

The Child of Christmas; the Children of Christmas

“So they [shepherds] came in a hurry and found . . . the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.” – Luke 2:16,17

Christmas is for children! There is more truth in that statement than we might recognize at first glance. I know that I celebrate Christmas best when I view it through the eyes of children. For them the ancient story of Christmas is still fresh, new, and full of wonder. They are not yet burdened with the chaos, clutter, and commercialism of the season. I love having our children help decorate the Christmas tree, put up lights, and set up the Nativity scene. Yes, this means that ornaments break, lights get stepped on, one of the Magi had to have his head glued back on, and the angel has only one good wing.

The joy and delight of the children helps to ignite and focus my own heart in celebrating Christmas. It means that things do not turn out “perfectly,” but they are more wonderful, as in “full of wonder!” I remember watching (unnoticed) years ago as our youngest child intently rearranged all the Nativity pieces in a circle around the baby Jesus so that they could all see the Christ-child with a clear view. May God so focus our view upon the Christ-child as well!

This year at Ruthfred we are going to be tracing God’s preparations of getting ready for Christmas through children in the Bible. I have to admit, I never thought about the significance of children in this before! The first promise of Christmas was the promise of a child to Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden after they sinned. This coming child would be a Savior. Our second focus will be the child of a prophet, as Isaiah receives the prophecy of his own child, which will be fully fulfilled centuries later by the Christ-child. Our third week of Advent we will focus on the child of a priest, as Zechariah and Elizabeth’s son John the Baptist announces that the Son of God is coming. Mary’s child will be our fourth focus as she is the virgin who conceives the Christ-child and gives birth to the Son of God.

On Christmas Eve we will draw all these Christmas promises of children into the culmination of the Christ-child of Christmas, as we hear Jesus’ invitation to all to become “the children of God.” Christ is the Child of Christmas, but we are all called to be children of Christmas as we experience the new birth in becoming the children of God. These services will be great opportunities to invite family and friends to come with you to hear of God’s love and grace!

“But as many as received [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to all who believe in His name.” – John 1:12

This Christmas, may we become as children and see Christ anew and be filled with wonder and amazement at the gift of the Christ-child.

We wish you all a very Blessed Christmas!

Pastor & Jen, Ben, Sadie, and Sam Carlson

Ruthfred Lutheran Church

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The submission deadline for the next Herald is **Saturday, December 7, 2019.**

The publication date is **Wednesday, December 18, 2019.**

Come, Join us this Holy Season as we Celebrate:

“The Child of Christmas: The Children of Christmas”

at Ruthfred Lutheran Church

Sunday Advent & Christmas Season Messages:

December 1st	“The Child of Promise”	(8:30 AM, 11:00 AM, & 6:00 PM)
December 8th	“The Child of the Prophet”	(8:30 AM & 11:00 AM)
December 15th	“The Child of the Priest”	(8:30 AM & 11:00 AM)
December 22nd	“The Child of Mary”	(8:30 AM & 11:00 AM)

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services: “The Child of Christmas: The Children of Christmas”
5:00 PM, 7:00 PM, & 9:00 PM

Christmas Day Service: “The Son of God” (10:00 AM Holy Communion)

Member Profile

By Mettelise Ziegler

Susan and Kevin Boehm

For Susan and Kevin Boehm life is a journey with daily opportunities to make an eternal difference in the lives of people.

Raised in Bethel Park just two houses from her longtime friend Judy Dymond Stewart (also a Ruthfred member), Susan attended John McMillan Presbyterian Church. Kevin, likewise from Bethel Park, attended Mt. Oliver Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Missouri Synod.

The pair dated in high school. Sue graduated in 1978, a year after Kevin. While Kevin studied Chemical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, Susan studied at the University of Pittsburgh. After many years of student life in Oakland, Kevin became a physician and Susan, a dentist.

While students, Sue and Kevin were active with Campus Crusade for Christ. Sue remembers spending time witnessing on the streets of Oakland and praying for ways to serve God when she and Kevin married.

The Boehms have lived in Peters Township for many years, raising four children to adulthood. Their son Ben is married to Lauren Segerdahl whom he has known since Sunday School. Ben is studying to become a medical doctor, like his dad. Their daughter Rebecca, married to Michael, works as a physician's assistant with her father. Sarah, married to Jeffrey, is an attorney. Jacob is currently a student at Washington & Jefferson College.



Sue and Kevin are transparent about their faith, offering to listen and to pray with their patients. After eighteen years in a typical dental practice, Sue took a job at the Centerville Clinics in Washington, an organization serving people with behavioral, dental, and medical needs regardless of their ability to pay. For over ten years, she has served the neediest patients in society—from the mentally ill to those in prison. Kevin has been in private practice in Eighty-Four for 27 years. In addition to his busy, compassionate family practice he visits the jail in Washington three times a week to care for those who are incarcerated.

The Boehms are grateful for Ruthfred Lutheran Church. They hold the pastors—past and present—in high esteem for their excellent Biblical teaching. They have several strong, lasting friendships with members of the church. Currently they are part of the parenting series going on in the “upper” room during the Sunday School hour.

Susan and Kevin understand “what a difference it makes to know the Lord. There are so many people who are lost and searching.” The doctors hope that they can do more than heal physical needs; that God will use them to bring people to a healed relationship with our loving God.

Official Acts

October 21, 2019 – November 10, 2019

Funerals

*Evangeline A. Ronstadt – October 24, 2019

*Delores Taylor – November 2, 2019

The Year of the Bible in 2020

Next year has been proclaimed “The Year of the Bible.” Every year is a great year to read the Bible, but we want to especially focus on this next year at Ruthfred. Our church elders are planning different ways to help our congregation read through the Bible together next year. We will use printed reading guides, smart phone apps, listening formats, etc. Especially as even the “churched” portion of our nation declines in Bible knowledge, we want to be familiar with the Word of the Lord and the great stories of God’s people. The Bible is filled with so many promises of blessing for those who read and hear the Word! Romans 10:17 declares, “Faith comes by hearing; hearing the Word of Christ.” We will be starting this on January 1st. Plan to be part of our Bible reading/hearing adventure together in 2020!

Offering Envelopes

The 2020 Offering Envelopes are now available for you to pick up. They are currently on the table by the elevator.

Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Lyrics: Unknown; Tr. by John M. Neale

Music: Unknown

As we grow older, most of us develop a fondness for the “oldies” music from our youth. For millennials, that might be songs from the 90’s. For folks like me it would probably be songs from—well—I’d rather not say. As we observe another Advent season, I think there is at least one golden oldie that we all enjoy singing. With Latin lyrics and a plain-song melody written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” has certainly stood the test of time! However, like many things that become extremely familiar, it is very easy to sing along devoutly or nostalgically and gloss over the lyrics and what they mean. I know I’m guilty! For example, allow me to share with you the little bit of homework I did on the various titles with which Jesus is addressed in each of the five verses we have in our hymnal.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Emmanuel is the Hebrew word meaning “God With Us.” The name comes from Isaiah’s well-known prophecy in 7:14: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign, Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.” Matthew also quotes this verse in 1:23 of his Gospel.

O Come, O Come, Thou Lord of Might

As elaborated upon in the remainder of the second verse, this title equates Jesus with none other than Yahweh Himself, the Law-giver on Mt. Sinai. Jesus is not only sent by God, He is God incarnate!

O Come, O Come, Thou Rod of Jesse

The “rod” is a new living shoot that springs up from a stump thought to be destroyed and dead. “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.” Jesse was David’s father. Luther commented that this prophecy refers to Jesse instead of David because even though Jesus would be in the line of David, He would actually be a new “David.”

O Come, O Come, Thou Dayspring

This archaic word from King James’ days simply refers to sunrise, daybreak, or dawn of a new day. It could perhaps be stretched to mean the dawn of a new era. Malachi, the last prophet before Christ’s coming, wrote this: “But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.” Malachi 4:2. In Zechariah’s song after the birth of his son John (the Baptist), he states that “the sunrise shall visit us from on high.” Luke 1:78.

O Come, O Come, Thou Key of David

This title simply acknowledges that control and authority over David’s domain has been given to Jesus. “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.’” Revelations 3:7.

May God bless your observance of Jesus’ first coming, and preparation for His second coming!

Ruthfred Technology Updates

This past year, Ruthfred has expanded its outreach and means of connecting with members and non-members alike through several projects focused on increasing the church's online presence. Ruthfred now has its own YouTube channel, which hosts copies of services and special event videos. Anyone can now listen to entire recordings of Ruthfred services on YouTube. They can be found by following Ruthfred Lutheran Church on YouTube or by clicking on the "Watch Online" link found directly under sermons on the website (<https://ruthfred.org/events-media/sermons/>). Additionally, the church website contains more content and digital media than ever before. Website visitors can now find Pastor Carlson's "Two on Tuesday" posts under the "Pastor's Blog," a copy of the Herald and the bulletin for every week under "Events and Media," and the latest church calendar. The website also contains sign-up forms for events and classes as they arise.

In addition to improvements on the website, Ruthfred continues to strengthen its online presence through Facebook and Instagram. Please like and follow us if you haven't already done so in addition to liking and sharing our posts. These posts reach thousands of people when they are liked and shared. Both of these platforms contain pictures from past church events, information on upcoming church events, and sometimes a preview of the sermon text for the upcoming Sunday. Following Ruthfred on these platforms is a great way to better connect with the church and others.

Many people are already taking advantage of these great resources and we look forward to seeing even more people using them. Ruthfred continues to increase its online presence and this effort is most successful when individuals utilize these great resources. Stay tuned for more updates on Ruthfred's technology, and please share your thoughts and comments through the "Contact Us" form on the website (<https://ruthfred.org/about/contact/>).

Submitted by Andrew Vogel

Announcements

Sunday School Christmas Program

“Christmas Cherubs Sing” on Sunday, December 15th—During the 11 am service, our Preschoolers will be singing their beloved Christmas repertoire. This is in place of the evening Sunday School Christmas Program which will not be held this year. The evening event is “on hiatus” for one year with a potential new format “reboot” next year. (All suggestions and new ideas welcome; consider being part of the planning committee next August!)

Submitted by Barb Harrold

Merry Christmas

From all of us at Ruthfred Lutheran Church

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Luke 2: 8-14



December

2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT Holy Communion 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Holy Communion 11:00 Holy Communion 6:00 	2 Craft & Sew 9:30 Elders' Meeting 7:00	3 Worship Team 7:00	4 5:45 Children's Choir 6:30 Bell Choir 6:45 JTTW/Klds Club 6:45 Jr. & Sr. Confirmation Classes 7:30 Senior Choir	5	6 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	7 HERALD ARTICLE DEADLINE
8 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 Women's Christmas Luncheon 1:30 LAST DAY TO ORDER POINSETTIAS	9 HAPPY 94th BIRTHDAY JOYCE ALDERSON Craft & Sew 9:30 Elders' Prayer Time 7:00 Council 7:30 <i>Happy Birthday</i>	10 Worship Team 7:00	11 12:00 Esther 5:45 Children's Choir 6:30 Bell Choir 6:45 JTTW/Klds Club 6:45 Jr. & Sr. Confirmation Classes 7:30 Senior Choir	12	13 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	14 Mary Bible Study 9:30
15 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	16	17 Worship Team 7:00 Men's Night 7:00	18 HERALD MAILING Nursery School Program (Fellowship Hall) 10:30 5:45 Children's Choir 7:30 Senior Choir	19 Ruth 2:00 7:00 Young Adult Group Christmas Party @ parsonage	20 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	21
22 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 5:00 7:00 9:00	25 CHRISTMAS DAY  Communion Service 10:00	26	27 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	28
29 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 6:00 Congregational Family Night	JANUARY 1, 2020			

December 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Sunday School 9:45am No SWAP	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	9	10 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	11	12	13 Friday Movie Night 7-10pm	14
15 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	16	17 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	18	19	20	21 TNT Christmas Party 5-9pm @ The Huwe's
22 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP Christmas Party 6-9 @ Church	23	24 NO TNT Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	30	31 NO TNT <u>New Years' Eve Party</u>				

Ruthfred Youth Ministry Calendar