

# THE GOOD NEWS

DECEMBER 2014

At St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Fall River, Wisconsin & St. John's Lutheran Church, Doylestown, Wisconsin  
Pastor James Bolda [pastorstjohnststephens@gmail.com](mailto:pastorstjohnststephens@gmail.com) [ststephensfallriver.org](http://ststephensfallriver.org) (920)484-3991; (920)296-3822 (cell)

## **CHRISTMAS SERVICES:**

### **St. John's Children's**

**Christmas Worship Program** will be held on Sunday December 21<sup>st</sup> at 8:15am.

**St. John's will have a Christmas Eve Worship Service at 5pm** (BUT THIS WILL NOT BE LED BY THE CHILDREN)

**St. Stephen's Children's Christmas Eve Worship Program** will be held at 6:30pm.

## **COMBINED CHURCHES CHRISTMAS DAY SONG SERVICE WORSHIP**

for members of BOTH congregations will be held at St. John's at 9:30am.

**INVITE your friends and family, neighbor, co-workers, acquaintances. Invite them to hear of the message of Jesus God's gift to us.**

## **GOD'S GIFT TO YOU? IT'S JESUS!**

When the time had fully come, as the Apostle Paul put it, God sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. The birth of God's only Son was a defining moment in the history of this entire world, and in the history of each one of our lives. Without Jesus, we would still "be in our sins." Guilty and bound for eternal damnation. Jesus came to do the seeming impossible: to rescue everyone from the guilt of their sins so they may have an eternal destiny of heaven, instead of hell. So that this message of rescue would be the most important history lesson the world would ever know, God the Holy Spirit would write the story of God's gift of Jesus in the sacred Scriptures. There, with the "Book" opened, we learn about God's gift of Jesus, the gift of gifts, for everyone. Scripture testifies to the truth that Jesus lived a perfect sinless life, and then died on the cross as the world's Redeemer, so that the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life can be offered to each person who lives on earth. When Jesus rose from the dead, the proof that Jesus the Savior, first born as an infant of Mary and His earthly father Joseph, truly did rescue everyone. For this profound gift, God's own Son, we give thanks to God. **God's gift of Jesus is our salvation, the gift of God's Son is worthy of all our attention, honor, and praise. OUR GIFT TO OUR LORD? IT'S OUR WORSHIP! Come and worship! Worship Christ our Newborn King!**

**REACH OUT!** The Advent/Christmas season is also an opportune time to invite someone without a church home to worship with us. Please invite them to our church if they have no congregation and are missing out of the GOOD NEWS of Christ our Lord in their lives.

**Thank you!** To everyone who giving Poinsettias. If you wish to donate a poinsettia in memory of someone or in honor of someone, please inform Diane Ashley or Betty Oehlert. Thank you to our Sunday school staffs, church decorators, and every kind of service to our Lord by serving our churches throughout the year.

**Other worship opportunities:** Pastor has worship services monthly at Nursing Homes / Assisted Living Homes. JOIN US if you would like. The FIRST Monday of each month Pastor has a worship service at Rio's "At Home Again"; The SECOND Tuesday of each month Pastor has a worship service at "The Meadows" in Fall River; And once a month (at different Sundays) Pastor has service at the Columbus' Nursing & Care Center (across from Zion Church/School).

St. Stephen's **new Advent paraments are blue.** Royal Blue is the color of royalty to welcome the coming of a King. It also symbolizes the night sky in which the star appeared to announce the birth of Jesus. The Angel announces Jesus' conception & birth. The Christ child is the "Prince of Peace" who brings the gift of eternal life.

**Children's Christmas Program Practices** will be held in place of Sunday School. Thank you to our SS staffs. Parents, work with your children on their parts!

**SISTER CHURCHES.** Our "dual parish" allows for special extra opportunities to worship Jesus at Christmas time **and** each worship day of the year. As a SISTER CHURCH *the Lord absolutely expects our THANK YOU'S at worship AS OFTEN AS WE POSSIBLY CAN.* Not vice versa! If you are missing worship for some particular reason(s), normally you have THREE opportunities to worship Jesus each week. **THREE opportunities in our two SISTER churches.** And when we have special services, we replace Thursday services with those special services. If you cannot make a special service at one congregation, you should make use of the special service at the sister church. We want to worship our Lord Jesus! It should never be a childish "do I have to" thing. It is equally foolish to think I cannot worship at my sister church just because your membership is at the "other" sister church. REMEMBER! OUR WORSHIP IS OUR THANK YOU TO JESUS FOR COMING FOR US! No matter which church or service we are attending. If your tradition is to do otherwise than above, then break the tradition this year! Jesus deserves it!

If you and someone else from church want to visit shut in's this Christmas, speak to Pastor for information.

Interested in Caroling this year? See Pastor. If there is interest, we will set something up and publicize it!

If you or someone you know would appreciate a pastoral call in the home, or hospital, or in a nursing home, please inform Pastor Bolda. Better yet, come with him when Pastor makes the visit. Or meet him there.

Would you like to speak to Pastor on a Sunday morning. He can arrange that after the two services? Just let him know! (He can meet you at either sister church)

**HELP! PASTOR NEEDS UPDATED phone numbers, especially cell phone numbers and updated emails, so he can contact you!**

Start 2015 with a new Interactive Faith Series! (online) In our lives we go through cycles of ups and downs – we think God is pleased one moment and that his not the next. Start a six week study online called Breaking the Cycle with Grace. [www.wels.net/interactivefaith](http://www.wels.net/interactivefaith).

Interested in gift ideas? Be sure to see the Northwestern Publishing House brochures in back of church, or 800 662-6022 or NPH.net

FORWARD IN CHIRST magazines present some of the BEST reading we will do this month, and every month of the year. It starts with taking one home. It continues when you place it in an obvious place for you to pick up and read: near your bed, on the dining table,

Those with health issues who could still our prayers: Oma Benzine, Dwight Marshall, Irene Baker and Gertrude Stilson. Want us to put you in our prayers? Tell Pastor!

**[ststephensfallriver.org](http://ststephensfallriver.org) Internet links: [WELS.net](http://WELS.net); [whataboutjesus.com](http://whataboutjesus.com); Minister:  
James Bolda 484-3991 (parsonage office & home)  
(920)296-3822(pastor's cell)**

## Jesus is...Immanuel

*Matthew 1:23*

*“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son,  
and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.”*

In 1995 Joan Osborne released the song “One of Us.” Catchy tune. Provocative lyrics. A repeated question: “What if God was one of us...just a slob like one of us?”

I don't know the songwriter's intent in asking the question. Was there a searching desire to know the answer? Or was it a commentary on God as he is often portrayed and perceived—a distant god who doesn't care about the human condition? I don't know. However, I do know that in the Bible God gives an answer to the song's question.

God is one of us. Come again? It's true! God is one of us. In the Bible we are told of a promise God made to become one with the human race: *...they will call him Immanuel—which means, God with us.* Those words are spoken of Jesus Christ at the time of his birth. The Bible teaches that Jesus is true God and true man at the same time! This is the mystery and miracle of Christmas. This is the mystery and meaning of the special name for Jesus, Immanuel.

Let that thought sink in during these days around Christmas. God is one of us! Think about it when you're having a rough day and it seems like nobody cares. Jesus knows and cares because he once lived in our world. In fact, he had it much worse than we do. He was perfectly innocent of all wrongdoing, and yet he suffered humiliation and scorn. He hadn't hurt anyone or broken a law of God and yet he was sentenced to death.

Jesus died...for no fault of his own. But that's what he came to do. He was born to die, because our relationship with God is totally messed up otherwise. We have been slobs in the way we've lived before God. We deserve his anger for disobeying his commands and living according to our own standards. But Jesus became, not a slob like one of us, but a slob instead of us! He died on the cross in our place. He rose from the dead...in victory.

What if God was one of us? In Christ Jesus he was and truly still is! Through faith in Jesus Christ we have what he came into our world to win—complete forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Look to Immanuel who promises to be your compassionate and powerful companion in this life...and the next!

# ~ St. John's(J) and St. Stephen's(S) Lutheran Churches ~ December 2014 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			3:30 pm Combined Churches 5 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> gr Bible History Class(S) 6:30 - 7:30 pm Combined Churches 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> gr Catechism Class(S)	4 7:30 pm Joint Churches Worship (S)	5	6
7 8:15 am Worship(J) 9:15 am SS Christmas Program Practice(J) 9:45 am Worship(S) 10:45 am SS Christmas Program Practice(S)	8	9	10 6:30 - 7:30 pm Combined Churches 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> gr Catechism Class(S)	11 7:30 pm Joint Churches Worship with communion(S)	12	13
14 8:15 am Worship w/comm(J) 9:15 am SS Christmas Program Practice(J) 9:45 am Worship w/comm(S) 10:45 am SS Christmas Program Practice(S)	15	16	17 3:30 pm Combined Churches 5 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> gr Bible History Class(S) 6:30 - 7:30 pm Combined Churches 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> gr Catechism Class(J)	18 7:30 pm Joint Churches Worship (S)	19	20
21 8:15 am Children's Christmas Worship Program (J) 9:15am Sunday School(J) 9:45 am Worship (S) 10:45 am SS Christmas Program Practice(S)	22	23	24 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service(J) 6:30 pm Children's Christmas Eve Worship Program(S)	25 9:30 am Combined Churches Christmas Day Song Service (J)	26	27
28 8:15 am Worship w/comm(J) 9:45 am Worship w/comm(S) NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	29	30	31 7:00 pm Combined Churches New Year Eve Worship Service w/comm(S)	<b>Notes:</b>		

**St. Stephen's Ushers:** Dec 7<sup>th</sup>: Randy Randall, Chris Randall, George Randall, Todd Huggett & Nathan Rockweiler;  
 Dec 14<sup>th</sup> & Dec 21<sup>st</sup>: Troy Sauer, Jamie McGee, Ken Dickerson, Jayson Selje & Mark Schultz;  
 Dec 28<sup>th</sup> & Dec 31<sup>st</sup>: Russ Krakow, Del Foulkes, Nick Posthuma, Trent Trelloff & Hunter Trelloff  
**Christmas Eve:** Church Council