

# GOOD NEWS

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## No “Grinches” when eyes are on Jesus

By Rev. William C. Plautz

One of my favorite Christmas specials has been “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas”. The 1966 animated version for TV, narrated by Boris Karloff, is a classic. I was a little skeptical about a movie version but its release in November 2000 was a huge hit.

To recount the story...an individual of unique appearance becomes society’s castaway. It has left him a bitter man who seeks revenge on those who mistreated him. He decides to destroy Christmas by robbing the town of its trappings. He guts the village, loading his sleigh only to park it on a mountain and gloat. Aboard is Cindy Lou Who, who with the goods now begins to slide toward the drop off.

Summoning super-creature strength he saves the sleigh, returns the decorations, and finds a new heart. A story of transformation and rediscovery of the meaning of Christmas.

So what’s missing? The true “reason for the season” —Jesus Christ. We can only talk change when we include Him. The “Grinches” are those things that would rob and keep us from

celebrating Christmas in the context of who we are—children of God through faith in Jesus. The rest of this month will be a blur for many of us.

Perspective is gained when we focus on the hope that is ours in Christ. There has never been nor will there ever be a greater gift. Born in a stable, lived in poverty, rejected by His own, betrayed and denied by friends, turned over to the authorities by the religious leaders, sentenced to death and crucified, died yet risen to life again. He is the One who is able to change our lives daily so that they reflect Him and His love.

### A Christmas greeting...

From our house to yours prayers for a blessed celebration of Christ’s birth. As in the past so now may Jesus descend and enter in to your homes and hearts, and fill you with all joy and hope as you trust in Him!



## Christian Humor *Light-hearted humor with a spiritual lesson*

Someone once observed that there are four stages of life:

1. You believe in Santa Claus.
2. You don’t believe in Santa Claus.

3. You are Santa Claus.
4. You look like Santa Claus.

The character we know as the modern day Santa Claus is based on a historical figure. Nicholas lived

in the 4th century in what is now present-day Turkey. He was a bishop in the early Christian Church. Legend says that Nicholas gifted a poor family by throwing money into their stockings which were hung to dry. Thus the custom of hanging up stockings for St. Nicholas to fill.

But there’s more to him than

stockings. He was a tireless defender of the Christian faith. Some were saying Jesus wasn’t true God. Nicholas battled such heretics by helping write what is the Nicene Creed, which affirms Jesus is both true God and true man. One thing is certain—St. Nicholas knew his Savior Jesus.

# Keeping Christ in Christmas!

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Acts 20:35 (NIV)

The number one way to keep [Jesus Christ](#) in your Christmas celebrations is to have him present in your daily life. Keeping Christ in Christmas is more about the way you live your life than the things you say—such as "Merry Christmas" versus "Happy Holidays."

Keeping Christ in Christmas means daily revealing the character, love and spirit of Christ that dwells in you, by allowing these traits to shine through your actions. Here are simple ways to keep Christ the central focus of your life this Christmas season.

**1) Give God one very special gift just from you to him:** Let this gift be something personal that no one else needs to know about, and let it be a sacrifice. Maybe your gift to God will be to [forgive someone](#) you've needed to forgive for a long time. You may discover that you've given a gift back to yourself. Perhaps your gift will be to commit to [spending time with God](#) daily. Or maybe there is something God has asked you to give up. Make this your most important gift of the season.

**2) Set aside a special time to read the Christmas story in Luke 1:5-56 through 2:1-20:**

Consider reading this account with your family and discussing it together.

**3) Set up a [Nativity scene](#) in your home:** You need not purchase; consider cutting one out of construction paper. Simplify it.

**4) Plan a project of good will this Christmas:** Do you have an elderly neighbor in need of home repairs or yard work? Find someone with a genuine need, involve your whole family and see how happy you can make someone this Christmas.

**5) Take a group Christmas caroling in a nursing home or a hospital.** Call & schedule your time to do this today.

**6) Give a surprise gift of service to each member of your family:** The idea of giving an unexpected gift of service to members of your family is to demonstrate Christ-like love and service. You might consider giving a back rub to your spouse, running an errand for your brother, or cleaning out a closet for your mother. Make it personal and meaningful and watch the blessings multiply.

**7) Set aside a time of family devotions on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning:**

Before opening the gifts, take a few minutes to gather together as a family in prayer and devotions. Read a few Bible verses and discuss as a family the true meaning of Christmas.

**8) Attend a Christmas service together with your family:**

If you are [alone this Christmas](#) or don't have family living near you, invite a friend or a neighbor to join you.

**9) Send Christmas cards that convey a spiritual message:**

This is an easy way to share your faith at Christmastime. If you've already bought the reindeer cards—no problem! Just write a Bible verse and include a personal message with each card.

**10) Write a Christmas letter to a missionary:**

Many missionaries are unable to travel home for the holidays, so it can be a very lonely time for them. Write a special Christmas letter to a missionary of your choice, thanking them for giving their life in service to the Lord. Trust me—it will mean more than you can imagine!

## December Bible Studies

### Sunday School

Kids ages 3—grade 8 are invited to grow in God's word everyday Sunday morning at 9am.

### Monday Aft Bible Class

Consider joining this group on Monday's at 2:30pm in October as they "Weave Christ" into your life, through study of His word. Leader: Sue Smith

### Tuesday Morn Study

Class meets Tuesday's at 6:30am at the Chippewa Family Restaurant. Bring your Bible and your appetite (cost of the meal is on your own). Topic: Romans Led by Pastor Plautz.

### Junior Instruction (gr.7 & 8)

Class is offered Wednesday's at 7pm (immediately following worship) in the sanctuary. No class on December 21 & 28.

### High School Bible class

Come Sunday's at 9am to Bible class with leader, Sue Smith. Seek answers to some tough questions on current issues... through the study of His word.

### Thursday Morn Bible Class

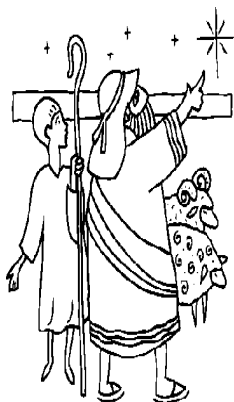
Come to class Thursday mornings at 9:30am. Topic: Psalms; Leader: Patricia Smith; Enjoy the fellowship.

### Thursday Eve Women's Study

Would you like to get into the "heart of Jesus"? Study women in the gospel of Luke on Thursday's at 6pm and find your way! Leader: Laura Hills

### Couples Bible Study

We're going to start our new study, "Your Time-Starved Marriage" on January 8th. Further information will be forthcoming.



# Congregational News

## Call Team Update

The Faith Call team has completed the process to select a candidate for the Director of Christian Education with an emphasis on Family/Youth ministry for our congregation. The team started with a list of 12 candidates from the North Wisconsin District office. After reviewing the documentation each member selected their top three. This narrowed the list to six candidates of which three were common to all. The references for the three candidates were contacted and each of the candidates was interviewed by phone. Based on the interviews it was determined that two of the candidates would be asked to come for a visit and an interview.

The visits were completed; the team reviewed the candidates and determined a recommendation for the position. The team presented their recommendation to the congregation at the Voter's Meeting on Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. The recommendation was to call Michael Robert Kipp to become our DCE for Family/Youth ministry. After discussion a vote was held and unanimous approval was given to place the call. The Call Team will complete the necessary documentation and exercise the call.

Our Heavenly Father continues to guide us as we approach this important decision to further his Kingdom at Faith Lutheran Church. We ask that you keep Michael and his wife Andrea in your prayers as they consider this call.

## Annual Voters meeting December 28 at 7pm

Items for discussion: 2012 budget, 2012 goals for our ministry, Election of Officers & Members-at-Large; replacing the cohabitation policy, and selection of delegate for 2012 district convention. Information packets are available from the narthex. Voting members are confirmed members of the congregation who attend the voters' meeting and have reached the age of 16.

## Choir Rehearsal

Now is an excellent time to join Choir. Come December 14 at 7pm and share those talents for Christmas!

## Christmas Bazaar—Dec.3

Women of Faith are hosting their annual Christmas Bazaar from 10am to 1pm on December 3. This event features a white elephant table, homemade noodles, baked goods and crafts. Luncheon menu includes: Creamed turkey over biscuit plate, chili or homemade pies. Come & enjoy the fellowship of the season!

## Donations needed!

The Women of Faith Christmas bazaar is December 3 (10am-1pm). Donations of crafts, Christmas ornaments, baked goods, cookies for the cookie walk, and homemade pickles, salsas, jellies and jams are welcome. Bring items to the church kitchen no later than noon on Dec. 2. Proceeds will benefit local charities.

## Couples Sleigh Ride

Join in the fun of our couples sleigh ride at Lowes Creek Tree Farm, S9475 Lowes Creek Road S, Eleva, WI on Friday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. The cost is \$9 per person. Reservations are needed, so please call Lynn Musser by Dec. 5 if interested in attending. What a wonderful way to get into the spirit of romance this Christmas.

## Sunday School Program

A special service to celebrate the birth of Jesus is Sunday, December 18 at 10:15am. The theme is "I Love to Tell the Story" and will involve all ages of our congregation (young & a "little older"). Come and "Tell the Story" with us!

## Youth Activities

Grades 5 & 6 – Wednesday's at 7:15pm in the youth room (except Dec. 21 & 28)  
Grades 7-12 – Wednesday's at 8:15pm in the youth room (except Dec. 21 & 28)

## Youth Tupperware Fundraiser

The youth group is doing a Tupperware Fundraiser before Christmas, a display with items for sale will be available this weekend. They will be selling through 12/11/2011. Product will be in time before Christmas. All proceeds earned from this fundraiser will support Youth Events.

## Women of Faith

Ladies met on November 15 to make plans for the Christmas bazaar. The next meeting is December 20 at 6pm for a potluck supper and Christmas devotions. There will be a \$5 gift exchange (if your wish) and bring non-perishable food items for the Chippewa Food pantry. Hostesses are: Linda Ahlen, Bonnie Schimmel, Sharon Volrath. All ladies of the congregation are welcome to attend.

## Parent in Prison Gift Ministry

We will be sponsoring families who have a parent in prison. Chaplain Cliff Waldersdorf has asked our help in providing gifts to inmates of the Chippewa County Jail. Contact Alice at the church office for more details.

## Youth Activities

Grades 5 & 6 – Wednesday's at 7:15pm in the youth room (except December 21 & 28)  
Grades 7-12 – Wednesday's at 8:15pm in the youth room (except December 21 & 28)

## Preschool News

Join in the joy of the season by attending the Faith Christian Preschool Christmas program on December 19 & 20 at 10am. The program will include songs that celebrate the story of Jesus' birth. Everyone is welcome!

## CHECK OUT OUR WEBPAGE!

The weekly Messenger, monthly Newsletter, and church photo directory schedule are available for viewing at [www.faithlutheranconf.org](http://www.faithlutheranconf.org).

*glory  
to  
God  
in the  
Highest*

## Christmas Worship Schedule

December 24—4pm Family Worship  
December 24—8pm Traditional with com.  
December 25—10:15am\* Contemporary worship (no communion)

## New Years Worship Schedule

December 31—6pm Worship with com.  
January 1—10:15am\* Worship with com.

\*Please note there will be only one worship service on December 25 & January 1.

## **December Birthdays and Anniversaries**

### **Happy Birthday!**

1-Steven Wing  
2-Gillian Schaller, Jerry Sorensen  
4-Joseph Hills, Bonnie Jacobson,  
Lacey Quale  
5-Dolores Polzin  
6-Judy Drivas, Caroline La-  
Grander  
8-Jennifer Krueger  
9-Nichel Andersen, Alice Lofgren  
10-Christopher Volrath  
11-Becky Davis, Austin LaGesse,  
Heather Printz  
12-Tyler Grant, Dawn Nesvacil,  
April Peters, Debra Peterson, Cole  
Schindler  
13-Chelsea Harings, Tresa  
Juedes  
14-Amy Bowe, Beverly Goettl,  
Carson Ramis  
15-Scott Swoboda  
16-Garnet Mathwig, Logan Solin  
18-Maxine Nazer

19-Katherin Blaha, Aaron Chitten-  
don, Jordan Johnson, Shirley  
Schroeder  
20-Nancy Krebs, Elizabeth Kummer  
21-Michael Butak, Adam Kern, Nick  
Kressin, Paula Young  
22-Kelsey Hackler, Julius Huth, Sharon  
Volrath  
23-Nicholas Bowe, Caryn Ericksen  
28-Ryan Dallas, Kim Feirn, Cindy  
Schroeder  
29-Shirley Gormley,  
Elna Buttenhoff,  
Lorraine Benner  
30-Laura O'Connell  
31-Janice Wirth

### **Happy Anniversary!**

26-Jack & Sandy Bornsen  
30-Ron & Pam Pfankuch  
31-Jerry & Roxanne Hallman  
31-Andrew & Elizabeth Peloquin



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