



Spruce Grove Newsletter

Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church, Wolf Lake, MN

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The Miracle of Christmas

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1:1-5).

Christ left the wonders of heaven to come to earth to live as a man so that when we leave the earth we can go to heaven. That is the miracle of Christmas! Because He was God, He could do the impossible. He was born both of a human and of God. He came as a small baby. He was “Emmanuel”—God with us.

God humbled Himself and **“made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men...and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”** (Philippians 2:7-8).

In the beginning God said, **“Let there be light: and there was light.”** This same Word that came forth as the light in the beginning had now taken on flesh and blood to bring light to mankind in this dark world to save us from our sins.

Jesus Christ was both God and Man. He was involved in the creation, **“God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness”** (Genesis 1:26). **“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God”**(John 1:1-2) **“And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us”** (John 1:14a).

The birth of Jesus was a time of great joy for some. The angels rejoiced. The shepherds rejoiced. Simeon and Anna rejoiced when they saw the Christ Child. But many were oblivious to His coming. There was no room found for Him in the inn. Is there room in your heart for Him?

The heavenly angels preached the first gospel message. The shepherds were the first congregation. They were faithfully doing the work where God had placed them. The sermon was short. **“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”(Luke 2:10-12).

But the message was precious. He is a personal savior for you and for me! This is the gospel (Good News) we should all preach.

The choir of angels in heaven begin to praise God saying, **“glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men”** (Luke 2:14)

Was it not appropriate that the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, first revealed Himself to shepherds? The Good Shepherd leaves the ninety and nine to seek the one that is lost. God knows each heart.

What was the response of the shepherd to the message of the angels. They said, **“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass.”** There was immediate obedience on the part of the shepherds. We are told that they went with haste. When God speaks to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, we need to obey His voice. Obedience brings a blessing.

Apostle Paul responded in a similar way. He tells us in Galatians 1:15-16, **“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”**

The announcement was not made to the King or the High Priests. There was no room in their hearts for Jesus. They were filled with pride, envy and greed. Even though the chief priests and scribes knew from the scriptures where Jesus was to be born, they did not go to seek Him. Herod plotted to do evil because he was afraid of losing his position. We can see how the plans of man will fail and the deceiver, Satan, is no match to God. God’s plan will always prevail. (continued on page 2)



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To really understand the Christmas story we need to see beyond the manger as to why Jesus came to earth. Jesus grew from infancy to manhood. At His baptism the voice of God was heard saying, ***"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"*** (Matthew 3:17).

Jesus Christ served mankind and gave of Himself. He healed the sick, raised the dead and fed the multitudes. But He did something much greater. He gave until He was crucified on the cross! He carried all our guilt and shame on His shoulders. He suffered on the cross in agony and shame until He cried out, "It is finished!" He completed the work He was born to do, He died for you and me. He was born to die. The wages of sin is death. Jesus had no sin so He did not have to die but He did it for you and me so that we might live.

But He rose from the dead on the third day in triumph and glory. He had overcome and conquered death. God so loved us that He gave us His only Son as a gift to make us a new person. It is not of works, lest any man should boast.

"The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). John saw in the mountain of transfiguration Jesus shining as the Sun. Moses and Elijah spoke with Him of His coming death in Jerusalem, and again God said, ***"This is my beloved Son: hear Him!"*** (Mark 9:7).

It was not revealed just to John, but Isaiah says in Isaiah 40:5, ***"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."*** The light has come into the world! Let us put away the works of darkness and be children of light, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. May we experience the nearness of Christ in such a powerful way that we will rejoice and praise Him with the angels of heaven! Have a blessed Christmas!

Elmer and Miriam Yliniemi

**Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church
Wolf Lake, MN 56593---Phone#218-538-6540**

Pastor-Elmer Yliniemi	V. Chm.- Harvey Aho
19505 Co. Hwy. 39	Tel.-218-538-6640
Frazee, MN 56544	Sec.-Joshua Aho
Tel-218-538-6615	Tel.-218-538-6719
Chairman-Raymond Aho	Treas.-Jeremy Howard
Tel.-218-538-6735	Tel.-218-564-4483
Sunday School Superintendent -Jason Aho	
Newsletter Editor - Miriam Yliniemi	

Grandpa's Reflections



"Candles"

Proverbs 20:27

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord"

"Grandpa, we have candles on our table, too." she said pointing to the advent candles on the table.

Grandpa walked over, pulled out a chair and placed the grandchild on his lap. "I think candles are wonderful symbols for Godly things."

The child looked up with a questioning look

"Symbols are things that we use to help us think and remember things that we can't see. Like the big cross in the front of the church that always reminds me of how Jesus died on the cross so that our sins can be forgiven."

"Candles always remind me of God because they bring light into the room just the way that we are supposed to let the light of Jesus' Holy Spirit shine in our lives. 'This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine...'" Grandpa sang softly.

"Our family lights a new candle each week during the time called Advent or the Coming of Jesus. Advent or the Coming is what we call the four weeks just before Christmas which is Jesus' birthday."

"On the first Sunday night we will light the first purple candle of our advent wreath called the Prophecy Candle. We pray, sing songs, and read verses about the Bible people who knew Jesus was coming long, long before he came. On the second Sunday, we will light the Bethlehem Candle which is also purple and we read, sing and pray about how Jesus will be born in the town of Bethlehem. Sometimes we light our candles at dinner time during the week, too. During the third week we light the Angel's Candle, which is the only pink candle, and we read, pray and sing about the Angels. And during the fourth week we light the last purple candle, the Shepherd's Candle, and do the same things all about the Shepherds."

"In our family, on Christmas Eve, just before we open Christmas presents we light a white candle, which is in the middle of the circle of candles, called the Jesus Candle."

"All these candles, songs, prayers, and Bible verses help us to remember that the true meaning of Christmas is about baby Jesus and not shopping, getting presents or Santa Claus."

"Can you remember the true meaning of Christmas?"

Love Grandpa

Baptism

Mateo Troy Reynolds son of Troy and Mia Reynolds of Bagley, MN, was baptized at the Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church, Wolf Lake, on Saturday, November 26, 2005 by Pastor Elmer Yliniemi.



Mateo was born on November 4, 2005 at North Country Regional Hospital, Bemidji, MN.

His sponsors are Brian and Chae Norman of Hawley, MN, Trevor Reynolds of East Bethel, MN, and Eno Yliniemi of Seattle, WA. Grandparents are Pastor Elmer and Miriam Yliniemi of Frazee, Linda and Steve Edmondson of Coon Rapids, MN, and William and Kathy Reynolds of East Bethel, MN. Great-grandmother is Marge Reynolds of Columbia Heights, MN.

Birth Announcement

Blaise William Anderson, son born to Brock and Ramona Anderson on December 2, at the St. Mary's Regional Health Center in Detroit Lakes. He weighed 7 lbs-4 oz.



Grandparents are Bret and LaRae Anderson and Joshua and Deborah Aho. Great-grandparents are George and MaryAnn

Salmonson, Elsie Aho, Donna Anderson and Edith Rennewanz.

Wedding Anniversary Invitation

The Children of **Glen and Miriam Mursu** invite you to join them in celebrating their parents thirtieth anniversary on Saturday, December 10th at the New York Mills Apostolic Lutheran Church from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.



Wedding Invitation

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Levijoki
Together with
Mr. and Mrs. Reino Aho
Invite you to share in the blessed
union of their children
Gina Lin to Jamin Mathias



On Saturday, December Tenth,
Two Thousand and Five,
11:00 a.m.
Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church
Reception to follow ceremony at
Wolf Lake Lion's Hall

Announcements

Birth of a grandchild

Armas and pat Aho announce the birth of a granddaughter to Marcy and Kurt Traffie in New Hampshire. She was born November 11th and was named **Delaney May**.

Married

Jordan Anderson and **Susan Martin** were married on December 3, at the Runeberg Apostolic Lutheran Church.. Jordan is the son of Bret and LaRae Anderson and Susan is the daughter of Mike and Gladys Martin of Menahga.

Welcome Home for Soldiers from Iraq

Rodney Aho's unit will be returning home from Iraq on Tuesday December 6. The initial welcome will be held at the Brainerd High School Gym (702 S 6th St) at 4:00 P.M. Coffee and Cookies will be served. The public is invited.

The official welcome ceremony is open to the public at the Recreation Center at Camp Ripley on Thursday, December 8 at 5:P.M. Welcome home Rodney!

News and Notes

❖ **Rodney Aho** is back in the States from Iraq and will be home this week. His wife **Hannah** has already arrived. They will be taking a wedding trip and visit with her family in NH before settling here at Wolf Lake. We praise the Lord for his safe return.

❖ **Rolland Sandman** of Detroit Lakes spoke about the work of the Gideons and the importance of getting the Word of God to people throughout the world on Sunday morning November 27, before the morning message. A total of \$701.75 was donated for Bible distribution.

Eno Yliniemi gave a presentation on her trip to Kenya with pictures on Friday evening, November 25 at the church. Eno has returned to Seattle after spending a month here at her home.

❖ The Youth group met at the Joshua Aho home on November 23.

❖ The Bible study group was hosted by Ray and Marge Kumma on November 16 and Gloria Juntunen on November 30. The study is on 1st, 2nd and 3rd John. Everyone is invited to join us for the studies when they resume again after the Advent services.

❖ Ray and Marge Kumma will be traveling to Seattle to spend Christmas with their children.

❖ Joshua and Deborah Aho and children will be traveling to NH toward the end of the month to attend a reception for Rodney and Hannah hosted by her parents.

Organist Schedule for December

Sunday, December 4, 2005: **Marge and Sarah**

Wednesday, December 7, 2005: **Marge**

Sunday, December 11, 2005: **Patricia**

Wednesday, December 14, 2005: **Deborah**

Sunday, December 18, 2005: **Deborah**

Wednesday, December 21, 2005: **Sarah**

Sunday, December 25, 2005: **Patricia**

Radio Broadcast

Echoes of Mercy broadcast – KWAD – Wadena
Sundays 8:05 a.m.- English--- 9:00 a.m.- Finnish

Elmer Yliniemi—December 4th and 18th.

Don Salo – December 11th and 25th.

Remember in Prayer



“...pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a 5:16)

- Pray for wisdom and God’s guidance for our leaders and protection for those in the military.
- Pray for those doing mission work in various parts of the world, and for our churches, that the Word of the Lord would go forth.
- **Gloria Juntunen** and **Jeanette Jurva** and their families in the sudden death of their sister, Betty, in Minneapolis. This is their 6th close family member to pass away during this year.
- **Gavin Hillukka**, young son of Dale and Molly Hillukka was hospitalized at the Park Rapids Hospital with pneumonia but is now at home on medication.
- **Andy Aho** whose surgery went well on November 11. He is at home recuperating and hoping to resume his farm work in a couple more weeks.
- Continue to remember in prayer:

Rodney & Hannah Aho

Martha Aho

Anna Alanen

Elnora Matson

Mildred Kangas

Edna Keranen

Dela Nelson

Lila Yliniemi

Violet Yliniemi

Shirley Yliniemi

Esther Hendrickson

Alice Ristinen

Services via Telephone:

The services at the church are available by telephone. It is free to everyone who can dial up any of the following exchanges as local calls:

Menahga-564-2030

Wolf Lake-538-2030

Sebeka- 837-2030

Verndale 445-2030

Nimrod-472-2030



By dialing one of the above numbers just when the service begins you will be prompted to give the pin number. You should then be able to hear the service. If these numbers are long distance numbers, you will have long distance charges. Pin numbers are in bold type as follows for the services in the month of. October (Unfortunately you have to have a different assigned pin number for each service):

December 4, 2005-Sunday –11:00 A.M—**21779**

December 7, 2005-Wed. – 8:00 P.M—**02050**

December 11, 2005-Sunday -11:00 A.M—**21819**

December 14, 2005-Wed—8:00 P.M—**02056**

December 18, 2005-Sunday 11:00 A.M—**21851**

December 18, 2005- Sunday - 7:30 P.M—**02162**

December 21, 2005- Wed. - 8:00 P.M—**02064**

December 25, 2005 Sunday 11:00 A.M—**21905**

Christmas 2005

What's in a Name?

Without a doubt, the name "Jesus" is the most controversial name in the world. It is the only name outlawed in the classroom of the public school. While its use is permitted as a curse word in the workplace, any other use of it can be considered harassment.

The fact that so many people are offended by the name "Jesus" provides credible evidence that it must be more than just a name. Such names as John, Elizabeth, James, Ruth, or Esther—all biblical names—cause no embarrassment and are offensive to no one. Why, of all the names in the world, is the name Jesus so despised by modern-day cultures?

I believe there are three reasons why the name "Jesus" is avoided and sometimes hated:

I. Because of Its Meaning

Jesus, being the Greek form of Joshua, means Savior. The angel proclaimed: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Since some of us do not want to admit any need of a savior, we hesitate to recognize that one exists, for fear that people will think we need saving. I have news for you: we do! We are all drowning in a "sea of sin" until Jesus, the Savior, rescues us.

II. Because of the Person

Jesus is the personification of perfection. He is the light that dispels the darkness. But, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). To be saved, we must be willing to come out of darkness and step into the light of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul told King Agrippa that Jesus came to "Turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may have forgiveness of sins..." (Acts 26:18).

III. Because of Its Exclusivity

The Apostle Peter said, "There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The gospel of saving grace is offered to all who will believe, but all must come through Jesus Christ. All the apostles gave their lives to uphold the name of Jesus. Angels said: "This same Jesus shall come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Like it or not, we will all someday bow before Jesus and confess that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God



Selected from Pulpit Helps – Author Donald Raub

Born to Die

**I think that I can almost see
That small Judean town,
That night, two thousand years ago
When Christ the Lord came down.**

**The inn, the shops, the flat-topped homes,
Where weary pilgrims slept,
The nearby softly-rolling hills
Where fleecy flocks were kept.**



**And then I think I see the sky
Aglow with heav'nly light
As angel messengers proclaim:
"The Christ is born tonight."**

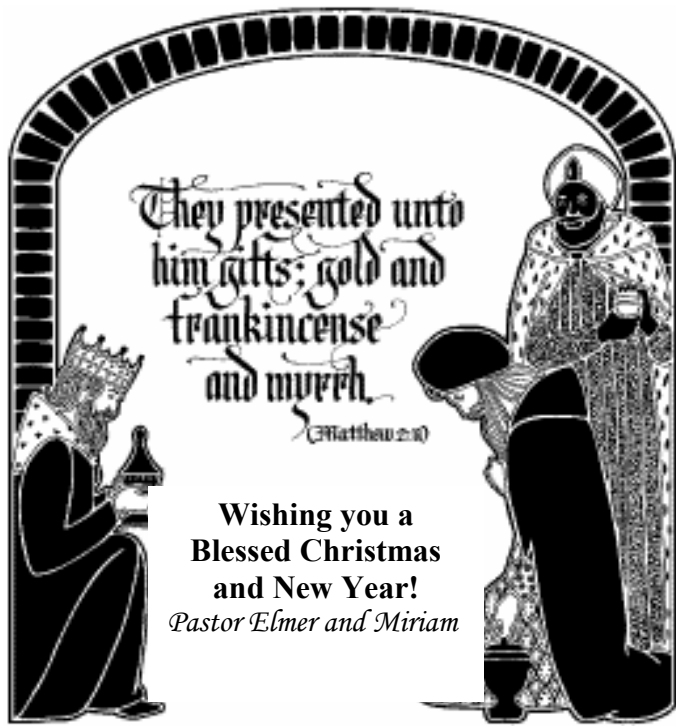
**I see the shepherds hasten
To where the baby lay—
A stable bare, a manger bed—
But "God with us" that day.**

**And when I think of Bethlehem,
I think of Calvary—
A lonely hill, a rugged cross,
A death of agony.**



**For He, the Babe of Bethlehem,
Was born, His life to give.
And willingly He gave His life
That you and I might live.**

Author unknown



A Christmas Thought

By Unknown Author

Christ Jesus was born in a stable—
 A birthplace of humblest degree,
 So that no one could say, "I am poorer,
 More lacking in comforts, than He."
 His mother in swaddling bands
 wrapped Him,
 The wardrobe of One, the Divine,
 That no one could say of His raiment,
 "Christ's garments were better
 than mine."
 His home and His comforts were
 borrowed—
 No pillow for resting His head!
 But He lived, and He suffered and
 sorrowed,
 To give us true comforts instead.
 In glory His wealth had been boundless!
 He laid all those riches aside,
 That we might have riches eternal,
 And with Him forever abide.

How well do you know the Christmas Story

Fill in the blanks to the Christmas Story in Luke Chapter two of the King James Bible: If you get them all correct without checking your Bible first—Let me know! (Ed.)

1. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from _____ that all the world should be _____.
2. (And this _____ was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)
3. And all went to be _____, every one into his own _____.
4. And _____ also went up from Galilee, out of the city of _____, into Judaea, unto the city of _____, which is called _____; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
5. To be taxed with _____ his espoused wife, being great with child.
6. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be _____.
7. And she brought forth her _____ son, and wrapped him in _____ clothes, and laid him in a _____; because there was no room for them in the _____.
8. And there were in the same country _____ abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
9. And, lo, the _____ of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore _____.
10. And the angel said unto them, _____: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great _____, which shall be to all people.
11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a _____, which is Christ the Lord.
12. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the _____ wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising _____, and saying,
14. Glory to God in the _____, and on earth _____, good will toward men.
15. And it came to pass, as the _____ were gone away from them into _____, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto _____, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
16. And they came with _____, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
17. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this _____.
18. And all they that heard it _____ at those things which were told them by the _____.
19. But _____ kept all these things, and pondered them in her _____.
20. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had _____ and _____, as it was told unto them.

Book available on line

A Godly Heritage

Historical view of the Laestadian Revival and Development of the Apostolic Lutheran Church in America

This book, edited by Aila Foltz and Miriam Yliniemi with Rodger Foltz, Jouko Talonen and Elmer Yliniemi. includes:

- Biographies of the Revival leaders and historical background of the movement.
- Information on the development of the Apostolic Lutheran Church and overview of the current status of the movement in the U.S. and abroad.



The book can be purchased from:

- Miriam Yliniemi, 218-538-6615 or
- On the website by credit card. See link on church website www.sprucegrovechurch.org

Price is \$10.00. Add postage and handling charge of \$2.50 when ordering by mail.

**Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church
Pastor Elmer H. Yliniemi
19505 County Highway 39
Frazee, MN 56544**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Church Website

You are invited to check out the church website at:
www.sprucegrovechurch.org

The Newsletter is now available on the web. New pictures are added weekly from events at the church. Sermons from the church as well as from last summer's Convention can be accessed or downloaded.

Christmas Calendar

Advent Services: December 7 and 14
& 21 - 8:00 PM

Sunday School Program: December
18 - 7:30 PM

Christmas Service: Dec. 25 - 11:00 AM
New Years Events: To be announced



Cleaning groups

December

**Andy & Patty
Keith & Jamie
Jason & Amy**

January

**Reino & Peggy
Victor & Stacy**

