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GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

MY PERSONAL FAILURES

December 21 and 22, 2019

BELLS AND WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

M We light four Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Mary.
He came to share our humanity.

C **We remember Jesus, whose name means Savior. He came to save his people from their sins.**

M We hear his call to give him a place in our hearts.

C **We light four Advent candles as a sign of our confidence, joy, and hope.**

M Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

C **Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.**

Four Advent candles are lit.

OPENING HYMN 2

Savior of the Nations, Come

HOLY BAPTISM

Hymnal page 12

Amelia Ann Viegut

Daughter of David and Krista Viegut, born July 22, 2019

INVOCATION

M In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

M Brothers and sisters in Christ, draw near to God and he will draw near to you; humble yourself before him and he will lift you up.

C **With King David we trust that “a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).**

M Let us come in humility and confess our sins.

All **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior, Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

M "Unto us a Child is born! Unto us a Son is given" (*Isaiah 9:6*)! For you and for your forgiveness Christ was born. I, therefore, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

M Forgiven and forgiving, carry the light of Christ's love to a dying world, a world aching for peace and hope.

C **Amen.**

RESPONSE HYMN 41, vv. 1, 2, 6

Let All Together Praise Our God

**Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;
Today he opens heav'n again
And gives us his own Son, And gives us his own Son.**

**He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne, Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone,
Lies in a humble stall, Lies in a humble stall.**

**For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today.
The angel guards the gate no more;
To God our thanks we pay, To God our thanks we pay.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins and make us ready for the celebration of your birth,

C **that we may receive you in joy and serve you always.**

M For you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now

C **and forever. Amen.**

FIRST LESSON

Romans 1:1-7, Bible page 1126

The Apostle Paul announces that Jesus came as both God and human in fulfillment of prophecy.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalms 24, Hymnal page 73

Let the King of glory in. He is the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25, Bible page 966

Joseph humbly accepts the task God assigns to him to be the human father of his incarnate Son.

HYMN OF THE DAY 47

Behold, a Branch Is Growing

SERMON

Isaiah 7:1-17, Bible page 685

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, who sent his Son as my Savior on Christmas Day.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, announced by the angels, worshipped by the shepherds, adored by the wise men, who lived to suffer and die, and rise again to free us from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me to faith in the Christ of Christmas, by whose continuous work in my heart I am ever led to lay before the feet of Christ the treasures of my love, and live for him as my King both now and forever. Amen.

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN 34, vv. 1, 2, 4

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

CLOSING PRAYER

M Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart, that being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

BLESSING

M The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.

C **Amen.**

PREACHER *Pastor Peter Panitzke*

PRESIDING MINISTER *(Sunday) Pastor David Kuehl*

SPECIAL WORSHIP MUSIC *(Sunday)*

I Wonder As I Wander, arr. by Karen Buckwalter

Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming, arr. by Cynthia Dobrinski

WEEKLY CALENDAR

For the week of December 23, 2019

MON		No School – Christmas Break (through January 5)
TUE		Christmas Eve
	12:00 pm	Christmas Eve at The Bridge
	2:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
	4:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
	6:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
	10:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
WED		Christmas Day
	10:00 am	Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion
THURS	6:30 am	Sunrise Bible Study (Faith Room)
	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	7:00 pm	The Bridge and Contemporary Band Practice
SAT	8:00 am	Men's Breakfast Bible Study (Grace Room)
	5:00 pm	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
SUN	7:45 am	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
	9:15 am	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
	9:45 am	The Bridge Communion
	10:15 am	The Bridge
	10:45 am	Contemporary Worship Service with Holy Communion
MON	10:00 am	Walking Group
TUE		New Year's Eve
	5:00 pm	New Year's Eve Worship Service with Holy Communion

BAPTISMS

Haley Ann Johnston, born August 4, 2016 and Claire Elizabeth Johnston, born July 12, 2018, were baptized in a private ceremony on Saturday, December 21. Haley and Claire are the daughters of Adam and Krystle Johnston. We rejoice with the Johnstons for the blessings of baptism given to Haley and Claire. May God bless and strengthen their faith.

FLOWERS

The flowers beautifying the altar today were given in loving memory of Ruth Dorn by her family.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

Please pray for the following individuals in their time of need: Carol Beyer, David Burkowitz, Steve Drobka, Carol Gosseck, Janelle Gray, Lois Guhr, Connie Hikade, Josh Nagel, Carol Smith, Jeanne Steinbrecher, and Dick and Jane Sternberg.

HOSPITALIZED

Gary Ives is at Froedtert, Richard Krebs at West Allis, and James Moll at Waukesha. Jan Kuske is rehabbing at Linden Grove New Berlin. Roger Musack, Nancy Rindfleisch, and Steve Stack have been discharged from the hospital.

ATTENDANCE

1004 were in attendance at last weekend's services; 224 at midweek Advent services.

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

10 FOR 10 PLANS FOR GIVING

We are coming to the end of our ten-week effort to give 10% (a tithe), or if that is not possible, to grow in giving. Early in January, your 10 for 10 Plans for Giving will be mailed back to you. May God bless us as we seek to give first-fruit, proportionate, sacrificial gifts.

A COOL MILLION PASSES \$800,000!

Thank you for your gifts to A Cool Million! We recently passed \$800,000 in gifts. We are also thankful for some good weather that has enabled the roofers to make progress on the church roof, the second largest of our Cool Million projects. We are about \$60,000 away from fully funding that project. Our final projects next summer will focus on the Trinity Gym and The Bridge equipment.

MORTGAGE FUND

With our focus on *A Cool Million* over the past 18 months, our gifts to the Mortgage Fund have decreased slightly, recently causing us to dip into reserves. Thanks for keeping the Mortgage Fund in your giving plans as well!

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS THANKS

On December 14, 107 children enjoyed a morning of activities centered on the birth of Jesus. We are thankful that this ministry served not only our own children but also 13 children from the community! Thank you to the 53 volunteers: 21 adults, 23 St. Paul's teens, and 9 Wisconsin Lutheran High School students!

FOCUS YOUR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE WITH HELPS FROM THE CHURCH LIBRARY

If you have children, you'll love the selection of over 90 Christmas picture books, as well as several Christmas DVDs, available in the church library. The library is located in the west wing of church.

FOLLOWING THE PROMISE BIBLE STUDY

Are you ready to explore the Christmas promise of a Savior? A Savior planned for you before time began? *Following the Promise* class happens Tuesdays, 7:00 – 8:15 pm, **January 7** – March 24. For longtime Christians or people just curious to know more, this class is for you! Express interest on the back of the Connection Card.

MINISTERING TO MILLENIALS: THE NEW GRACE ROOM SERIES

Join our St. Paul's pastors, 9:15-10:15 am the Sundays of January, as they lead discussion based on a video series produced by our church body to explore what we can do to retain and gain members of this generation. The discussion will also help you in your personal witness ministry.

AWAKE AND ALIVE 2020

Awake and Alive is a national Christian event ministry for the 18-25 generation and leaders of this generation led by founder Mike Westendorf, St. Paul's Artist in Residence and Director of Video Production. Make plans to attend the 2020 Winter Conference on January 10 and 11 at the Best Western on Howell Avenue in Milwaukee. Visit awakealive.com or pick up a postcard at the Welcome Center to learn more.

CARD PLAYERS' GROUP

The first Friday of every month Sheepshead is played. The third Thursday of the month is card players' choice. Both evenings begin at 7:00 pm in the Faith Room. Enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship, bring a snack to share, and your own beverage. RSVP by calling the church office at (414) 422-0320, ext. 128, or joining the Card Players Group on My St. Paul's.

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

DECEMBER—A MONTH OF OUTREACH!

Your St. Paul's outreach team had a fun and very busy December!

Because of the generosity of your St. Paul's family, 150 gifts for the Friends of Jesus organization and 65 gifts for the Muskego Health Care Center were given to those in need. That's over 200 people blessed by an act of kindness together with the message of a Savior. The monetary donations given for us to do the purchasing for you were a blessing starting already in the store! Through conversation started in the check-out line, the cashier and those around heard that our church was buying gifts for others because of our love for Jesus. An inquiry was even made about our Child Care Center. It was a beautiful moment.

December 7 saw Outreach Coordinator Sally Wallner joining together with the Muskego Chamber of Commerce in greeting children and families at the Muskego Public Library for Jingle on Janesville. And that afternoon she was at the Muskego Police Department representing the Muskego Woman's Club dropping off gift cards that they collected to show sincere appreciation for Muskego law enforcement officers.

Our beautifully designed Christmas postcard invitations were mailed to all Muskego residents mid-December, welcoming the community to worship with us. Facebook and our website were utilized as well to spread the word about who we are and why we are here. When you share these online links it multiplies our outreach efforts. Please invite people to church with you. Friendships are the best way to bring people closer to Jesus in his church.

And one of the best things our church family can do is be friendly! This means when you are at church, please talk to people you don't know. It can be as simple as saying, "Hello, my name is _____," when someone sits down in a pew around you. People long to feel connected in their church. A simple hello and smile will bring that connection together, whether they are trying church for the first time, or are a longtime member.

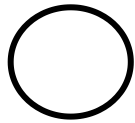


ST. PAUL'S TEEN BASKETBALL LEAGUE TO START

St. Paul's is forming a team to play in the WELS High School Boys Basketball League. If you are a member of St. Paul's and not playing on your high school's basketball team, contact Dr. Nelson at jnelson@stpaulmuskego.org to receive information as it becomes available.

ST. PAUL'S CLEAN TEAM STAFF OPENING

A position on our clean team is open. This is a paid position with 4-8 hours on weeknights and some occasional fill-in hours on weekends. Responsibilities include cleaning of school, church, and fill-in at the child care facilities to create an optimal environment for student learning and worship. Contact Church Administrator Randy Fink at rfink@stpmuskego.org or (414) 422-0320, ext. 120, to apply.



ChristmasWork

Life application materials for use in Life Groups, home devotions, and other small groups.

I. Read the Christmas Gospel: Circle phrases that you would like to make a comment about – perhaps it comforts you or you have a question.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

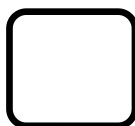
¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

2. Celebrate the Christmas Gospel: Sing together some of your favorite Christmas carols.

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and Child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all you nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

3. Close with prayer and the Lord’s Prayer



NoteSheet

Sermon Outline

Take notes during the sermon to help you remember the main points.

The Ghosts of Christmas Past

Prepare for Christmas at the Laundromat

Isaiah 7:1-17, page 685

*“At the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer’s Field”
Isaiah 7:3; Isaiah 36:2*

- I. The place where we are confronted by the Ghost of Past Failures.
 - a. Ahaz’ dirty laundry is exposed – true guilt (2 Chronicles 28:1-4).
 - b. Hezekiah’s dirty laundry is exposed – false guilt (Isaiah 36:7).
 - c. My dirty laundry is exposed (Psalm 24:3-4).
2. The place to choose between two cleaning models.
 - a. The Ahaz model (Isaiah 7:1-12)
 - Tremble
 - Wash it yourself
 - Cover it up
 - b. The Hezekiah model (Isaiah 37:1,14-20)
 - Tear your clothes
 - Spread it out before the LORD
 - Pray for God’s glory
3. The place to see the Zeal of the LORD at work!
 - a. God’s Zeal undiminished by your doubts (Isaiah 9:7).
 - b. God’s Zeal undaunted by the number of your stains (Isaiah 37:32,36).

Cast of Characters

Ahaz: Wicked king of Judah

Hezekiah: Ahaz’ godly son

Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel. Has already defeated Ahaz once.

Rezin: King of Aram (modern Syria), ally of Pekah

Locations

Aram: (Syria) capital is Damascus

Israel: Northern nation of God’s people. Also called Ephraim after its most powerful tribe or Samaria, its capital.

Assyria: The world power of the 700’s BC that makes ISIS look tame.

My Next Steps to be Christmas Clean

- **A Call to Humility:** Read Psalm 24. What has made your hands unclean and your heart impure?
- **A Call to Trust:** Read Isaiah 7:1-9:7. Celebrate God’s zeal to send Immanuel.
- **A Call to Invite:** Who do you know who feels “exposed?” Share what you know – that Immanuel comes for the guilty and fearful and doubting. All are welcome to be cleansed in his forgiving love.