

THE REDEEMER RECORD

Vol. 110, No. 11

December, 2015



LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Rev. James Erlandson, Pastor

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A Letter From Pastor Erlandson

"The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." (Jeremiah 33)

Dear friends,

The season of Advent is one of the most beautiful in the church year. The four weeks before Christmas are a time of "hope and expectation" as we prepare for the coming of Christ. He comes as a child in Bethlehem, he comes into our hearts and lives today through faith, and he will come again to bring justice, righteousness and peace to all the world. This is our witness as Christians throughout the Advent season, which culminates in our Christmas celebration which begins at midnight on December 24 (which lasts for a full twelve days).

This time of preparation can be confusing to people, as the surrounding culture begins the celebration sometime before Thanksgiving, and wears itself out by the end of the first day of Christmas! It appears that to many, the "preparation" has actually become the party! As much as we all love Christmas carols, gift-giving and holiday foods, there is only so much celebration that people can endure! And then there are those who argue about whether to say "Happy Holidays", or "Merry Christmas" – or what design should go on a Starbucks coffee cup, as if such things are a witness to our faith (they are *not*!).

It could very well be that so many of us focus on the preparations and the parties before Christmas, because of the suffering and violence that we see all around us in our world. This is how it has always been. We know from reading the Old Testament and the gospels that the people of Israel and Judah suffered greatly from many invaders, who conquered their land and destroyed Jerusalem: Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans. The ancient prophets warned the people that their neglect of God would lead to their destruction. There are those who look at our world today, and see how our lack of faith has resulted in unimaginable cruelty, suffering and loss of life. We see the destruction of cities like Aleppo, Syria and the mass exodus of refugees out of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other places where civil war is taking place, and wonder ourselves if we are seeing the end of days ourselves. We also look around us in our own communities and nation, and see the violence inflicted by our own terrorists and those consumed by racial and ethnic hatred. We look to our faith for comfort and hope, knowing that we have been unable ourselves to reconcile with one another.

The ancient prophets give us the words of peace and hope that we need in these times.

Prophets with "strange" names like Jeremiah, Isaiah, Malachai, Zephaniah, Amos and Micah – whose names are familiar to us because we read their words every Advent season. They tell us that the days are coming in which God will fulfill God's promises to bring justice and righteousness to this world. That God will send a messenger to prepare the way (we call him "John the Baptist"). Micah tells of One who would come forth from Bethlehem, who *"shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord... and they shall live secure...he shall be the one of peace."* In the meantime, we prepare our hearts, and sing our songs of hope:

*Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption that sets your people free! Amen.*

December Calendar

Recurring Weekly Events

Sun.	10:00 am ~	Worship
	11:15 am ~	Coffee Fellowship
	12:00 pm ~	Universal Life Church of God
Wed.	7:00 pm ~	Senior Choir
	8:00 pm ~	Courage to Change N.A.
Thur.	6:30 am ~	Prayer & Meditation A.A.
Fri.	8:00 pm ~	Words into Action N.A.
Sat.	8:00 am ~	Siloé Church

Other Events

2nd	7:00 pm	Holden Evening Prayer
3rd	11:00 am	Happy Seniors Meeting
4th	10:00 am	ISAIAH Meeting
5th	12:00 pm	ISAIAH Meeting
8th	7:00 pm	Elders/Vestry Meeting
9th	7:00 pm	National Interfaith Vigil to End Gun Violence
11th	10:00 am	Restore the Vote Meeting
14th	5:30 pm	ISAIAH Caucus Meeting
16th	7:00 pm	Holden Evening Prayer
17th	6:30 pm	Anti-Racism Meeting
18th	12:00 pm	Happy Seniors Holiday Party
20th	10:00 am	Service of Lesson & Carols
	11:30 am	Congregational Potluck
24th	11:00 pm	Candlelight Eucharist
25th	10:00 am	Festival Eucharist - Christmas Day

CONGREGATIONAL POTLUCK

Sunday, December 20th, following the service of Lesson and Carols, all are invited to potluck hosted by the Womens Guild. Please bring a dish to share and join us for fellowship and carol singing.

December Altar Servers ~ If you are unable to serve, please contact an elder or the church office no later than the Tuesday of the week you are signed up to serve so that a replacement can be found.

	<u>Deacon</u>	<u>Subdeacon</u>	<u>Reader</u>
Dec. 6	Joel Michael	Bob Paddock	Myrna Nelson
	<u>Acolyte</u>		
	Neal Caerwyn		
Dec. 13	<u>Deacon</u>	<u>Subdeacon</u>	<u>Reader</u>
	Joann Conroy	DeAnne Hilgers	Ruth Belmonte
	<u>Acolyte</u>		
	Jack Sprung		
Dec. 20	<u>Deacon</u>	<u>Subdeacon</u>	<u>Reader</u>
	Michelle Geschwill	Leilani Drake	Ray Hayes
	<u>Acolyte</u>		
	Jared Geschwill		
	<u>Deacon</u>	<u>Subdeacon</u>	<u>Reader</u>
Dec. 24	Tammy Cownie	Bob Paddock	Rev. Robert Hausman
	<u>Thurifer</u>	<u>Torchbearers</u>	<u>Crucifer</u>
	David Tannen	Catalina Cretsinger &	Benjamin Cretsinger
Dec. 25	<u>Deacon</u>	<u>Subdeacon</u>	<u>Reader</u>
	Michelle Geschwill	Joel Michael	Rev. Jon Olson
	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Crucifer</u>	<u>Thurifer</u>
	Jared Geschwill	Ray Hayes	Nathan Parsons
	<u>Torchbearers</u>	Laura Michael	Ali Michael
	<u>Bannerbearers</u>	Todd-Allen Hamilton	
Dec. 27	<u>Deacon</u>	<u>Subdeacon</u>	<u>Reader</u>
	Joann Conroy	Trudy Cretsinger	Mary Lou Knipe
	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Crucifer</u>	
	Neal Caerwyn	Hilary Ziols	

DECEMBER SCRIPTURES

We invite members and friends of Redeemer to read the appointed scriptures for each Sunday. This is a meaningful way to prepare for worship. It also binds us to our homebound sisters and brothers who we also encourage to read the same scriptures weekly.

	First Reading	Psalms	Second Reading	Gospel
December 6 <i>2 Advent</i>	Malachi 3:1-4	Luke 1:68-79	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
December 13 <i>3 Advent</i>	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Isaiah 12:2-6	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18
December 20 <i>4 Advent</i>	Micah 5:2-5a	Luke 1: 46b-55	Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]
December 24 <i>Christmas Eve</i>	Isaiah 9:2-7	Ps 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]
December 25 <i>Christmas Day</i>	Isa 52:7-10	Ps 98	Heb 1:1-4 [5-12]	John 1:1-14
December 27 <i>1 Christmas</i>	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26	Ps 148	Colossians 3:12-17	Luke 2:41-52

WORSHIP AT REDEEMER

Wednesday, December 2nd & 16th – We gather to sing Holden Evening Prayer at 7 p.m. each Wednesday during Advent, as we prepare for the coming of Christ. Come sing this beautiful setting of Evening Prayer with candlelight and the burning of incense.

Sunday, December 20th ~ *A festival of Lessons and Carols with holy Eucharist, led by our senior choir and instrumentalists. Followed by a congregational potluck hosted by the Womens Guild in the undercroft.*

Thursday, December 24 ~ *Join us at 11:00 pm for Candlelight Eucharist on Christmas Eve to hear the story of Jesus' birth from the gospel of Luke and the angel's song to the shepherds: "Gloria in Excelsis Deo!"*

Friday, December 25 ~ *Join us at 10:00 am for Festival Eucharist on Christmas Day as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and King Jesus Christ! The Word has become flesh and dwells among us!*

A Giving Tree ~ has been set up in the church undercroft. We are seeking donations for uniforms, specifically polo shirts and khaki pants, for students at Benjamin Mays Elementary School (our school partnership). They are in great need of uniforms for boys and girls in grades K-6. A full uniform costs about \$30, but **ANY** amount helps!

If you would like to help, please take an ornament from the tree and bring the gift notated on the front. Please bring your gifts Sunday, December 6th, 13th and 20th or anytime during the week during office hours. Thank you!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

The price is \$15.00

Deadline for ordering is Sunday, December 13th.
We will not take any orders after this date as this is the day the order will be put in.

Order forms are available in the back of the church or in the undercroft.

THANK YOU

Dear Redeemer friends - Thank you so very much for the lovely music painting you commissioned from Katie. I have always admired her work and am delighted to have a piece of it. I have a music grouping in the corner of my living room which needed an anchor piece, and now I have one. I truly love it. It was a very thoughtful gift. Many, many thanks, Kay

ADULT FORUMS

Dec. 6, 2015 9:00 A.M. "Saint Nicholas: the Real Story" DVD presented by Joan Foreman. Today people think of Saint Nicholas as the red suited figure who brings presents to good children on Christmas Eve. This account presents historical evidence of the real man, a third century bishop, on which this jolly old character is based. Nicholas was a courageous man of God who stood for truth at a critical time in church history and who profoundly impacted the culture in which he lived.

Dec. 13, 2015 9:00 A.M. "Santa Lucia" Presented by Reverend Trudy Cretsinger. Santa Lucia was a young Sicilian girl who was martyred, killed for her faith in 304 A.D. She used her wealth to minister to the persecuted Christians in Rome who lived by hiding in the catacombs under the city. She wore candles on her head so her arms were free to carry gifts. Today Santa Lucia festivals are annually celebrated especially in Scandinavia.

Dec. 20, 2015 9:00 A.M. "Katie Luther" Presented by Reverend Trudy Cretsinger. Katharina von Bora was a former nun whom Martin Luther helped to escape from a convent along with other nuns. She eventually married Martin Luther and was important to helping him change the course of history.

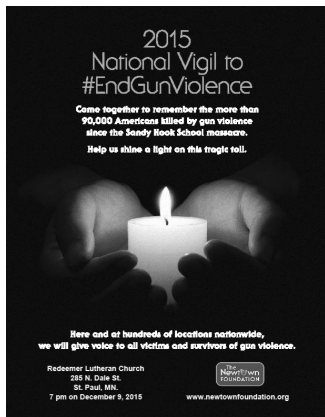
Dec. 27, 2015 No class.

There will be an Adult Forum Planning meeting Thurs. Dec. 10, at 10:15 A.M. in the library. You are invited to attend. For more information contact Joan Foreman at 651-699-0266.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

One of main purposes for Confirmation is for students to participate in the life of the congregation – in worship, service, and fellowship. During the month of December we will not hold a "class session" for our confirmation students. In place of class, we invite each student to worship each Sunday AND participate in Advent worship on Wednesday evenings (Dec 2, 9, & 16). In worship each student is invited to serve as an usher, acolyte, candle-bearer or reader on a Sunday morning or Wednesday evening. **On Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 7:00 pm there will be an Interfaith Prayer Vigil to End Gun Violence** to which the whole community is invited – this is a time especially important for students to attend. Also, final decorating in the church sanctuary will happen on **Saturday, Dec. 19, at 9:30 am**. We invite all students and their families to worship, help decorate, and bring a donation for the Giving Tree (school uniforms for Benjamin Mays Elementary students).

November is National Family Caregivers Month ~ On Tuesdays from November 17th to December 8th, a Holiday Caregiver Café will be at Lyngblomsten's 5-5-1 Club from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm (1415 Almond Ave.) Please bring your own bag lunch. Water, coffee and dessert will be provided. There is a sliding fee cost. This is an opportunity for caregivers to connect with one another. Questions? See Mary Lou.



2015 Vigil to #EndGunViolence
Wednesday, December 9th, 2015
7:00 pm

Come together to remember the more than 90,000 Americans killed by gun violence since the Sandy Hook School massacre. Help us shine a light on this tragic toll. Redeemer will be the official gathering place for the state of Minnesota.

The sanctuary will be open at 6:30 for quiet reflection.

Thursday Book Study on "The Magnificat"

We will study the new book **Luther and Bach on the Magnificat: For Advent and Christmas**, authored by Peter A. Hendrickson, Bradley C. Jensen & Randi H. Lundell. We will meet on **Thursdays, December 3, 10, & 17 at 2:00 pm in the church library.**

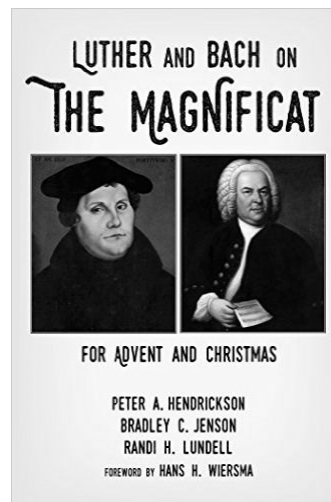
Please read chapter 1 & 2 introductions to Martin Luther's commentary and J.S. Bach's composition *The Magnificat* for the first session. We still have copies of the book, available for \$14 from Pastor Erlandson.

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*Luther and Bach on the Magnificat: For Advent and Christmas* brings together the gifts of Lutheranism's original and most prominent theologian with Lutheranism's most prominent composer/musician as Martin Luther and Johann Sebastian Bach expound in word and music on the Virgin Mary's song of praise in the Gospel of Luke: the *Magnificat*.

Written in 1521, Martin Luther's *Commentary on the Magnificat* is a spiritual classic with a timeless message: soli deo gloria--to God alone be the glory. This central theme of Luther's *Commentary* makes it as significant today as it was nearly five hundred years ago.

Johann Sebastian Bach wrote his musical masterpiece, *Magnificat*, during his first year as Kantor of the Church of St. Thomas in Leipzig. Bach conducted the first performance of this cantata on Christmas Day in 1723, and it remains one of his most famous compositions.



Bringing together Luther and Bach to interpret the timeless message of the Magnificat results in a unique and inspirational word and music Advent and Christmas study experience that can be enjoyed year after year by individuals and congregations alike.



## CORE TEAM NEWS

***"[God] has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
And lifted up the lowly..."***

*Mary ~ Luke 1:52*

So sings Mary in Luke's gospel, which we begin reading from this Advent. So we sing with her at our Advent Vespers services with Holden Evening Prayer. We anticipate the coming of this table-turning God who cares for the plight of the poor and downtrodden, who favors them and lifts them up out of oppression.

As part of our Advent journey this year, we have the opportunity to participate in the work of our surprising, uplifting God. A **People's Congress** is being convened, **Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup>** at the **Minneapolis Convention Center**. **ISAIAH** along with many other partner organizations that comprise **Minnesotans for a Fair Economy** are gathering people along with city and state leaders to present our calls for changes that will improve the lives of the lowest-paid workers in our community. Our part for Saint Paul will focus on a city-wide ordinance requiring all employers operating with the city to provide their employees with **Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST)**. This policy will allow workers to earn paid time off in proportion to hours work; the paid time off can be used when the employee is ill or to care for a sick dependent. Additionally, employees fleeing a domestic violence situation could use the time to arrange safe shelter and access court services. Plans are also underway to have a high-ranking representative from US Bank present to receive our request that the bank stop financing payday lending operations.

The entire event will take place from 11:00am to 5:00pm. **However, if you could come for the major event, the public meeting from 2:00pm to 4:00pm, that would be a great help.** Our leaders pay attention to numbers and your presence will be noted. This is a busy time of year, but if you could spare a few hours to stand with us in the spirit of Mary and her song, we would be glad to see you.

*For more information on this event, contact any member of the Core Team: Gretchen Vanderlinden-Wang, Myrna & Lyle Nelson, Irene Markley, Trudy Cretsinger, and Joann Conroy.*

At the center of every powerful social justice movement are people of faith.



The people in our communities experience the pains of racial and economic injustice - the lack of a livable wage, mass incarceration & deportations, hunger, crushing debt - just to name a few.

Acting with our allies from neighborhood organizations & labor, we can build a new kind of power through a diverse movement to make our state a place where everyone can thrive.

Join us for:  
**The People's Congress**

*A Faith, Labor & Community Event For A New Minnesota*

December 12, 2015 • Minneapolis Convention Center • 11am - 4pm

We will join with 1,000 local allies to celebrate our common story of power and race; to proclaim a new path forward, and launch into a new movement together for equity.

Register: [tinyurl.com/PeoplesCongress](http://tinyurl.com/PeoplesCongress)

## **110 YEARS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT REDEEMER – 1905-2015**

by Diana Rankin

It is easy to assume that the traditions we keep at Advent and Christmas today have changed little from what we remember them being. The well-worn claim that "We've always done it that way" helps to ground us in our memories, but "always" is a very long time. Over the past 110 years at Redeemer – a very long time indeed – there have been many changes to how this congregation has observed Advent and celebrated Christmas. Most resulted from changing fashions, liturgical discoveries, or the practical realities of a changing congregation and world affairs.

Christmas Day worship has been part of our tradition since at least 1905, the year the Redeemer Record was first published in 1905. The time for the service has not always been 10 a.m. like it is today. In 1910, it was decided that "By resolution of the congregation, and to satisfy a rather general demand, especially on the part of the young people, the Christmas service will be held at six o'clock on Christmas morning." The Record notes that the street car company would accommodate this early hour. This early service on Christmas Day was the only service that day until 1930 when, because of the "dangerously overcrowded" situation at the 6:15 a.m. service the previous year, a second service at 10:45 a.m. was added. Then, in 1935 and for the first time in Redeemer's history, a Christmas Eve service was held at 11 p.m. and there was no service at dawn on Christmas Day. Beginning in 1940, the Eucharist was celebrated on Christmas Day and by 1965 was also celebrated on Christmas Eve.

The December 1905 Record also announced that the Sunday School's "Christmas exercises" would be held at 5:30 p.m. on the 24<sup>th</sup>. The time and day changed over the years, but there were always treats for the children or a party of some sort. In 1910 each child received a box of sweets and a prayer book. The next year there was a Christmas party for the children on the Thursday after Christmas in the new church at Dale and Carroll.

The name of the Sunday School observation also changed over the years. In 1911 it was a Sunday School Song and Praise service and in 1930 the Sunday School children ages 10-12 participated in a Christmas pageant. In 1935 Pastor Paul Lindemann emphasized that the Children's Service was to be "a service and not a performance or a mere entertainment." In 1955 the pageant was described as telling the story from Creation through the Nativity. This tradition continued through the 1980s, 90s, and early 2000 years. In 2010 the children and youth presented a contemporary play, "A Primetime Christmas."

Decorating the sanctuary has always been a top priority. A photograph from 1930 shows the church decorated with tinsel-laden trees and a huge tinsel bell hung from the rafters with swags of tinsel. A Mr. William Vasatka was credited with designing and supervising installation of the elaborate decorations. For many years the usher hosted the annual garland making party. In 1955 expenses for the sanctuary decorations included a large tree (\$75), 2 tons of greens (\$136), bells (\$15), wire (\$20), tinsel (\$11), 600 feet of garland, more than 12 wreaths, 178 lights on

the large tree, several small trees, and the supper for the ushers and volunteers (\$15).

Observation of the Advent season has not always been part of our tradition. Mid-week services do not appear to have been introduced until 1940. At some point (at least by 1975) they were discontinued and then were reintroduced in the 1990s. In 1911 new purple altar and pulpit paraments were introduced for Advent and then new blue paraments in 2010. In 1980 Redeemer celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Solemn Advent Vespers on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The speaker was Rev. Dr. Harold Hecht, president of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC).

Redeemer's choirs have held a prominent place in the Advent/Christmas season for many years. The Christmas Carol Service, usually held on the last Sunday in Advent in the evening, was very popular beginning in the 1940s. In 1945 Pastor Paul Lindemann wrote in the Record that "Our choirs, which now number one hundred twenty-five voices, are busily engaged in preparing for the Christmas, and for the annual Christmas Song Service to be presented on Sunday evening, December 23." He also emphasized that the music they would be singing was of the highest quality.

At least two notable events occurred during Advent/Christmas. On December 10, 1922 Redeemer dedicated the expanded church building (east and west transepts and new altar area) with services at 9:30 a.m. for the Sunday School and then at 10:45 a.m., 3 p.m., and 7:45 p.m. There was also a social event in the basement on the 11th and dedication of a new organ on the 14th. The second event occurred on Christmas Eve 1990 when our newest and current organ was played and heard for the first time.

The Record also documents some of the ways in which Redeemer responded to needs in the world and community. Beginning in 1930 or possibly earlier, the Waltham League sold Wheat Ridge seals to benefit the Missouri Synod's sanitorium in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. In 1945 Pastor Herbert Lindemann wrote that "As for the Church moves into the new year with the first Sunday in Advent, the future looks more ominous than ever. ... since the invention of the atomic bomb." He urged members to contribute clothing and tinned food for the homeless and destitute in Europe. Today we collect pajamas and books for The Family Place and mittens and hats for children at Benjamin E. Mays school.

Throughout these past 110 years we have adapted to many changes in the "how" of our Advent and Christmas observation. The "why" has never, and will never, change.



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