



I looked up the meaning of Advent in Wikipedia (or as my kids would say, "I Wikkied it.") Wikki said: Advent is a season observed in many Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming. The term is a version of the Latin word meaning "coming". For Christians, the season of Advent anticipates the coming of Christ from three different perspectives: the coming of Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem, the coming for Jesus into our hearts daily, and glory of the second coming of Jesus at the end of time.

OK. I guess I was looking for a deeper meaning. How do *we take in the deeper meaning* of this, 'expectant waiting and preparation,' for the coming of Jesus? I think there are several things we can do to prepare our hearts.

Sweep out the old. First, when we are expecting an important guest, or a new baby one thing that we do is sweep out the old dust and clutter. We might want to take that literally. My sister, who is a minimalist, says that any kind of clutter can also clutter your mind or your heart. Too many possessions weigh us down. What is too many? When I have too much stuff, I feel a need to spend my precious time seeking just the right box in which to store it and looking for just the right spot to store the box. Then I keep the box and don't look in the box until I move.

Whatever is too much for you is very individual, and it is your own choice. But this may be a good time to bring things that are no longer useful to your local charity, or perhaps put them in a bag and put the bag in the green box outside of our church. It is very handy.

Sweep out your old resentments. It turns out that one of the things that can be unhealthy can be hanging on to old, painful, resentments. This is something that *most* people do. We feel hurt by someone, and we re-think what that person did or said over and over and each time we think of it we become hurt and angry all over again. My question is, '*How is that helping you?*' The truth is, that it is **hurting** you, by destroying your inner peace. A better choice might be to talk over your hurt feelings with the one who hurt you and make peace in your friendship. If you still feel resentment it truly may be time to let go, and give it to God. Remember, God will take your anger and bitterness away and give you peace.

If you find that you want to hang onto your 'righteous indignation' think of this. By rethinking your hurt, you are not hurting the other person a bit, you are only hurting yourself. Perhaps that person said something that hurt your feelings *once*. Yet, every time you think of it *you hurt yourself* again. Thinking of it doesn't hurt hem a bit. That doesn't make sense, because you are *choosing to hurt yourself* when you choose to dwell on it. Imagine if someone hit you over the head with a baseball bat. That would hurt! But remembering an old resentment is like picking up that baseball bat and hitting yourself again and again, perhaps for many years. It *doesn't hurt them* it *hurts you*. It's time to put the bat down and let your resentment go... give it to God. God knows how to turn hurt and anger into a peaceful heart.

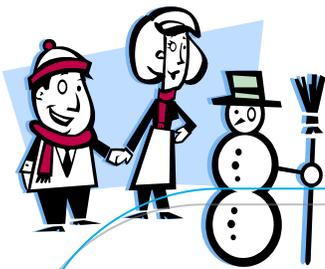
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Sweep out your sins. We talk about forgiveness every Sunday and often in between. But are you engaging in God's forgiveness? Do you think about how you have sinned? Do you reflect on how that hurts you and the other people? To bring a repentant heart is to think about these things. Take time for engaging in thinking over your sins, and then when you ask God's forgiveness you will feel a sense of freedom and release. You will also think twice before doing that sin again.

Invite the dear Lord in. Pray. Now that you have decluttered your heart, open your heart in prayer and invite the Lord in, asking for peace, and asking the Lord to use you today. Then, listen...

PASTOR CAROL GARMAN



Unexpected Hero: Diane Blanchard Rislow

One of the very early people who I came to know at St. Paul's was Diane, and for good reason. Not long after my arrival, Diane invited me to assist in driving for the SPY Retreat in Minneapolis. It was a wonderful experience, partly because our youth are great, but a big part because Diane is so full of energy, good ideas, and positive goodwill. As I hear congregation members talk they say things like, "Diane is always positive and smiling," and "Diane has so many good ideas," but the most amazing comment that I hear is, "Diane is so good at leading the youth. She teaches them how to be good people and shares her faith, *and they love her.*" In my mind, those words convey the finest compliment of a youth leader. I would add that if we look to the fruits of the youth in Diane's leadership, you will find many faithful young Christians preparing for a life in Christ.

I looked at recent pictures on the St. Paul's Youth Facebook page, and I see Diane's big smile in the middle of a sea of smiles and positive caring activities. That is another huge part of Diane's leadership: She doesn't just lead activities that are fun, though SPY certainly has fun, Diane leads activities that reach the people in our congregation, the people in our community, and even into the world. Recent SPY activities have taken place for the Cords, whose home burned in a tragic fire. They made adorable ornaments for the Cords Christmas tree, but also supported the community activities for the family. I'm sure we can all be grateful for the delicious lunches and coffee delicacies that SPY provides, under Diane's direction.

I was very sad to hear of Diane's recent difficulties with her knees, and I know how discouraging that can be. I look forward to seeing all the ways that we will return the love she has so freely shared. On behalf of a very grateful congregation, thank you Diane. You have a heart of gold, and a million dollar smile. You are our Hero.

Call to order: Carol Boynton 7:05 pm. **Members Present:** Carol Boynton, Jennifer Schultz, Josh Reps, Pastor Carol, Jon Nienow, Dennis Martin, Randy Snell, John Botten

Secretary Report: No Report due to lack of a quorum

Treasurer's Report: R. Snell moved to approve J. Nienow Seconded Motion Approved

Church Committee Reports:

Mutual Ministry: Committee plans to meet Dec. 2nd

Outreach and Evangelism: Will be visiting Donna Ferguson before Christmas, last visited her in October. Organized Christmas Caroling event for December 15 with fellowship afterward.

Parish Education: Sunday School is preparing for Christmas program Dec 7th with baby shower for baby Jesus after the program. Donations for baby shower for Jesus currently being collected. "Safeguarding God's Children" training will be conducted for persons working with children and youth after Christmas.

Property Management: Josh will look into work on roof and attic areas of church to prevent ice dams and water leaks and seek estimates on repairs. Josh Reps and Randy Snell pruned bushes on south side of church last weekend and hauled away debris. Big Thank You!

Worship: Had a meeting last week to plan music and worship services for Advent and Christmas.

SPY: See report in packet. R. Snell moved and J. Nienow seconded a motion to pay for rental of a Van

\$300 to \$350 to transport SPY members who sign up to Quake Convention March 13-15 2020. Motion Approved

Old Business:

Nominations for Council: No one has stepped forward. The council will continue to seek nominations between now and the church annual meeting in January. Three new persons are needed to serve on Church Council to replace members going off.

Vacuum cleaners have been purchased and are being used.

Carpet Cleaning upstairs: Josh will get written bids and report back to council

Gas Oven Concern: Ovens in Kitchen need repair or replacement. Jon Nienow will contact Volkmann's to assess what is needed along with repair costs.

New Business:

Ralph Wangberg will plan to meet with the council in January to discuss steps needed to move forward to get our combined constitution and bylaws including church name reviewed and ratified by ELCA and UCC. Pastor will touch base with Ralph Wangberg to clarify meeting times and agenda.

Energy Bills: Church electric bills seem to be abnormally high (around \$500 a month) Jon Nienow will have the energy company come out and check our electric meter and report back to council.

Snow Removal: Josh will check with person who did our snow removal last year and report back on availability and cost.

Request by boy scouts to use church for meetings on Tuesday's and Thursday's. R. Snell moved to approve request J.Nienow seconded Request Approved

Kitchen Volunteer training: Will be scheduled after the first of the year.

Church Cleaning: If you find areas that need special attention leave a note in the Janitors mailbox outside church office.

Dec 15th Christmas Caroling and Fellowship: Everyone is invited come join us and share the Christmas Spirit! Sponsored by Outreach and Evangelism Committee.

Treasury Concerns: Need more volunteers for counting offering after Sunday Services. Also need to investigate ways to keep track of SPY money makers (Kwik Trip and SCRIP cards). Also need to devise process for crediting non-general fund donations (fund raisers) to members church giving statements. We need to find ways to make financial record keeping and reporting easier and more responsive to data entry and budgeting needs.

New volunteers needed for Altar Guild. Council will work with Chris to develop a sign up sheet for ushering and altar guild duties to cover months not currently covered.

Meeting Adjourned 9:15 pm.

GROWING TO SERVE...SERVING TO GROW...

Musicians:

December 1: Jon Nienow
 December 8: Nancy Wagner
 December 15: Various Musicians
 December 22: Susan Snell
 December 24: Jennifer Rupprecht
 December 29: Jon Nienow

Counters:

December 1: Trevor/Renata
 December 8: Judi/Leann
 December 15: Beth/Mary
 December 22: Olson's
 December 24: Trevor/Renata
 December 29: Judi/Leann

Acolyte

December 1: Lucas Brand
 December 8: Morgan Miller
 December 15: TJ Rasmussen
 Dec. 22: Avrianna Bambenek
 December 24: Chase Peters
 December 29: Alexa Wardwell

Ushers: Boynton's

Altar Guild: Beth Olson and Peggy Olson

Coffee Fellowship: Circle #3

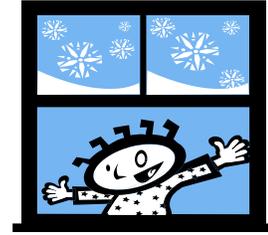


DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Steve Buckbee	12/1	Morgan Miller	12/17
Trinity (Reps) Kieffer	12/1	Brogen Reps	12/17
Betty Wirt	12/4	Bode Rislow	12/17
Sarah Sommer	12/7	Mike Burfeind	12/18
Elliana Nelson	12/8	Rebecca Baer	12/21
Melissa Meisch	12/12	Zane Nelson	12/23
Kennedy Mueller	12/13	Jordan Buckbee	12/24
Nicholas Koverman	12/14	Dianne Rislow	12/24
Amy Eggert	12/15	Parker Peters	12/27
Dennis Hovelson	12/16	Carol Boynton	12/29
Angela Eggert	12/17		

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Randall and Lori Reps 12/11
 Jack and Dianne Rislow 12/19
 Vernon and Adele Zander 12/23



Dear St. Paul's family, Dennis, I and Dan want to thank you so very much for the prayers you have prayed for Dan for quite some time now. He is doing better in general though not totally well. He is well enough that he has done some things he could not have entertained doing a year and a half to two years ago. He has even taken a job that is two-8 hours days, back to back. Kind of has him worn out for the couple days that follow, but he's managing. It has been a very long, difficult path full of all kinds of pain and incapacitating fatigue, but he feels that slowly he is healing. We are taking his name off of the prayer list at this, but please know how much we appreciate all of your prayers. We will of course continue our prayers for him and all of our church family. We believe in the power of prayer and the goodness of God. We are blessed by the caring the people of St. Paul's in so many ways. God's blessings to you all.

Moira, Dennis and Dan Martin

Hello -

My husband and I are waiting to adopt in MN and have been waiting for a little over a year. We are working with Adoption MN as our agency and are home study approved to adopt an infant domestically. If you know someone in your community who is pregnant, and considering adoption, we would be so grateful if you'd share our letter below.

<https://adoptionmn.com/families/jacob-meghan/>

Thank you very much!

Meghan Claussen





Getting our Hearts Ready for Christmas

A Hands-on Worship Experience for Wednesdays

Advent 2019

For Believers of All Ages

December 4: Uncluttered Hearts

December 11: Come into Our Hearts

December 18: Worship at the Manger

Supper 5:45 followed by Worship



Will you help us fill up this jar?

Check your pockets and your car!

Loose coins are what we seek.

Let's fill this up to the peak.

In the merry month of May,

We'll turn it into the bank for pay.

Then with a smiling face,

We'll donate it to a wonderful place!



**ST. PAUL'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
6:30 PM**

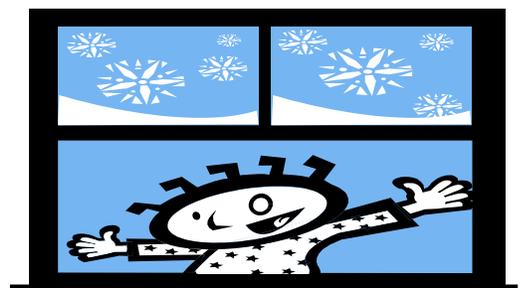
Join the Sunday school children at St. Paul's Church as they perform their Christmas program- The Not-So-Silent Night on Saturday, December 7 at 6:30 pm. Three young shepherds joyfully shouting God's praises after meeting baby Jesus soon discover they were "disturbing the peace." Join them for a hilarious trial and a surprise ending.

Be sure to check out the live nativity before and after the program which is hosted by S.P.Y.

Following the program, please join the kids for a celebration of baby Jesus in the fellowship hall. Cupcakes and hot chocolate provided!

The Sunday School will also close their Jesus baby shower mission project this evening. For the month of November and up until the program, the SS children, families, and congregation members have been collecting baby donations such as diapers, wipes, formula, etc. in a pack and play in honor of Baby Jesus. All donations will be taken to the Resource Center to help new moms and babies!

We hope you can join us on this very special evening!



S.P.Y. HAPPENINGS



Important Dates St. Paul's Youth:

Dec. 1 (Sun.) – H2O – 9 to 10am

Dec. 7 (Sun.) – SS Christmas Program 6:30pm – Live Nativity 5:30 & 7:30pm

Dec. 8 (Sun.) – S.P.Y. Coffee Fellowship after worship

Dec. 11 (Wed.) – S.P.Y. serves supper before Advent worship – 5:45pm

Jan. 8 (Wed.) – S.P.Y. Supper Mtg. 6-8pm

Jan. 5– Deadline for Quake Registration

Jan. 12 (Sun.) – Snow Tubing @ Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch – 2 to 6pm

CALLING ALL SHEPHERDS, WISEMEN, MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS ACTORS!



S.P.Y. members are needed to dress in costumes for S.P.Y.'s LIVE Nativity before and after the Sunday School Christmas Program on Saturday, December 7th. Be sure to tell your relatives, friends, and neighbors to stop by!

THE ALUMINUM CAN TRAILER IS BACK!



Thanks for saving your cans for our youth activities!



S.P.Y. WILL BE OFFERING KWIK TRIP CARDS FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING!

We have LOTS of scrip cards on hand including \$5 and \$10 cards for stocking stuffers. See us before or after worship on Sundays to pick up your cards.

THE EARLY BIRD QUAKE SIGN-UP DEADLINE IS COMING – JANUARY 5TH, 2020



Every other year S.P.Y. attends the Quake convention. This year it is March 13-15th in Minneapolis at a hotel near the Mall of America. We will leave on Friday after school and return Sunday afternoon. Everything happens at the hotel we will be staying at. There will be a speaker, LIVE band, games, activities, swimming, and workshops. All to help us grow closer to God and each other. This is for grades 7 – 12. We want to send in our deposit as the program rate will increase from \$95 to \$120, then \$145! This is a non-refundable deposit but can be transferred to another student. This event is a favorite of S.P.Y. Make plans to attend!

Let's Go! Sign up TODAY!

Where: Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch – Stewartville

When: Sunday, January 12th

Time: Meet at St. Paul's at 2pm and we should be back at 6pm.

Cost: \$12 per person

What should you bring? Warm clothes (hats, boots and gloves too), supper or snacks, and water. We'll furnish the hot chocolate and the ranch will furnish the tubes and the warming house!



Note: You can bring a friend if you let me know who is coming and have them sign a waiver.





SERVING SUPPER AT THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

Special thanks to Elise Sommer for chairing this project, Sarah Sommer and Pastor Carol for chaperoning, and Thrivent Financial for their generous donation to purchase groceries for the meal.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP MAKE A CHRISTMAS WISH COME TRUE?



We are so excited that St. Paul's is going to be a part of donating gifts for the Lewiston-Altura Sharing Tree again this year. The Lewiston-Altura communities come together each Christmas to offer assistance to families who could use a little extra help making their Christmas a little brighter.

The Sharing Tree is open to families living in the Lewiston and Altura communities, or families with children attending Lewiston – Altura public and parochial schools and also adults.

We will be setting up a little Christmas tree in the narthex with numbered tags listing the person's age, whether they are male or female, and some things they would enjoy receiving. The average cost of the gifts will be about \$30

If you would like to help, just take a tag, record the number, your name, and phone number on the list beside the tree. There are gift suggestions along with the person's age and whether they are male or female. The gifts should be wrapped and the card tag placed on the package for collection on December 15th.

Thanks so much for your help in fulfilling wishes this Christmas.

S.P.Y. MAKING CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS FOR THE CORDS FAMILY OF RUSHFORD.

It was fun and felt awesome to make the ornaments for this family that is recovering from their house fire. They still have a little daughter that is in the hospital. Please continue to keep them in your prayers. Thank you!





Save the
Date

CHRISTMAS Caroling

Sun. December 15th 4:30 pm

Meet at St. Paul's Church

We will carol around town and then head back to the church for hot chocolate, pizza, cookie decorating, and minute to win it games! Bring a white elephant gift (anything you don't want anymore!) for a silly gift exchange game. Wear your ugly Christmas sweater for a chance at a prize!

Bring a friend! Family friendly! All are welcome!

