In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good. St. John’s Gospel begins: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... [And] the Word became flesh and made his dwelling with us. You heard it: The Word - the eternal, divine, world creating, Genesis 1 Word - became flesh and moved in with us. All things heavenly, spiritual, and eternal touched earth, took up residence here, in Him. I’m not too sure how I feel about that. I know that’s not a good thing for a pastor to admit. But there it is: I just don’t know about this God in the flesh stuff: maybe because I’m too connected to my own flesh stuff.

I’m 66. I say that with regret. I don’t want to hear about how much you love retirement because I don’t want to think I’m getting old enough to do it. When I turned 60, people tried to tell me, “60 is the new 50.” But that’s bunk. 60 is 60 and my body knew it. Then I turned 64 and remembered the old Beatles song, “Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I’m 64?” First time I heard that song 64 seemed so old; now it’s in the rearview mirror. And my body (this flesh) knows it! I’ve heard women experience aging as change of appearance; men experience aging as loss of power. Maybe that’s true. I’ve got a growing list of things I could do once but can’t do now. My eyes were my first clue. For decades my eyeglass prescription never changed, then I hit 50. Stability went out and bifocals came in. Then I started to ask people to repeat stuff to me because I didn’t hear them. Now I don’t bother because I figure I don’t care what they’re saying. Movies used to be fun, now they’re an exercise in lip-reading. “All flesh is grass,” complains the psalmist (Ps 90). I’m proving that in my own body. Of course, so are you. We are not created to be angels. We are finite, mortal, and limited, or as the Bible puts it, “flesh.” I know how much this flesh controls me and that makes me wonder about John’s words: “The Word became flesh.” Seems to me like there are lots of times we want to escape this “flesh” of ours, rise to a higher, more spiritual plane. Sometimes it’s hard to think of these changing, aging, hurting fleshy bodies as anything but a prison we want to escape from—not embrace. But then Christmas comes; Jesus comes down: and the Word is made flesh. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... [And] the Word became flesh and made his dwelling with us. The Word - the eternal, divine, world creating Word — became flesh and moved in among us. All things heavenly, spiritual, and eternal touched earth, took up residence here, in Him.

This was his glory, says John’s Gospel. We need something done about our flesh, this decaying material stuff. So on a starlit night God slipped in among us, assumed the very flesh we would like to shed and was born among us: God incarnate, God in the flesh, and God-with-us. It was an unexpected thing for a God to do. We think of God as the exact opposite of flesh. Carnal is what we are when we are farthest from heavenly. Godly is what we are when we are spiritual, when we rise above the decadence of this world and these bodies and float upward. But “no” says Bethlehem and the manger and the birth; “no” says the Word made flesh. You are animals - frail, enslaved, finite, and limited. You cannot climb up to God, so God stoops down to you. This is what incarnation (literally “enfleshment”) means. This is what Christmas means. It’s that time of year when we celebrate because God has done something about our wearisome flesh. God has become flesh in Jesus. God didn’t just come close to being human, didn’t just seem almost human, God became a person with a face and a name, was born among us, in the flesh.

So God sent us a Savior. His name is Emmanuel: which means God is with us. God gave us the kind of savior we needed, if not the one we expected. But we’re not always the best judges of what we should have, are we? Garrison Keillor wrote: “Some luck lies in not getting what you thought you wanted but getting what you have, which once you have it may be smart enough to see is what you would have wanted had you known.”

Sin has broken us all. We are lost without God. We need a Savior. We need a Savior who can identify with us, who can feel what we feel. We need a Savior who can enter completely into our lives. We need a Savior in the flesh—like ours... one who can laugh and cry like we do; who loves like we do... one who knows what it means to suffer, as we must. We need a Savior who understands what it means to be flesh... to change, to get older and start falling apart... we need a Savior who knows what back pain feels like. We need a Savior in the flesh who knows what it feels like to be betrayed, to be hungry, to face death. We need a Savior who is born like us, lives with us, and dies for us. We need this baby! We need this Savior! Emmanuel is here.
He was born—in the flesh—to carry our sin, our brokeness, and our failures to a cross and bring us back to God. The shadow of the cross falls over the manger and because of it; you are God’s child again! And so the promise of forever life is yours too… as Job said, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and in my flesh will I see God.” So Emmanuel has come: the Word was made flesh and dwells among us. Emmanuel, the Word was made flesh and came to us and he will dwell among us. We don’t need to try and climb up to him; he has come down to us. We are flesh and so we change. We need bifocals and hearing aids and our backs hurt. We are flesh and so we change. But because Emmanuel is with us, we don’t travel through this changing world alone. No matter where you find yourself a couple of days from now; no matter what your flesh is up to this Christmas; Emmanuel comes to you. May God bless each of you… in the flesh… this Christmas!

DECEMBER SUNDAYS

Dec 02 – Christian Education Board
Dec 09 – Wobrocks
Dec 16 – Dawn Schofield
Dec 23 – Doreen Fasig
Dec 30 – Kelly Olney

DecembeR Birthdays

Dec 02 Harold Oliver
Dec 03 Susan Atrops
Dec 04 Don Pfingsten
Dec 06 Karl DiModica
Dec 07 Floyd Olson
Dec 08 Vicki Amaral
Dec 09 Mary Windsheimer
Dec 13 Linda Bornholt, Fred Lee
Dec 14 Estelle Schofield, Debbie Wobrock
Dec 16 Louis DiModica, Richard Mininger
Dec 17 Darrell Heuchert
Dec 21 Cathleen Van Den Berg
Dec 23 Jean Janssen
Dec 25 Deborah Rich,
Dec 28 Debra Mattson, Ethan Rust,
Devon Zamudio, Ivy Zamudio
Dec 30 Richard Gagnon, Clara Rowe
Dec 31 Trevor Schofield, David Southern

December Anniversaries

Dec 10 Gerry & Marilyn Wagner
Dec 20 Jesse & Julie Wobrock
Dec 22 Rudy & Cheryl Stowell
Dec 27 David & Debbie Wobrock

MOWING IN DECEMBER

Dec 08 – Mark Hathaway, Terry Morgan, Dick Scholar
Dec 22 – Ernie Heuchert, Corey Maddison, Harold Oliver

Tri-City Sound
Friends & Family Christmas Show
Thursday – December 13
7:00 PM
Lutheran Church of Our Savior

Refreshments will follow
Goodwill offering to benefit scholarships
for young women pursuing music education
All are invited!
**ELDER’S CORNER**

Christ's Ambassadors

2 Cor. 5:20 "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God was making His appeal through us..."

Paul says Christians are ambassadors for Christ. By calling Christians ambassadors, he is saying that we have been appointed by God to represent Him and have been given the authority to speak on His behalf. We are to present the message of God to all people. We are not ambassadors of a nation. We are ambassadors for the kingdom of God. As ambassadors for Christ, we are responsible to tell others the Good News—Jesus died for our sins and rose again on Easter morning. His victory over death is also ours. Paul calls this the ministry of reconciliation. "All this is from God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18. Sin separates us from God. We can have a restored relationship with God only through Jesus. Because of His sacrifice, our sins are no longer counted against us. Jesus took our sins upon Himself.

When you think about it, God has given us a big responsibility. The message we are to proclaim is really a matter of life or death. God's love has no bounds. He wants everyone to be saved and to receive the gift of eternal life. He uses His word, His sacraments, and us, His ambassadors, to reach out and touch those who do not know Jesus.

I thank God for all the "ambassadors" He has put in my life. You never know when one will show up. I ran into one the other day while working my lawn route with my two hired hands, Lucas and Emma. While en route to the next client, we were discussing the virtues of the minimum wage law. We rounded a corner, came to a stop sign, and encountered a man with a big smile on his face waving his hands in the air. Curious, I had Lucas lower the window and I asked the guy, "What's up?" He said that Jesus was up and He loves you. He handed us a small pamphlet that turned out to be the Book of John and asked us what our names were because he wanted to pray for us. Since that encounter, I have seen him on his corner several times with a wave and a big smile. One time I rolled the window down and shouted out, "He is risen" to which he replied, "He is risen indeed, hallelujah." You know, you can never hear the Good News enough.

Every believer plays a part in this ministry of reconciliation. We plant, we water, and God brings the growth. What a privilege and honor God has bestowed on us—to be His ambassadors for Christ. ☺

...Mark Hathaway

---

**OPERATION SHOEBOX – A HUGE SUCCESS**

WOW! How you supported Operation Christmas Child!! At the packing party on November 11, approximately 35 members packed 205 shoeboxes. Another 36 shoeboxes were packed by individuals making a total of 241 shoeboxes from LCOS. During National Collection Week (November 12-19), 25 volunteers put in 174 hours to pack the 1,826 shoeboxes collected into 126 cartons. It was necessary to make a mid-week transfer of 63 cartons (the horse trailer full) to the Central Drop Off in Arroyo Grande. Gary and Anita Lange would like to shout out a HUGE THANK YOU to the many volunteers that made the daily collection of shoeboxes, prayer over them, and packing them into cartons a wonderful time. ☻

---

**CHILDREN’S CORNER**

**PUZZLE!**

Joy to the World

In Luke 2:10, the angels share good news that continues to bring great joy today.

Directions: Circle all the complete small “joy” words — forward only. Count the total. Bonus: See if you can find "Jesus" amid all the joy!

Answer: 26 (not in the O. It is at the P.)  Jesus is at the bottom

TOTAL JOY= ___
“Responding to God’s love, Lutheran Church of Our Savior desires to reach more people for Christ by proclaiming Him, by growing in faith, and by caring for all people.”

Sunday Worship – 8:15 AM & 10:45 AM
Sunday School & Bible Class – 9:30 AM

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16