

THE LAMPLIGHTER

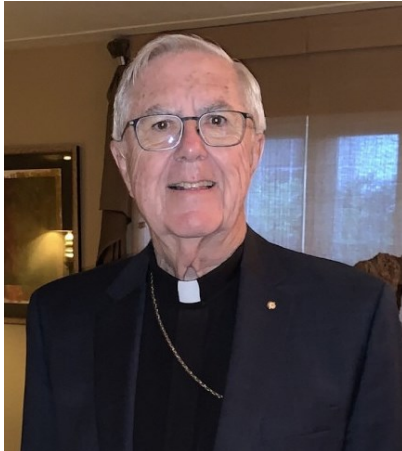
Christ Lutheran Church Newsletter

Volume 69 No. 6

NOV/DEC 2023

IN MEMORIAM

Deacon Robert V. DePugh



On October 13, 2023 Robert V. DePugh went to be with his heavenly Father. He was born September 20, 1939 in Inkster, Michigan, and was consecrated as a Lutheran Parish Deacon on October 25, 2015, serving as Parish Deacon at Christ Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, Florida until his death.

Bob was involved in the real estate development and property management fields for over 63 years. He received many national awards from professional real estate organizations and from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

He retired from day to day real estate management in 2002 and dedicated the balance of his career to helping not-for-profit church and community related organizations, including the Lutheran Apartments and the Lutheran Residences in St. Petersburg where he served on the Board of Directors until his death.

Bob is survived by his wife, Yvonne DePugh, three children, two grandchildren, and a brother William J. DePugh.

Deacon Bob loved Christ Lutheran Church, where he was a charter member from 1955. He loved his country and was active in community life wherever he lived. Bob will be remembered for his compassion, his service to others and his commitment as a disciple of Christ. He will be missed by those he met and loved along life's journey.

Deacon Bob's funeral service was held October 21 at Christ Lutheran Church



Happy Birthday

- 11/01 Edna Sargent
- 11/02 Lisa Scopel
- 11/06 Marie Layton
- 11/10 Dana Bolvin
- 11/13 Monique Rigby
- 11/16 Cheryl Hughes
- 11/28 Caitlin Moyer
- 12/02 Ryan & Jeremy Brewer
- 12/04 David Besel
- 12/09 Meg Benjamin
- 12/12 Nick Dembishack
- 12/19 Dean Bolvin
- 12/21 Marianne Besel

Happy Anniversary

- 12/04 Ed & Donna Schonbrun

Thanksgiving Day 1621-2023

We come together every fourth Thursday in November for one common purpose — to give thanks to God. Millions of voices will be raised in thanks for all the blessings we have been given by Him. A blessed and happy Thanksgiving!

Undoubtedly, Thanksgiving Day is one of the most iconic American public holidays. Turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pies, football, overeating, and family gatherings — all a part of the Thanksgiving celebration we have come to know. For many it is one of the few meals at which we will pray blessings and give thanks over the meal before partaking. All a part of the American tradition.

So...obviously, we eat a lot. But what are the roots of the holiday we celebrate? What is the true purpose of Thanksgiving? More importantly, what ought it mean to us today?

For generations, the history of the first Thanksgiving event has been passed down within families and in grade schools. It has been widely taught — and widely believed — that the first Thanksgiving took place circa October 1621. A group of English Pilgrims, Puritans, had migrated to escape religious persecution.

As the story goes, these Pilgrims had settled in an area called the Plymouth Colony in New England. After living much of the winter onboard, the ships used to travel to the New World, they chose to celebrate their newfound religious freedom as well as their first harvest in their new home. The celebration took place alongside new-found indigenous friends— members of the local Wampanoag tribe who had taught the settlers how to cultivate the land and fish in the rivers. As the lore goes, the groups came together to enjoy a celebratory feast of thanks. Many historians and researchers disagree with the American lore of Thanksgiving. Some say that the Pilgrims were anything but friendly to the Native Americans, and the conflict was often bloody and cruel. Others say the Wampanoag tribe — was anything but friendly with the European settlers and served a selfish purpose. Whether truth or folkloric tradition, however, is somewhat irrelevant to what we celebrate today, and the intent of celebrating a day, a season, dedicated to giving thanks.

A Day of Thanksgiving has deeper roots in Western culture, dating back to pre- Christian times. Saxons would come together every autumn to eat supper, fashion straw dolls, and harvest corn and other products. Festivals of communal thanksgiving became popular in the aftermath of the English Reformation. The actions of Henry VIII gave rise to the Days of Thanksgiving to celebrate perceived acts of providence, such as the defeat of the Spanish Armada. There developed a familiar culture of thanksgiving for Providential blessings--Blessings of God.

Even so, it was more than a hundred years after that very first Thanksgiving that George Washington, in 1789, issued the first National Thanksgiving Proclamation — inviting Americans to thank God for their safety and happiness. Then, almost another 100 years later, in 1863, Abraham Lincoln formally made Thanksgiving an annual national holiday.

Centuries later we Americans come together every fourth Thursday in November for one common purpose: to thank God. Millions of voices will be raised in thanks for all the blessings he has given us. We are called to live a life of thanks (see Psalm 95:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:18), which is a beautiful, daily practice. But once every year, we come together with friends, family, and all our loved ones to give thanks. We come together as a nation. To celebrate together. To thank the Lord our God. So yes, we will come together to watch football and overeat turkey, stuffing, and pumpkin pie. But most importantly, we will join hands and, in one voice, thank God for His love, grace, His Son, Jesus Christ, and continued blessings on every one of us.

A blessed and happy Thanksgiving to all!

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Prophecy Fulfilled: The Prophets and Prophecies Foretelling the Coming of Jesus Christ

The season of Advent is as much a time of contemplation as it is a time of preparation. It is a time to consider God's long-term plans, and how God has promised that he will intervene in the lives of his people — and in the world itself — on the coming Day of the Lord. This Bible study takes a look at the Old Testament prophecies of our Lord's Advent, and shows how these prophetic words were fulfilled by the coming of Christ over 2000 years ago, and how they also point ahead to the return of Christ in his Second Coming.

Topics:

1. The Day of the Lord (Prophets of the Bible)
2. Prepare the Way (The Prophet Malachi)
3. A Child is Born: (The Prophet Isaiah)
4. In the City of David (The Prophet Micah)

Join us each Wednesday in Advent (Dec 6, 13 & 20) for a "Lunch and Learn" session when we will study the messages of the prophets. We will have an hour-long discussion using the Prophecy Fulfilled study guide authored by the Rev. Thomas H. Walker. Pastor John will lead and facilitate our study each week. We'll share soup and bread to nourish our bodies as we nourish our souls with the Word of God.

Please call the church office (727-526-3265) and let us know if you will be attending so that we can order you a copy of the study book. Even if you cannot join us for the Wednesday sessions, you might want to order a copy of the book for your own personal Advent season preparation. We are asking for a donation of \$8.00 to cover the cost of the books.

ADVENT FOOD DRIVE

We are blessed, as individuals, as a congregation, and as neighbors in our communities. Advent is a time to share those blessings with others. We all know that prices are higher everywhere—and especially at the grocery store this year. Please pick up that extra bargain, or a 2 for 1 deal and share non-perishable food items with those less fortunate. Items can be placed in the large collection bin in the narthex of the church. All that we collect will be taken to the local food banks and pantries in St. Petersburg.

"You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God."

2 Corinthians 9:11-12



A Christmas message from Pastor John

From the time I was just a very young boy, I have enjoyed giving gifts at Christmas time. The presents I bought (or made) for my parents and my sisters weren't much, to be sure – only what a dime-a-week allowance could manage but, it brought joy and excitement to my heart like nothing else. I learned early on that, for me, one of the most thrilling gifts of Christmas was giving a gift to someone else in celebration of Christ's birth. What joy!

To this day, it provides a strong link for me to the story of Magi. It was a long and arduous journey that the Wise Men embarked upon so as to bring their gifts to Jesus. But I suspect they thought it was more than worth it. Clearly, they got the better of the gift-giving. They got to see the gift of salvation; their God came to them in the living flesh born of the Virgin Mary. And yet, I also believe their hearts were greatly uplifted and made joyous when the gifts they had brought were accepted and received. What joy for them, surely!

And so, while I know the commercialization of Christmas has gotten way out of hand, I absolutely believe that the giving and receiving of gifts that we – and all believing Christians, do this December 24th/25th is in honor of, and a significant witness to, our precious Savior. It not only connects us with the story of our Lord's birth in a deep and profound way, it also reflects and mirrors the love and generosity of His own very gifting and giving life. What joy!

I truly lament the over-commercialization of Christmas and the secular co-opting of one of the Church's great, high-holy day. But at the same time, I fully believe our giving and sharing at this most sacred time of our Lord Jesus' nativity are wonderful signs that Christ has found a genuine place in our hearts.

And, therefore, I pray that your gift-giving in this blessed season takes you even deeper into the story. And I further pray that your participation in it brings you even nearer to the gift that is Jesus Christ.

May you all have a most blessed Advent, and a very Merry Christmas!



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION 7 PM SUNDAY DECEMBER 24

SERVICE OF READINGS & CAROLS WITH HOLY COMMUNION 10 AM MONDAY DECEMBER 25

THE LEGEND OF THE POINSETTIA

The legend of the poinsettia comes from Mexico. It's a story about two young children, a brother and sister. Pablo and Maria were very poor but they always looked forward to the Christmas festival in their village. Each year a large manger scene was set up in the church courtyard. In the days before Christmas there were many parades and parties. The children loved all the fun and games they played. But they were also sad because they had no money to buy gifts. They especially wanted to give a gift to the Baby Jesus in the church manger scene. All the other village people would bring wonderful gifts. The children had nothing to give. One Christmas Eve, Maria and Pablo went out to attend their church service and on their way they stopped to pick some weeds growing next to the road. They decided that this would be their gift. As they got closer to the church all the other children started laughing and teasing them about their gift. Maria and Pablo said nothing and kept right on walking to the church. When they began placing the weeds around the manger a miracle happened. The others were all standing in amazement. For, the green weeds had turned into the most beautiful bright red flowers they had ever seen. No one was laughing any more. The Poinsettia then called "Flor De Nochebueno" which means "The Flower of Christmas Eve". This, they say is why it is our traditional Christmas flower today.

It has long been a tradition at Christ Lutheran Church to adorn our chancel on Christmas eve with Poinsettia plants—beautiful red blooms and rich green leaves surround the creche and the manger awaiting the arrival of the Baby Jesus. It is a glorious sight! Each Poinsettia plant is dedicated to the Glory of God in memory or honor of family and friends of Christ Lutheran Church.



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH REV. JOHN THOMPSON, PASTOR
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Phone 727-526-3265 Email christstpete@aol.com Website www.christstpete.org
WORSHIP SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION 10 AM SUNDAY

CANDY CANE COOKIES

Ingredients

- 2 sticks (227g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup (200g) sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons peppermint extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 large egg
- 2 3/4 cup (385g) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon liquid red food coloring

To finish

- 1 egg white
- 2 tablespoons sparkling sugar

Instructions:

1. Make the dough: Place the butter, sugar, peppermint, vanilla, baking powder, and salt in the bowl of stand mixer. Beat until a paste forms and clings to the side of the bowl. Scrape down the side of the bowl and beat in the egg until it is absorbed. Add the flour and beat until just combined and no more dry streaks of flour remain.
2. Color half the dough: Divide and remove half the dough from the bowl. Carefully add the red food coloring to the remaining dough. Mix on low until the color is evenly distributed.
3. Chill the dough: Pat each piece of dough into a disk, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or overnight.
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F: Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicon baking mat.
5. Shape the cookies; Pinch off a 1-inch round piece of the white dough and roll it out to a 5-inch rope. Do the same with a piece of the red dough (make sure the ropes are the same length). Place the ropes next to each other and twist together. Transfer to the baking sheet and curve the top of the dough into a candy cane shape.
6. Top the cookies with sparkling sugar Make the egg white wash by beating the egg white with 1 tablespoon of water until foamy. Brush the top of each cookie with the egg white wash and then sprinkle with the sugar.
7. Bake in the oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until the edges are just barely brown. Let cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before moving to a wire cooling rack.



CHRISTMAS CAROLS QUIZ

1. Which Christmas carol has been voted the most popular one of all?
2. What carol began in the ancient church as *one single word*? And what was that word?
3. When hosts of angels appear to them, announcing Jesus' birth, a carol says the "shepherds quake at the sight." In what carol is the quoted line found?
4. One of our carols begins, "Angels we have heard on high, / Sweetly singing o'er the plains." What did the angels sing at Jesus' birth?
5. Mary laid her newborn Son in a manger. A carol says Jesus had "no crib for a bed." What is the carol?
6. What carol contains the line, "Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing"?
7. What carol quotes the angels saying to the shepherds, "All glory be to God on high, / And to the earth be peace"?
8. What carol fancifully describes "angels bending near the earth / To touch their harps of gold"?
9. What carol says of Jesus' birth, "While mortals sleep, the angels keep / Their watch of wondering love"?
10. What carol says of Christ's coming to earth, "Mild He lays His glory by, / Born that man no more may die"?
11. What carol begins, "Hark, how all the welkin rings!"
12. What carol says to the wise men, "Sages, leave your contemplations, / Brighter visions beam afar"?
13. What carol tells us, "Then entered in those wise men three, / Full reverently upon the knee"?
14. What is the meaning of the word "Noel," as in the carol line, "Noel, Noel, / Born is the King of Israel"?
15. Referring to the English custom of ringing church bells on Christmas morning, what carol says, "Then pealed the bells more loud and deep" / "God is not dead: nor doth He sleep"?

OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDY, LEARN AND FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday morning Bible Study: 10:30 Discuss the OT, NT and Gospel lessons for the coming Sunday

Women in Spirit: First Monday of each month at 5:00 PM Studying the book of Revelation.

Advent Wednesdays Lunch & Learn: 12:00 Noon "**Prophecy Fulfilled**" Bible Study led by Pastor John

Adorn the Sanctuary for Christmas: Sunday Nov 26th after the worship service. All are welcome!

IMPORTANT UPCOMING MEETING DATES

DECEMBER 17th—2024 Budget approval and election of Church Council members following the 10 AM worship service

JANUARY 21st—Annual Congregational Meeting and Luncheon following the 10 AM worship service

Christmas Carol Answers: 1. Silent Night 2. O Come, O Come Emanuel from the long drawn-out Oh! Of the Advent antiphon. 3. Silent Night. 4. The angels said "Glory to God in the highest. 5. Away in a Manger 6. O Come All ye faithful. 7. While Shepherds Watched their flocks by night. 8. IT Came Upon a Midnight Clear. 9. O Little Town of Bethlehem `10. Hark the Herald Angels Sing. 11. Hark the Herald Anges Sing., 12.The First Noel. 13. Angels from the Realm of Glory. 14. Noel means birthday. 15. I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

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