



From the Pastor's Desk

Be His Shepherds in 2023!



On December 11, 2022 several men, women, youth, and children at Ruthfred worked together in Jesus' name to glorify God with a wonderful Christmas Pageant and fellowship dinner! Over 100 people attended the production of *The Son Has Come*, which was written by Ruthfred's own Pastor Adam Osier. I sat on the end aisle seat in the last pew on the right, enjoying the production.

Looking up front at the actors I noticed among the audience in the pews some people I know who don't go to church, some who haven't been baptized, people dealing with life-threatening illnesses, people with struggling marriages, some struggling with addiction, some who've lost loved ones and are struggling with intense loneliness, people living in poverty, and people who struggle with anxiety and depression.

I looked at those adorable actors, heard the powerful voices of our youth proclaiming God's Word, saw the adults leading the child-actors to where they needed to go, saw other adults setting up the stage, managing the scenery on the set, remembered all the practices and hard work these people had done, and I thanked God for them! I thanked God that I could just sit in a pew and enjoy the production. You see, it wasn't just other struggling people who sat in those pews and needed to be blessed that evening. Pastors need to be blessed too!

After the beautiful production we all enjoyed a fellowship dinner together. Then someone came up to me and said, "Congratulations, Pastor McMinn. This event was a success." I asked, "Why are you congratulating *me*? I only encouraged these folks as best I could. I didn't do any of the work for this event. We have incredibly gifted, talented people in our church who made this happen. I had almost nothing to do with it. These people know what they're doing. They didn't need any help from me."



Continued on page 3 ...

Ruthfred Lutheran Church

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In This Issue

- 3 From the Pastor's Desk**
Continued from cover page
- 4 Christmas Reflection**
- 5 Member Profile**
Kathryn Carr
- 6 Lutherans for Life Quote;
90+ Birthday Club;
Ponderable Quote;
New Members Class**
- 7 Song of the Month**
As With Gladness Men of Old
- 8 Official Acts**
- 9 Worship Team Members
for January**
- 10 Church Calendar**
- 11 Youth Calendar**
- 12 Reading Through the Bible 2023
(One Story that Leads to Jesus)**
- 13 A Joyful Heart Is Good Medicine**



The Closing Hymn: "Silent Night"



Continued from cover page ...



It was then that I realized how blessed I was by the pageant! I truly had little, if anything, to do with it, and am grateful to God for that. During the 2022 Christmas season, while the kids, youth, and adults at Ruthfred who managed the pageant were doing their work, I was working with many others at Ruthfred, reaching out and ministering to (among others) many of the people in the audience.

Pastors and many other faithful shepherds at Ruthfred pour themselves into ministry, counseling, visiting, preaching, teaching, administering the Sacraments, mourning with those who mourn, walking with and sitting by the sides

of those who are struggling. Among the many, unforgettable Christmas blessings I received in 2022, as well as attending our pageant, was being at Carol Mueller's bedside, reading the Christmas story (Luke 2:8-20) to her, praying the Lord's Prayer with her, and singing the Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2:29-32) to her as she took her last breath on this earth, departing in peace to be with her Savior. Also at Carol's bedside in that moment was a home care worker who'd never heard those verses from Luke 2 before, and wasn't familiar with the Lord's Prayer.

A few days before that, I was blessed to visit a dying man at Jefferson Hospital, Ray Moore. Ray was the grandfather of Ruthfred member Matthew Moore. Heather, Matthew's Mom and Ray's daughter-in-law, texted me to ask if I'd visit Ray. Heather thought he was dying. I went to Ray's hospital room, and it was beautifully filled with Ray's loved ones. To Ray, and for his loved ones, (as I'd done with Carol) I read the Christmas Story from Luke 2, prayed the Lord's Prayer, sang Silent Night, and sang the Nunc Dimittis. Ray passed away peacefully just ten minutes later, surrounded by his loved ones and family.

The 2022 Christmas season was a busy season for many at Ruthfred! Watching that pageant, enjoying a delicious fellowship dinner with all those dear people, which was faithfully served by so many loving hands, I realized just how many people in our congregation (many without realizing it) live, by God's grace, *just like* the shepherds in Luke 2:8-20. All of them, like the shepherds (kids,



youth, and adults) have plenty of work to do in their vocations at home, at work, in their families, and many other things they could've done with their time. But like the shepherds, even in the middle of a busy Christmas season, with plenty of other things to do, in the rush of life, they took the time to temporarily leave those things (Luke 2:16), to make known to others everything that had been told to them about the Christ Child (Luke 2:17)! Like the shepherds, with their very lives they glorified and praised God (Luke 2:20) for their Savior and King!



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We are blessed, even when we're tired, busy, overwhelmed, helping others who are struggling or struggling ourselves, that God would use our lives in whatever way He pleases to bring Glory and praise to Himself. He makes known to others the Good News of Jesus Christ through His faithful shepherds!

He is coming again! Be ready, faithful shepherds! Go! Make disciples!

Love in Christ,

Pastor McMin



CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

He, through whom time was made, was made in time;

He who made man, was made man;

He was given existence by a mother whom He brought into existence;

He was carried in hands which He formed;

He nursed at breasts which He filled;

He cried like a babe in the manger in speechless infancy --

this Word without which human eloquence is speechless!

from a sermon on Christmas by Augustine of Hippo

* * * * *

Editor's Note: On Christmas Eve my wife Peggy and I attended an afternoon service at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Whitehall where we have several personal connections. Peggy taught preschool there for nine years; a college friend of mine has been serving there as a vacancy pastor; and a nephew of ours and his family belong there with their son performing in the bell choir. Another unexpected connection occurred when the Scripture reader turned out to be a cousin of Bob Vogel's. It was a beautiful service, and the above quote appeared in their bulletin. I enjoyed Augustine's meditation on our Lord's nativity and decided to reproduce it here in case you might also. St. Augustine, of course, is regarded as one of the great early church fathers who lived and served in North Africa in the 4th and 5th centuries.

Member Profile:

by Mettélise Ziegler

Kathryn Carr

We have often heard our pastors refer to our beautiful church bulletin covers. They are prints of original artwork from the creative, talented mind of Kathryn Carr.

Kathryn's family has a history at the church. Her parents are Carolyn and the late David Carr. Kathryn's brother Richard is an AFLC pastor serving out west. Her brother Matthew lives much closer to their family's Bethel Park roots.

Kathryn has traveled extensively to many places including Costa Rica, Spain, and Beliz. She lived in Anchorage, Alaska for seven years. She found inspiration through those travels. Combined with a formal art education from Edinboro University, Kathryn decided many years ago that making a living by working for herself as an artist would be possible.

Most artists can work successfully in more than one medium. It is no different for Kathryn. Like most artists, however, she prefers one medium over others; her favorite being something called scherenschnitte. Simply put, scherenschnitte is the painstaking process of cutting a pencil drawing with an X-Acto knife from the reverse side of black paper. Look closely at our bulletin covers. You will see Kathryn's original design carefully cut into minute detail.

Kathryn's work is displayed at BE Gallery in Lawrenceville. She teaches adult classes at the Society for Contemporary Craft in the Strip District. She exhibits at the Three Rivers Arts Festival and so many other places it is hard to list them all. She has also illustrated children's books, produced greeting cards, (available for purchase at Whole Foods or online), and is currently working on templates that can be folded to make Pittsburgh-themed, three-dimensional buildings.

Serving God through art is not new to Christianity. Kathryn is a member of the communion of saints who helps us see His Word as pictures that touch our hearts and deepen our understanding in ways that mere words cannot.

You are invited to visit Kathryn Carr's website, www.gocarrgo.com for more detailed information about this talented artist and her projects.



Life Quotes from Lutherans For Life

“Unlike Christmas ornaments, each baby is a unique life never to be replicated in all of history. Each life brutally snuffed out by abortion will leave the world a lesser place for it.”

Bradley Mattes, President of Life Issues Institute,
– A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org

**90+ Birthday Club**

Priscilla Tarr	January 17th	92
Else Resosky	January 24th	92

Ponderable Quote:

Every day in a life fills the whole life with
expectation and memory. C.S. Lewis

A **New Mermbers Class** is scheduled to start January 22, 2023. It will meet in the Fireplace Lounge during the Sunday School hour (9:45-10:45 AM). If you or someone you know is interested, please let Melissa Bostaph, our Parish Assistant, know. Email: melissabostaph@ruthfred.org



Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

As With Gladness Men of Old

Lyrics: William Chatterton Dix

Music: Conrad Kocher

Unless you're of the Eastern Orthodox persuasion, we're done with "Merry Christmas!" and "Happy New Year!" until next December. Now it's onto "Glad Manifestation to the Gentiles!" (said no one ever). We could shorten the greeting using the fancier word from the Greek: "Glad Epiphany!". We still probably never hear that, but maybe we should. Epiphany, of course, is that season of the church year when we celebrate the first revelation of Jesus' birth to the Gentiles in the persons of the Wise Men, or Magi, from the "East". (More generally, it also commemorates the first manifestations of Jesus' divine nature.) As most of us reading this are likely Gentiles, this is something to celebrate. Pastor Carlson preached a sermon recently in which he talked about how trees factor interestingly into the Bible's salvation story, and in particular the Jewish family tree that ran through David's line down to Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus. Thankfully the salvation that Jesus brought was not just for the nation of Israel. As Paul describes in Romans 11, we Gentiles, like a wild olive shoot, have been grafted into God's family tree.

One of the more popular hymns sung during Epiphany is "As With Gladness Men of Old". The men of old refer, of course, to the Wise Men of the Christmas story. This hymn dates back to the 19th century, which is not very surprising as so many of our beautiful hymns come from that era. What is somewhat unusual, however, is that the lyrics were not composed by a member of the clergy, but rather by a businessman who became the manager of a marine insurance company in Glasgow, Scotland. Mr Dix actually wrote lyrics for many hymns. Most are not familiar, at least to me anyway. There is one, however, which does stand out: "What Child Is This?" The tune for "As With Gladness" was composed by Conrad Kocher. Mr. Kocher was born in Germany, trained as a teacher, taught in St. Petersburg Russia, and then subsequently studied music in Italy.

*As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding start behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious God, may we
Evermore be led to thee.*



*As with joyful steps they sped
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
Him whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek thy mercy-seat.*

*As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger rude and bare;
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.*

Continued on next page ...

You may have noticed that the first three stanzas all begin with the word 'As'. I looked up that word in my dictionary. (On a side note, have you ever noticed that the shortest words usually have the longest definitions?!) In this case I suppose meaning #8 in my dictionary would apply here: 'in the degree, manner of'. The usage almost implies that a "So" will be following, and so it does. In the manner of the Wise Men, so should we be led to the Savior, seek God's mercy-seat, and offer our costliest treasures to His service.

I seldom quibble with theology in hymn lyrics. But in this case I think I may have to make an exception for stanza 3. Do not wait until you think you are "pure and free from sin's alloy" to approach Christ with your treasures in hand! On this side of heaven we will never be perfectly pure or free from sin. Come to the manger. Come to the cross. Come with humility and true repentance. Come to the One who "knows our frame and remembers that we are dust". (Psalm 103:14)

Stanzas 4 and 5 constitute a prayer addressed to Holy Jesus. In that prayer Dix invites us to pray with him that Jesus will bring us ultimately to where His uncreated light will supplant the light of the Christmas star, as miraculous as it may have been.

*Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And, when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds thy glory hide.*

*In the heavenly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down;
There for ever may we sing
Alleluias to our King.*

Sources: *Hymnary.org; Random House College Dictionary*

Official Acts -- December 2022

Baptisms:

* Zoe Rose Dalessandro -- 12/18/22

-

Funerals:

Jesse Raymond Moore -- 12/10/22

* Carol June Mueller -- 12/17/22

* Terence Neil Alwine -- 12/21/22

* Indicates member

*I am
the Way,
the Truth
and the
Life*
John 14:6

Worship Team Members for January 2023

Acolytes:

8:30 AM Jonathan Tarrant (1st, 15th, 29th)
Elliot McMinn (8th, 22nd)
11:00 AM Ryan Handshue

Crucifers:

8:30 AM Morgan Dolence (8th)
Holly Miller (22nd)
11:00 AM TBD (1st)
Courtney Felicetti (15th)
Holly Miller (29th)

Ushers:

8:30 AM Bernard Paterra &
John Ruzicka
11:00 AM Rich Rostauscher
Mark Riley (1st)
Mark Sheatsley (8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th)

Counters:

8:30 AM Frank Fife &
Shane Cox
11:00 AM Will Charlton &
Kris Wentz

Altar Guild

Kathi Siciliano

Coffee Hour

TBD

CL





~Psalm 84:10
(KJV)~

For a day in thy courts
is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a
doorkeeper in the
house of my God, than
to dwell in the tents
of wickedness.

CL





January, 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Holy Communion 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Holy Communion 11:00 Fyalkowski Baptism Noon Holy Communion 6:00 CITY MISSION FOOD SUNDAY	2 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Elders' Meeting 6:30	3 Worship Team 7:00	4 Children's Choir 5:45 Bell Choir 6:30 Confirmation 6:45 Kids' Time 6:45 Senior Choir 7:30	5	6 EPIPHANY Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge) 	7 Mary Bible Study 9:30 (Fireside Lounge)
8 1 st Sunday after Epiphany Worship Service 8:30 (Rothermel Baptism) Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 	9 JTTW Leaders 9:30 Craft & Sew 9:30 Elders' Prayer Time 7:00 Council Meeting 7:30	10 Worship Team 7:00	11 JTTW 9:15 Esther Noon Children's Choir 5:45 Forkless Dinner 6:00 Bell Choir 6:30 JTTW 6:45 Confirmation 6:45 Kids' Time 6:45	12 Knit Wits 10:00	13 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge)	14
15 2 nd Sunday after Epiphany Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AFTER BOTH SERVICES	16 JTTW Leaders 9:30 Craft & Sew 9:30 	17 Worship Team 7:00 Happy 92 nd Birthday Priscilla Tarr 	18 JTTW 9:15 Children's Choir 5:45 Forkless Dinner 6:00 Bell Choir 6:30 JTTW 6:45 Confirmation 6:45 Kids' Time 6:45 Senior Choir 7:30	19 Ruth 2:00	20 Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge)	21 Contemporary Liturgical Worship Service 6:00
22 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 New Member Class 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 (Vos Baptism) GIFT Bible Study 6:30 (Glassers' House) Young Adult Bible Study 6:30 (A & C Vogels')	23 JTTW Leaders 9:30	24 Worship Team 7:00 Happy 92 nd Birthday Else Resosky 	25 JTTW 9:15 Children's Choir 5:45 Forkless Dinner 6:00 Bell Choir 6:30 JTTW 6:45 Confirmation 6:45 Kids' Time 6:45 Senior Choir 7:30 Herald Deadline	26 Knit Wits 10:00	27 Lydia, Dorcas and Phoebe Men's Prayer Group 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge) XYZ Noon	28 Thomas Aquinas
29 4 th Sunday after Epiphany Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	30 JTTW Leaders 9:30	31				



January Youth Ministry Calendar

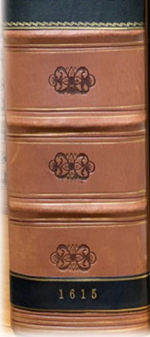
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Sunday School 9:45 NO SWAP tonight	2	3 TNT @ Church 7-9	4	5	6 	7
8 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6-7:30	9	10 TNT @ Church 7-9	11	12	13	14
15 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6-7:30	16	17 TNT @ Church 7-9	18	19	20	21
22 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6-7:30	23	24 TNT @ Church 7-9	25	26	27	28
29 Sunday School 9:45 SWAP @ Church 6-7:30	30	31 TNT @ Church 7-9				

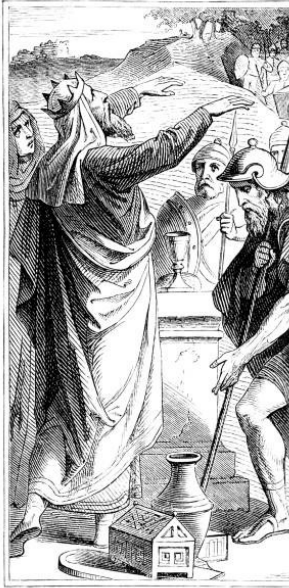
Reading Through the Bible 2023

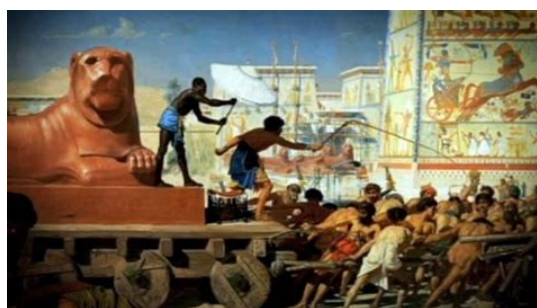
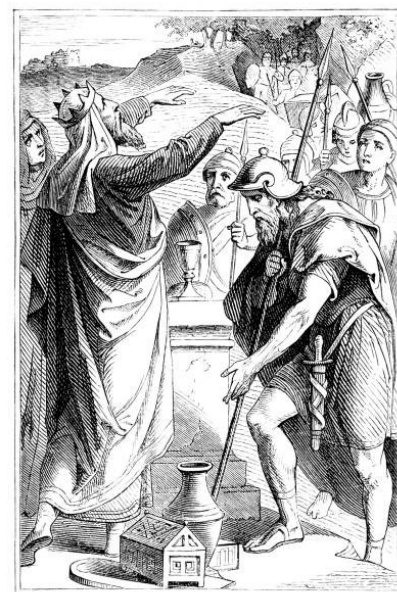
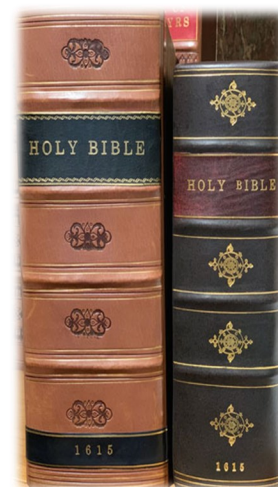
"One Story that Leads to Jesus"

Schedule for January

1st	Genesis 1	Genesis 2	Genesis 3	Psalm 1	
2nd	Genesis 4	Genesis 5	Genesis 6	Genesis 7	Psalm 2
3rd	Genesis 8	Genesis 9	Genesis 10	Genesis 11	Psalm 3
4th	Genesis 12	Genesis 13	Genesis 14	Genesis 15	Psalm 4
5th	Genesis 16	Genesis 17	Genesis 18	Psalm 5	
6th	Genesis 19	Genesis 20	Genesis 21	Psalm 6	
7th	Genesis 22	Genesis 23	Genesis 24	Psalm 7	
8th	Genesis 25	Genesis 26	Genesis 27	Genesis 28	Psalm 8
9th	Genesis 29	Genesis 30	Genesis 31	Psalm 9	
10th	Genesis 32	Genesis 33	Genesis 34	Psalm 10	
11th	Genesis 35	Genesis 36	Genesis 37	Psalm 11	
12th	Genesis 38	Genesis 39	Genesis 40	Psalm 12	
13th	Genesis 41	Genesis 42	Psalm 13		
14th	Genesis 43	Genesis 44	Genesis 45	Psalm 14	
15th	Genesis 46	Genesis 47	Psalm 15		
16th	Genesis 48	Genesis 49	Genesis 50	Psalm 16	
17th	Exodus 1	Exodus 2	Exodus 3	Psalm 17	
18th	Exodus 4	Exodus 5	Exodus 6	Psalm 18	
19th	Exodus 7	Exodus 8	Exodus 9	Psalm 19	
20th	Exodus 10	Exodus 11	Exodus 12	Psalm 20	
21st	Exodus 13	Exodus 14	Exodus 15	Psalm 21	
22nd	Exodus 16	Exodus 17	Exodus 18	Psalm 22	
23rd	Exodus 19	Exodus 20	Exodus 21	Psalm 23	
24th	Exodus 22	Exodus 23	Exodus 24	Psalm 24	
25th	Exodus 25	Exodus 26	Exodus 27	Psalm 25	
26th	Exodus 28	Exodus 29	Psalm 26		
27th	Exodus 30	Exodus 31	Psalm 27		
28th	Exodus 32	Exodus 33	Exodus 34	Psalm 28	
29th	Exodus 35	Exodus 36	Exodus 37	Exodus 38	Exodus 39 Exodus 40 Psalm 29
30th	Leviticus 1	Leviticus 2	Leviticus 3	Leviticus 4	Psalm 30
31st	Leviticus 5	Leviticus 6	Leviticus 7	Psalm 31	







A joyful heart is good medicine.

Proverbs 17:22a

**Someone told me that
nothing rhymes with
orange.
That's false, it doesn't.**

**Professor to his paranormal
studies class:
"If anyone here believes in
telekinesis, raise my hand."**



**Sign seen in a university's earth sciences department:
Geology rocks! But geography is where it's at.**