worship Anew, we experience this truth every day. As we share the Gospel and provide resources for aging adults, the blessings we receive in return are tenfold. Your prayers, your encouragement, and your gifts make this ministry possible. And we know the source of all these blessings. As James reminds us, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17a ESV). Together, we reflect the greatest gift of all — our Savior, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us.

So, as we enter this season of wonder and generosity, here’s my Worship Anew Christmas Wish List. These are ways we can celebrate Christ’s birth together by blessing those who need His comfort most:



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

**UPHOLD US IN PRAYER**

Lift up our ministry team, viewers, and aging adults who need Christ's comfort. Your prayers sustain this ministry beyond measure.

BE CHRIST'S HANDS & FEET

Make tangible expressions of love possible for those facing isolation or grief through Worship Anew's Care Ministry.

CONNECT HEARTS THROUGH THE WORD

Keep the Broadcaster magazine in the hands of thousands, maintaining this cherished ministry connection.

DELIVER DAILY GOOD NEWS

Provide Hope-Full Living devotionals that remind older adults of God's presence and purpose in this precious season of life.

STRENGTHEN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Equip churches to better serve their older members with ministry tools and resources.

TAKE THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS

Expand our reach through streaming worship and online resources, helping aging adults access Christ-centered content anytime, anywhere.

PROCLAIM CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

Keep "Worship Anew" on the air every week, ensuring messages of hope reach homebound believers across the nation.

PASS ON THE FAITH

Include Worship Anew in your will or estate plans to ensure the Gospel continues to reach future generations.

We would love to speak with you more about how you can support aging adults through our ministry. Call us at (888) 286-8002 or visit our website at WorshipAnew.org to learn more.

One of my favorite Christmas hymns is "What Child Is This." In it, we marvel at the mystery of God's

greatest gift — His Son, given for us. The third verse calls us to respond: "So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peasant, king, to own Him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone Him."

Like the wise men who brought their treasures to the Christ child, we too are invited to bring our gifts — not because He needs them, but because giving is the heart's response to God's grace. The gift of grace inspires our giving and reminds us that every blessing flows from His hand.

Thank you for being part of this ministry. Your generosity is a gift that keeps on giving — and as the apostle Paul reminds us, "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15 ESV).

Every good gift truly comes from above.

Merry Christmas and may the peace of Christ be with you!

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."

James 1:17a (ESV)

In This Issue

4 Listening to the Gospel
A new system allows listeners to call in to listen to the "Worship Anew" program.

5 Hark!
Celebrate the season with a special hymn music program.

9 Program Summaries
See what is on "Worship Anew" in December.

12 Sharing in Precious Gifts
Time and love are gifts that ought never be taken for granted.

18 A Time for Everything
What is it to fill the time in your "golden years"?

23 Candy Canes
Do you know the meaning behind them?





Call-in service removes barriers to hearing the Gospel

Worship Anew has launched a new service to allow aging adults to call in on their telephone to hear the “Worship Anew” program each week.

Worship Anew’s mission is to engage and equip aging adults with resources to live a full and abundant life in Jesus Christ. But, for those who have poor eyesight, watching the program can be difficult. The program that is available on the call-in service will have enhanced audio description to make understanding the program easier.

The service also allows anyone, anywhere to hear the program, regardless of local broadcast availability or internet access.

“At Worship Anew, we want to make it possible for every person to hear the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Thus, we’re grateful to remove any barriers that aging adults may have to hearing God’s Word shared,” said Matthew Leighty, executive director. “Many older adults do not have reliable internet access or the ability to navigate digital platforms. Others have vision impairments that make viewing screens difficult or simply prefer the familiarity and simplicity of listening to ‘Worship Anew’ on a traditional telephone. This system makes it extremely easy for aging adults to hear the comforting message

of God’s Word each week, regardless of their circumstances.”

The program is available to hear by calling the Worship Anew office at (888) 286-8002 and selecting the program from the menu options or dialing the call-in service directly at (260) 440-8476. Listeners will be prompted to press any key or say “Play” to begin.

Additionally, Worship Anew also provides closed captioning for viewers who are deaf or hard of hearing, ensuring that the spoken words and messages are clearly visible on the screen. This feature is available on TV stations nationwide, online, and through the Worship Anew app, making the program accessible in multiple formats. During hymns, subtitles are displayed, allowing everyone to follow along with the lyrics and join in singing the dearly loved hymns.

The call-in service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, allowing listeners to access spiritual comfort and God’s Word whenever they need it most. The newest program will be available by Friday each week.

“We hope that aging adults will find comfort in hearing of the love of Christ as shared in God’s Word,” Leighty said.



The St. Paul Preble Choir records a song for the Christmas program.



Tune in for Worship Anew's Christmas choir program

“Hark! The herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the newborn King: Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!’”

Worship Anew brings this favorite hymn and others together in a Christmas choir music program this season.

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing: A Christmas Music Celebration” is a compilation of favorite Advent and Christmas hymns from choirs who have recorded on the “Worship Anew” program. This choir program will be available on select TV stations and on Worship Anew’s digital platforms, including YouTube, streaming, Worship Anew’s app, and WorshipAnew.org.

The program will include the following hymns:

- ▶ “Savior of the Nations, Come” (LSB #332) by the St. Paul’s Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (LSB #357) by the Zion-Mt. Calvary Choir, Woodburn, Ind., and Antwerp, Ohio.
- ▶ “Crown Him with Many Crowns” (LSB #525) by the Holy Cross Junior Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

- ▶ “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (LSB #380) by the Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” (LSB #386) by the St. Paul’s Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ “Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising” (LSB #375) by the St. Paul’s Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” (LSB #358) by the Worship Anew Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light” (LSB #378) by the Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” (LSB #393) by the St. Paul Preble Adult Choir, Decatur, Ind.
- ▶ “The Infant Priest Was Holy Born” (LSB #624) by the Holy Cross Treble Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ “Silent Night, Holy Night” (LSB #363) by the Gospel Light Chorus of St. John Lutheran School, Plymouth, Wis.

To learn more and to see all of the ways to watch, visit worshipanew.org/christmas.

At right, the crosses used in the Worship Anew care packages are from the Cross Makers. Below, volunteers help to sand the crosses before the stamps are added.



Holding dear to the cross

Cross Makers extend blessings through handmade crosses

By Renee Schuller
Care Ministry Specialist

“So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.”

~ “The Old Rugged Cross”

“Recently a member of our congregation died of complications from a stroke. He had received a care package from you prior to his stroke. The entire time he was hospitalized, he had the pocket cross in his hand and clung to it. ‘I’m clinging to the cross of Jesus,’ he said. His wife included in his medical orders to the hospital staff that the cross should never be removed from his hand. Our pastor included this in his funeral service saying, ‘Until his final breath, he clung to the cross of Christ.’ Thank you and your team for all that you do.”

~ A Care Package Sender

As Christians, we cherish the cross. Not as if the cross itself is anything, but in that it reminds us of Jesus who loved us so much that He was willingly nailed to the cross of Calvary.

When we hold a cross, we can prayerfully lay down the sorrows and griefs that we bear in this life, put them at Jesus’ merciful feet, and be comforted in knowing that we are not alone.

The Cross Makers of Seward, Neb., have made it their mission to extend blessings to others through handmade wooden crosses. They are specially designed to be held in the palm of the hand and grasped with the



fingers. What started in one man's garage has become a thriving workshop full of buzzing equipment and the smell of cedar. To date, they have made almost 176,000 crosses.

Each cross begins with wood planks that often come from donated logs that are sawn at a local sawmill. A local manufacturing plant planes the wood planks and cuts them into smaller pieces. A volunteer at the local senior center uses a plastic template to draw the outline on the wood. At the workshop, a group of more than a dozen volunteers, mostly retired men and women, use the skills God has given them to turn an ordinary piece of wood into a beautiful and comforting cross.

"I feel like we're giving back to people," said Cross Makers Chairman Bob Kropf.

They cut out, route, sand, polish, stamp, and finish each cross. Each one is dipped twice in polyurethane to make it extra smooth and shiny. The crosses come with a symbol imprinted on it such as a heart, cross, or dog paw.

They offer crosses for a variety of special occasions, such as Baptisms, confirmations, and graduations. They can imprint them with mom, dad, vet, a ribbon, and logos representing professions such as military personnel, nurses, police, and firefighters. The imprints can be colored. They can also create a one-of-a-kind cross with a specific logo or symbol. They even make memorial crosses with a small picture of the deceased loved one in the center.

Each cross comes with a card with the verse John 3:16 as a reminder of the blessing and love of Christ that each cross represents.

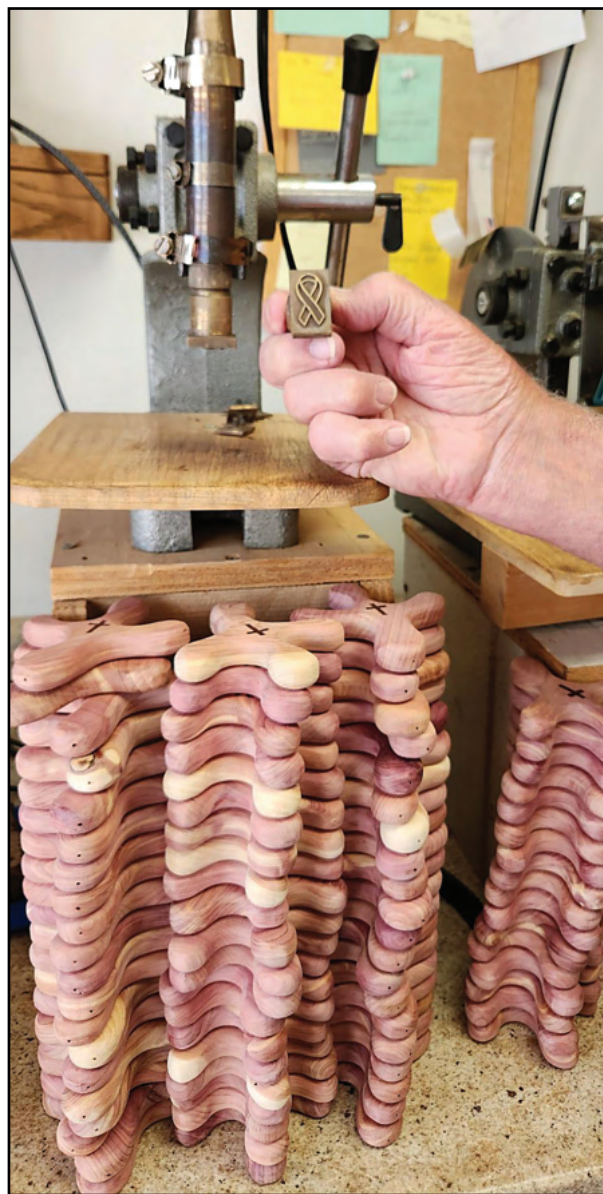
The ministry is largely supported by proceeds from the sale of the crosses to individuals or groups who give them away as part of their ministry. This cross is also used through the Care Ministry at Worship Anew in the care packages and in the Grief Ministry mailings.

All the volunteers are blessed to serve the Lord in this way. They enjoy the work. It gives them something to do and a sense of purpose in their retirement, but they will say the best part is knowing that others are blessed and comforted by the fruits of their labor.

"It is rewarding for me," said Bill Morse, who manages communications for the organization. "I hope that I am doing God's work here."

To learn more about their ministry, visit www.thecrossmakers.etsy.com.

Below, the stamping machine imprints a variety of designs on the crosses. At bottom, volunteers dip the crosses in polyurethane and use a cabinet to hang them to drip dry.



An Emperor in God's Service

By Rev. Richard Koehnke

The greatest of all the Roman emperors wanted to maintain his supply of revenue and soldiers, so he decided to conduct a census. He thought his decision was all about troops and taxes. Wrong. He was an emperor in God's service. He was operating at the beck and call of the one true God — a God he certainly did not worship and never would admit to serving — the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — the God who had promised to send a Savior, His Son, whose birth would take place in Bethlehem.

Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, about 90 miles north of Bethlehem. How was God to get them to Bethlehem in fulfillment of the prophecy? Simple: Have the Roman emperor decree that everybody had to return to their ancestral home to be counted in the census. Joseph was of the family of King David, so off he went to David's hometown of Bethlehem, taking Mary with him. "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born" (Luke 2:6 NIV). No problem for God. We say it every time we say the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." The great Caesar Augustus was an emperor in the service of the almighty God.

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world."

Luke 2:1 NIV

What a monumental hassle that trip must have been for Mary and Joseph! How much they would have preferred to stay in Nazareth rather than undertake a difficult journey in the last days of Mary's pregnancy. But the emperor was the emperor, and the law was the law, and so they had to go. To Bethlehem they went, and while they were there — not while they were in Nazareth, not while they were on the way, but while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for God's Son to be born. Thus was fulfilled Micah's prophecy, made eight centuries before.

In the vast sweep of human history, in the great decisions made by heads of state, in some mysterious way beyond human comprehension, God is at work to accomplish His purposes. In the routine events of daily life, in the intricate details of human relationships, God is at work to accomplish His purposes. From galaxies to atoms, from emperors to carpenters, from the newspaper headlines to your to-do lists, in some mysterious way beyond human comprehension, God is at work to accomplish His purposes.

God is capable of using any person, any situation, any circumstance, to serve His holy and sovereign will. As God's Word says, "We know that in all things God is at work for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28 NIV).

No matter what's happening, God is at work for your good, to accomplish His purposes in your life. That was true for Joseph and Mary, and it's true for you.





Worship Anew in December

Year 2026 | Series A



Stirring Things Up

December 7, 2025 – Second Sunday in Advent ~ Rev. Scott Zeckzer

It is time for baking. There will be a lot of stirring up. God stirs things up to get us ready for His coming.

Sermon Text: Matthew 3:3; Readings: Psalm 105:4-8; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

Featured Choirs: Zion (Bull Rapids) Lutheran Church Choir, Woodburn, Ind.; Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Antwerp, Ohio; Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.

Featured Art and Architecture: Emanuel Lutheran Church, New Haven, Ind.



Lord, Give Us Patience

December 14, 2025 – Third Sunday in Advent ~ Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

John the Baptist asked Jesus if He was the Messiah because earlier John had preached that the Messiah would come in judgment. John did not see this happening in Jesus' ministry. In response, Jesus indicates that He is indeed the Messiah and that John should be patient.

Sermon Text: Matthew 11:2-10; Readings: Psalm 146:1-10; James 5:7-11; Matthew 11:2-10

Featured Choirs: St. John Adult Choir, Indianapolis, Ind.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.



The Word Became Flesh

December 21, 2025 – Christmas Day (observed) ~ Rev. Shayne Jonker

The Son of God came in humility that we might be glorified. He came in poverty that we might be rich. He came to die that we might live. He came to dwell with us that we might dwell with Him.

Sermon Text: John 1:14; Readings: Psalm 2; Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14

Featured Choirs: The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.; St. Paul Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Trinity Lutheran Church, Detroit, Mich.



Christmas Can't Be Stolen

December 24, 2025 – Nativity of Our Lord; Christmas Candlelight ~ Rev. Paul Shoemaker

This program will be available on Worship Anew's streaming services.

The Grinch was not successful because he did not realize the true meaning of Christmas was not in things. We know the true meaning of Christmas is to be found in Jesus. This world's Grinch, Satan, still tries to steal Christmas joy from us. Let's focus on Jesus, the Reason for the season.

Sermon Text: Luke 2:1-14; Readings: Psalm 96; Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-14

Featured Choirs: The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Peter's Junior Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Paul Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Concordia Choir of Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.; Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Paul Preble Adult Choir, Decatur, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.



Save the Child!

December 28, 2025 – First Sunday after Christmas ~ Rev. William Mueller

Aside from the fact that the text tells us about the 2-year-old Jesus, this Gospel reading seems so out of place in the Christmas season. Yet, there is an important truth to be discovered.

Sermon Text: Matthew 2:13-23; Readings: Psalm 111; Isaiah 63:7-14; Matthew 2:13-23

Featured Choirs: The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.;

Holy Cross Treble Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Lutheran Life Villages (North Anthony), Fort Wayne, Ind.



Dinner time at the David and Jennifer Bush household is a sit-down time, sans cell phones and TV, but it is a time for discussion of how everyone's day went, whether with their children or grandchild.

Everyone gather 'round

Make time to feed body and soul

*By Jennifer L. Boen
Ministry Team Writer*

Renowned chef, cookbook author, and TV personality, the late Julia Child, told culinary fans: "People who love to eat are always the best people."

It's the time of year when families gather around tables laden with roasted turkeys and glazed hams, steaming bowls of grandma's favorite sweet potato casserole and desserts so rich you could take them to the bank.

For the David and Jennifer Bush family of Fort Wayne, Ind., it doesn't have to be holiday time to bring everyone to the dinner table. It happens nearly every evening, despite busy schedules.

"It's very important for us to sit down and eat together," Jennifer said. "It's a time to find out how

everyone's day went. There's no phones at the table. It's important to be present, really present."

The Bushes have eight children — five, ages 11 to 18 who still live at home. David has been a Fort Wayne Police officer for 18 years. Jennifer works part time as the librarian at Ascension Lutheran School in Fort Wayne and regularly babysits the couple's 2-year-old grandson.

Jennifer credits David for skillfully directing the conversation at dinnertime.

"We talk about what's going on in the family, and it gives us opportunity to explain things that have occurred locally and in the world," Jennifer points out.





A plethora of research gives credence to benefits the Bushes have found from eating a meal together. For example, in a 2022 American Heart Association (AHA) survey of adults across the country, two out of three reported feeling stressed, with more than one in four saying they were very or extremely stressed. But, among people who said they regularly shared a meal with family, nearly all reported lower levels of stress in themselves and in their family members.

TALKING AND LISTENING

Jennifer and David ensure everyone around the table has opportunity to talk.

“It’s important that they respect each other’s opinions and not put others down,” Jennifer explains, noting dialogue and listening are important lifelong skills.

Dinner is around 5 p.m. at the Bush home. Eating at a regular time “prevents the kids from grazing,” Jennifer said, while readily admitting the family sitting down to eat together doesn’t occur seven nights a week. Sometimes it’s a make-your-own sandwich night; periodically it’s grab-a-hot dog at the game concession stand.

But home-cooked meals are the majority. The children help with meal planning and prep.

“They’re very much aware of what they’re eating,” Jennifer points out as she opens a jar of home-canned salsa made from tomatoes grown in their small backyard garden. “Eating together is very important to us. After all, your family are the people who genuinely love you.”

To the Bushes and other families who gather at the dinner table, whether with your grandchildren or friends this holiday, Julia Child would most definitely say, “Bon Appétit!”

The Health Benefits of Eating Together

Research confirms a positive correlation between eating meals with family or friends and better health outcomes. This is true for all ages. Family meals can be any meal.

Older adults who ate frequent meals with others consumed more fruits and vegetables and reported more pleasure in eating compared to those who ate meals alone.

Eating together also provides socialization, which can be a need among older adults who feel alone or isolated. Eating alone can also affect your food intake which can, in turn, affect your weight and your overall health.

As 1 Corinthians 11:33 (NIV) says, “So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together.”

Blessings on your meals and togetherness this Christmas season!

Sources:
www.fni.org/family-meals-movement (The Food Industry Organization); Ageing Research News, May 2022.

“Eating Together” from a research study from the National Library of Medicine.



The Precious Gifts of Time and Love

By Rev. Tom Eggebrecht



Time and love are gifts that ought never be taken for granted. I was reminded of this a while back while I was watching, of all things, a game in the Little League World Series.

The pitcher was struggling, and the game was getting tense. These kids who play in the Little League World Series are only 12 years old, and the pressure is enormous. So, the coach, who also happened to be the father of that pitcher, came out to the mound with a very appropriate and special message. He said, “I just came out to say how much I love you, as a baseball player AND as a son.” The kid was struggling a little bit with his pitching, but his dad wanted him to know what was most important. He went on to strike out the next hitter, and the team won the game.

When I saw that happen, it hit close to home for me. I coached baseball for 13 years. Our son was on every one of the teams that I coached. I have to admit that there were times that I was harder on him than other members of the team. I overcompensated to show them and their parents that there would be no nepotism or favoritism.

But, the one reason I coached all those years was so that I could spend quality time with my son. I’ll never forget all the time we had in the car on the way to and from games to talk about things (or to simply sit quietly). I will always treasure the trips to Culver’s after the games with the rest of the team. No one could ever take away from us the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs, we had as coach and player for the same team. To this day, I treasure that time and recognize it as a precious gift.

That dad on the mound of the Little League World Series reminded me just how much I love my son and just how quickly time slips away. The last game we had together as coach and player was a loss in our area high school playoffs. It was heart breaking. There were tears shed (yes, even my own). It was the end of an era.

continued on page 14



continued from page 13

“The thing about time in this world is that we know it is limited. Every moment we breathe is a gift from God.”

Now our 8-year-old grandson, who lives near us, plays baseball. As I watch him play, it sometimes feels like *déjà vu*. It seems like just yesterday our son was 8 years old, and I was coaching his team. Now I proudly sit in the stands cheering on our grandson (sometimes maybe a bit too loudly!). But I am struck with just how precious time is. “Time, like an ever-rolling stream,” it says in the old hymn. The stream of time has taken me from being the dad and coach of a young boy to being the granddad and fan of another young boy. In my wildest dreams, I could have never imagined God would have blessed me with times like these and love like this.

The thing about time in this world is that we know it is limited. Every moment we breathe is a gift from God. While I very much appreciated the time my son and I had together on the baseball field, as I

grow older, I appreciate even more the gift of being able to watch our grandson play on a regular basis. Not only that, but I sometimes also get to watch our four other grandsons play when we visit them out of state.

I know that these days won’t last forever. I know that seasons come and go. I know that every moment I am granted to sit in those stands and watch the incredible plays they make out in the field, the hard hits when they step up to the plate, and even their mistakes and errors, are all gifts.

Baseball is a game that doesn’t have a clock. You can’t just stall at the end of the game and let time run out. The pitcher has to throw the ball over the plate, and the hitter has to try to hit it. It’s one of the things that makes it a great game. It’s a metaphor for life. Life keeps coming at us, and we have to step up to the plate and take our hacks. We don’t know when our last “at-bat” will be, so



by the grace of God we keep swinging, always appreciating the encouragement and support of those who love us.

Time and love are precious gifts. Here's how to appreciate them:

Do like the Little League coach and tell the people you love that you do. Say it out loud. Even if it's in the middle of the Little League World Series on the pitcher's mound. Say it even if you haven't said it in a while. Say it so often people get tired of you saying it. There can never be enough love shown and shared. And remember that God's love through Jesus for you is more abundant than the stars in the sky, the sand on the seashore, and the seemingly limitless energy of an 8-year-old out on the baseball diamond.

Be mindful of appreciating each day. Sure, there may be arguments or disagreements, but at the end of the day, love still remains. Before you know it, the little catcher behind the plate will be getting married and have a little catcher of his own. Stay in the moment and recognize that time truly is a gift.

Honor the people you love with the gift of time. It's a greater commodity than money, riches, or things. Time spent together can never be taken away. Toys break, and money gets spent. Memories last forever. This holiday season, consider gifts of experience and time rather than stuff.

Receive time and love as the gifts that they are. When people want to give you those things, don't deny them the opportunity. They should be treasured above all other earthly things. And receive once again this season the ultimate gift of a God who entered space and time in the form of a Baby. He demonstrated His eternal love by paying the ultimate price of His life for you. He gives that very same love and forgiveness to you in Word and Sacrament. Receive those gifts frequently.

Be generous with time and love. There is far too little of either of them in this world. You can never give too much time or love to those near and dear — and even those not so near and dear. The gift of those two things could change lives and relationships. As our God has shown, time and love are priceless.

Our son now lives nearly 11 hours away from us. We talk on the phone and FaceTime often, but it's much more difficult to go out in the front yard and throw the baseball around. Next time we get together, we're going to have to make it a point to do that. And maybe ... well, probably ... the grandchildren will join in the fun as we share both time and love.

The Rev. Tom Eggebrecht is senior pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Casselberry, Fla., where he enjoys preaching the salvation of Jesus, proclaiming His name, and serving His people. Follow his personal blog at www.tomeggebrecht.com.





The Healing Power of Generosity

How Giving Transforms Your Health and Spirit

By Jon Dize, CFRE

Director of Development & Strategic Initiatives

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” ~ 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

In Acts 20:35b (NIV), we read that “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” This isn’t just a spiritual ideal; it’s a truth backed by science and lived experience. Charitable giving, whether through financial support, time, or acts of kindness, offers profound benefits that touch every part of our being and can help extend lives and enrich our time on earth.

Emotional Renewal

Generosity activates the brain’s reward center, releasing dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin — chemicals that foster joy, connection, and peace. People who give regularly report lower rates of depression, greater life satisfaction, and a deeper sense of purpose. Giving reminds us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

Physical Restoration

Surprisingly, giving can be good medicine. Studies show that acts of kindness can lower blood pressure, reduce stress hormones, and even strengthen the immune system. Volunteers often live longer and experience better overall health. When we give, we don’t just bless others; we nurture our own bodies.

Spiritual Alignment

Giving aligns us with the heart of God. From the widow’s mite to the Good Samaritan, Scripture is filled with examples of sacrificial generosity. When we give, we reflect the character of Christ. Generosity becomes a spiritual discipline — one that shapes our hearts and deepens our walk with God.

Social Connection

Charitable acts build bridges. Whether it’s mentoring a young person, supporting a ministry, or helping a neighbor, generosity fosters empathy and strengthens community. It’s a way of saying, “You matter. You’re not alone.”

Everyday Impact

You don’t need wealth to be generous. A note of encouragement, a shared meal, a listening ear — these small acts carry eternal weight. The key is intentionality. When we give with compassion and purpose, we meet real needs and experience real transformation.



Give the gift of Hope-Full Living this season

**Subscriptions are just \$16
for the year. Learn more at
HopeFullLiving.org or call
us at (888) 286-8002.**



When does Advent begin this year?

For most churches in the Western world, Advent begins on Sunday, November 30. Some churches will have special services on weekday evenings up until Christmas Day.

Why is one candle lit each week?

As we light a candle on the Advent wreath each week, this is not only a great visible countdown to Christmas, it's also a way to show the growing light of Christ in a dark world. You can see this each week on the "Worship Anew" program throughout the Advent season.

What is the significance of the Advent wreath?

In mid-16th century, German Lutherans adapted the use of evergreens and candles in winter celebrations to mark the beginning of Advent, a time of preparation for Christ's coming. Advent is similar to Lent in that it's a time of reflection, repentance, and preparation. The circle shape of the wreath reminds us of God's never-ending love for us. The use of evergreen points us to the eternal life we have in Jesus Christ.

What do the colors of the Advent candles mean?

During Advent, four candles on the wreath represent different themes leading up to Christmas. Three candles symbolize hope, peace, and love, while one pink candle (lit on the third Sunday) represents joy. Each week, a new candle is lit to mark growing anticipation for Christ's birth. Some wreaths also include a fifth white candle, the Christ Candle, lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to celebrate the arrival of Jesus, the Light of the world.

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!



A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING

Finding purpose in your Golden Years

By Rev. James Voorman

King Solomon records these words for us in Scripture, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a ESV). With these words, we are reminded that things change. Life changes, there are ebbs and flows, ups and downs, various seasons along the journey. One of these seasons of life that brings its own challenges is retirement, or senior living.

Visiting with members and residents in care facilities during their golden years, a common question that gets asked is how to fill the time. Our bodies may not work like they used to, we may be unable to get out and about like we did before, and that can leave us wondering about our purpose, our contributions to society and to the church.



So, what is there to do as a Christian during your golden years? How can you still serve and find meaning and purpose in your Christian vocations?

First of all, as hard as it may be to hear, part of your purpose can be found in being the person who others care for. Just as you, throughout your life, found purpose in caring for others, so now also others are able to find purpose as they care for you. So, use these relationships to encourage and be thankful. Help to make their life more joyous as they serve and help you. And while you thank God that He uses you and allows others to help serve you, here are some more ways to fill your time:

Prayer: Reach out to your pastor and get a list of the people in your congregation who need prayers. Spend time every day praying for those people who are sick, injured, struggling, and grieving. And don't just pray for those in need but pray for every person in your church by name. Prayer is powerful and a wonderful gift given to us by the Lord, so in your available time be a prayer warrior for your church.

Read/study: Reach out to your pastor and ask for some suggested reading materials and devotions. There are many options, such as Hope-Full Living. See what your pastor might suggest for daily use. Then fill some of your time with reading and meditation on the Scriptures. As you're able, attend a Bible study, where you can learn from your fellow Christians and walk together through the Word of God. If you live in a long-term care facility, you can start a Bible study if one isn't already offered.

Talents/abilities: What hobbies or talents do you have that may benefit others? Do you like to quilt, knit, stitch, and sew? Can you make things like hats, gloves, blankets, and the like to be used for local organizations helping others in need? Do you bake well? People always love baked goods especially around the holidays. Are you musical? Teach music lessons, join the choir or handbell group, share your gifts with those around you.

Mentor/teach: There are many young members of your congregation that need your wisdom and encouragement. Reach out to those you know with an encouraging word. Write letters/cards supporting others in their faith. If you see young men or women in your congregation who would be good church workers, encourage them. Push them toward ministry with your love and support. (Personally, the words from members of my home church are the reason I became a pastor!)

For everything there is a season. Whatever season you are in dear friends, the Lord is with you! Christ has died and risen for your sins, and salvation in Him belongs to you. Delight in that good news as you fill your days with love and service. While life and seasons change, you always have a purpose in Christ.

The Rev. James Voorman is the director of pastoral care at Lutheran Life Villages, a care facility in Fort Wayne, Ind.



And the Word Became Flesh

By Deaconess Sarah Longmire

Have you ever considered the reality that Jesus went through the stages of development within Mary? I have friends who, when pregnant, use an app that compares their babies' sizes to a fruit or vegetable. Consider that Jesus was once the size of an apple! Of a cantaloupe! While we don't know His exact "birth stats" about size, length, and weight, we can be sure that He developed as any baby would.

Consider too that Jesus had regular bodily needs: He needed rest. He needed food. He felt thirst. He experienced all the needs that we do. Hebrews 4:15-16 (ESV) states, "For we do not have a high priest who

is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

As we enter the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we rejoice that our Savior is born. We reflect on the need for a Savior and the perfect faithfulness that God shows us — His kept promise that give us eternal salvation. And yet, how often do we skip over the details about Jesus "in the flesh?"

I know that I am always very aware of how I feel in the flesh — the cold makes my body hurt; a forgotten item at the grocery store causes my dinner recipe to fail (so now I'm hungry!); a trip to physical therapy reminds me of my frailty — and the list can go on.

I feel the wages of sin in my body. I suffer under the brokenness of this world. I'll admit that I too can forget that God loves and redeemed my broken body. I assume I'm on my own to fix it. Lord, forgive me and help me trust You.

Perhaps you too can feel the suffering of this sinful world in your body and

Prayer:

Lord God, Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus in the flesh to be our Savior. Thank You that we have hope and confidence in Your promises. Remind us that even in the middle of pain and suffering, we are not alone. Give us comfort and reassurance in our trials and remind us that we are Your beloved children. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



yet forget how your faith gives you hope amid that pain. Jesus BECAME FLESH! He felt all that we feel. He developed as we developed. He carried the weight of all sins (but none of His own) and did it out of love for you and love for me — love for this whole world.

Jesus in the flesh was the plan since before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4-5 (ESV) states, “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.” Jesus came bodily to fulfill all that was required and carry our sins to the cross. He defeated all our enemies and gives us victory through Baptism and in His Supper.

This Advent and Christmas, take a moment to consider the gift of Jesus in the flesh. He knows how you suffer and has defeated the cause. He is with you as you wait for relief and has promised you eternal rest and peace in Him.

Reflection Questions:

Have you ever considered Jesus’ bodily development before? What comfort is there in knowing that He went through all the stages of life as we do?

How does remembering that Jesus came in the flesh give you hope and a renewed sense of peace this season?

This month’s study text:

The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 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. 15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

John 1:1-18 (ESV)



100 Years of Thanks

*By Lucy Moll
Worship Anew Intern*

Showing gratitude is an important skill to have during Christmastime and has been for centuries. For a fun throwback, how about using these old phrases to say thank you?

1920s – You’re the bee’s knees!
1930s – Much obliged!
1940s – That’s keen!
1950s – Thanks a million!
1960s – Groovy of you!
1970s – Right on!
1980s – You’re radical, thanks a bunch!
1990s – You rock!
2000s – ‘Preciate it!
2010s – You slay!
2020s – 🙏!

Other ways of saying thank you don’t even require words! You could send a card in the mail, make a flower arrangement, or simply smile.

What really matters is that you show your family and friends how much you appreciate them this Christmas season.



More than just a candy cane

By Lucy Moll
Worship Anew Intern

We all recognize the classic red and white striped candies that adorn Christmas trees and fill stockings, but the candy cane is also a great way to teach young children about the Christmas story.

The candy cane originated as a plain white sugar stick shaped as a hook in 1670. According to “Stories Behind the Great Traditions of Christmas” by Ace Collins, the choirmaster at the Cologne Cathedral handed them out to children during the Christmas service to keep them quiet. Almost two centuries later, they travelled to America when August Imgard decorated his Christmas tree with candy canes. In the 1800s, red stripes were introduced, and religious meanings were associated with different aspects of the candy.

Next time you decorate your house or tree with candy canes, explain to your grandchildren what each part of the peppermint candy means.

First, the shape of the candy cane makes a J for Jesus, whose birthday we celebrate every year on Christmas Day. Turned upside down, it can also be seen as the staff of a

shepherd. Read your grandchildren the Bible story in Luke 2 that recounts how the shepherds were the first to welcome Baby Jesus.

The three small stripes stand for the Holy Trinity, which is made up of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Have your grandchildren count these stripes and explain to them that Jesus is the true Son of God. Then, ask them what colors they see. The red stands for the blood of Jesus that He shed for our salvation, and the white represents how He makes us clean through His sacrifice. This is a good opportunity to show children how we can look forward to Easter and the resurrection.

The candy cane is an excellent teaching tool as well as a tasty Christmas treat! It can be a great way to connect with your grandchildren this season. You can even read them the Christmas story from the Bible as they enjoy the candy or make pipe cleaner candy canes to hang on the tree!

Whether you use candy canes or not, remember to keep Jesus in your celebrations with family this year.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Merry Christmas

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT
WORSHIP ANEW

“Every good gift and every
perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the
Father of lights, with whom
there is no variation or
shadow due to change.”

James 1: 17 ESV