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Rev. Christopher Natan Sperb, Pastor

OUR MISSION

Glorifying God the Father and filled with the Holy Spirit, we celebrate our relationship with Jesus and invite others to join our celebration.

NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2019

Christ Lives Inside His Christians

Many artists throughout history have painted the astounding miracle of Christ entering the Virgin Mary's womb (Luke 1:26-38). One, in particular, has amazingly depicted the *Annunciation* with both Mary and the angel focusing their eyes on an opened Bible. In so doing, he shows that Mary conceived Jesus, not by any personal decision that she might have made, but by the miracle-working Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Christ comes inside our hearts in exactly the same way that He entered Mary's womb. He does not come into us because of any human effort or by any decision we might make. Rather, as Christ came into Mary through the Word, He also comes into us through the miracle of the Word.

Martin Luther explained in a very clear and simple way how it happened that Mary became pregnant: "*Where does [this Child] come from? The angel Gabriel brings the Word: 'Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, etc.'* With these words Christ comes not only into her heart, but also into her womb, as she hears, grasps, and believes it. No one can say otherwise, than that the power comes through the Word" (Luther's Works, vol. 36, p. 341).

The angel preached God's powerful Word to Mary. While he was preaching, the Holy Spirit was busy performing the very thing that had been promised in the Word. Clearly, the Word was at work in her.

God's Word does what it says! For example, Lazarus came out of the tomb when Jesus said, "*Lazarus, come out*" (John 11:43). In the Book of Acts, the lame man walked when Peter preached God's Word, "*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!*" (Acts 3:6). In the same way, the angel said to Mary, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God*" (Luke 1:35). Through the angel's preaching of the miracle-working Word, God the Holy Spirit performed the very act He promised: Mary conceived, Christ entered into her.

The astounding and miraculous power of God's Word is a good reason for us to rejoice. Where the Word of God is preached, there Christ is also. Because Christ miraculously comes into us, not through our own human decisions or efforts but through His Word, we may praise God as Mary did, "*Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word*" (Luke 1:38).

Heavenly Father, we thank You that Your Son Jesus comes into our heart in the same way that He came into Mary's womb, through the preaching of the Word. We believe that He is present inside of us, not because of any inward feeling we have, but because Your Word declares it to us. Let Christ always remain in us, through this Word, until we enter Your eternal glory. Amen.

Pastor Christopher Sperb

Director of Christian Education

GAHU Happenings!

The past month things for GAHU have flown by. We met to finish watching God's Not Dead 3; the youth helped make the Live Nativity such an amazing success, and we finished out the month with our annual Christmas Party. We had an amazing time getting to be in fellowship together and celebrate the birth of Christ together.

The Youth Ministry Team has been hard at work making sure that we are ready to start right back up when we return in January. When we get back we will start Bootcamp, so be ready to compete ☺ our theme for Bootcamp will be Man vs. _____. We hope you will be able to join us as we explore different issues that we will face off against and how we connect it back to the Bible.

Young Adult Happenings!

We just had our Young Adult Cook-off, and we had some amazing food that was brought by our amazing Young Adults. We had an amazing time getting to welcome some of our college student's back and getting to spend time with them. We finished our topic of prayer and when we come back in January, we will be starting a new topic. We will begin meeting for Bible study again on January 8th.

If you know any Young Adults that are looking for to be a part of a Young Adult group, please forward their information to me, and I will reach out to them.

DCE Happenings!

Emily and I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the hospitality that you have shown toward us. We have felt so loved with invitations to dinner, celebrating Christmas with you, and so many other kind gestures towards us. I am so thankful for such amazing people who care so much for Emily and I.

Thank you and God's Blessings be upon you,

Alexi Lundquist (DCE)



Small Group Ministry

We have had a great year of small groups. Many of our small groups have now partnered with local ministries to help support them. Our groups have had many different topics they have been talking about. We have had group discussions that talked about 1-3rd John, Martin Luther, and Prayer. Our small group leaders have worked very hard this year, and I ask that you would keep them in your prayers as they continue to lead. Our leaders include: Alex Ihde, John Blessing, Gene Shackelford, Ray Linscomb, Pastor Sperb, Debbie Geiger, and Stan Stigdon. Please pray for them and encourage them as they continue to lead and serve.

If you are interested in getting involved with a group, please, let me know so that I can get you connected with them. Or if you are interested in leading your own, email Alexi so that we can talk about it. Email Alexi at dce@faithmd.org

National Gathering & Mission Trip

As we enter the new year, we will be having some new fundraisers that you can be a part of to help support the Faith Youth Ministry and our trips to Eastern Shores, VA and Minneapolis, MN.

We will be selling Super Bowl Subs. You can find an order form on the Youth Board or ask any of the NYG participants about it, and they will give you more information. Please return the order form to Alexi by January 30th. You will be able to pick up your subs on February 3rd after either service.

In August, we will be holding a Youth Rummage Sale. I would encourage you to hold onto things that you might be considering to discard. We currently don't have a place to take any donations so please hold onto them, and during the summer we will start talking about drop off options. We will be looking for books, clothes, furniture, children's items, housewares, kitchenwares, etc. We will not be taking upholstered furniture and old TVs. If you have any questions, please contact DCE Alexi Lundquist. Thank you for your support.

A Word from our Elders

At the close of one year and the beginning of another year many of us make what we call “New Year Resolutions”. But in so doing what have we actually done? Webster’s New World Dictionary defines **resolution** as *the act or process of resolving something or breaking it up into its constituent parts or elements; and determining a decision as to future action.*

Now that we are in the new year, what will our resolve be with respect to praising and giving thanks to God our Father for the many blessings we have and will receive? The easiest answer to that question is to take 5 minutes out of each 24-hour day (of which there are 1,440 minutes) which is exactly **0.4%** of our day and go to God in prayer.

“How” you say? That is easy, simply use the acronym taught to our confirmands **ACTS**.

Adoration – begin by addressing God with respect and honor such as “Heavenly Father,” “Gracious Father,” “Forgiving Father,” etc.

Confession – confess our sins which is the primary way we receive God’s forgiveness and maintain a Spirit-filled life.

Thanksgiving – thank God for the many gifts He has given us (not just things, but people in our lives as well; even our senses and physical abilities).

Supplication – present our individual needs and desires to God.

Now that we have broken the act of prayer up into its constituent elements, here comes the big questions (Time and place?). For some that might be first thing in the morning, for others late at night and still others in the middle of the day. Even the busiest person still takes a few minutes to unwind, and what better way to unwind than to be refreshed in a discussion with our loving heavenly Father. The place is of your choosing – in a car, on a plane or train, in a chair or even in your bed.

Peace,
John Knight



Worship Ministry

Here I Am To Worship

Verse 1

Light of the world You stepped down into darkness
Opened my eyes let me see
Beauty that made This heart adore You Hope of a life
spent with You.

Chorus

So here I am to worship Here I am to bow down Here I
am to say that You're my God
And You're altogether lovely Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me.

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The Christmas decorations will be packed away. Family and friends will return to their homes. School starts again, and our college students return to their dorms. Vacations are over for a while, and new projects begin to demand our attention. Outside the often-cloudy skies seem bleak and cold. January can be quite a contrast from warmth and anticipation we have in December. Thankfully though, January is not really bleak and dreary! As we celebrated the birth of our Savior at Christmas, we can continue to rejoice that His light came into the world and is always here with us. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus lives in us and shines His glorious light through us: *“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* 2 Corinthians 4:6. So be of good cheer as our lives return to the everyday, because through Christ every day is extraordinary!

Please join us for services in January at either 8:00 or 10:45 and for Sunday school from 9:30-10:30.

May you always have God’s Word in your heart and a song of praise on your lips!

Connie Simmons



Women's Ministry Team

“Daughters Of The King” Women's Ministry Update

Upcoming Women's Ministry Events:

We are called to be daughters and wives, sisters and friends, mothers and grandmas. We are called to be volunteers, employees, citizens, and leaders and... As we fill these various roles, we are to be intuitive, creative, persistent, supportive, and productive and... Is it any wonder that we may also be tired and crabby?

Throughout this year, our Saturday morning Bible study will be using *Golden Fruit*, a Bible study that helps Christian woman put all of these roles, characteristics, and emotions into perspective. Each session focuses on one fruit of the Spirit and considers how the lives and stories of nine biblical women convey that characteristic.

Monthly Women's Ministry Gathering

Our next *Monthly Women's Ministry Gathering* will take place on *Saturday, January 19th from 9:00-10:30 a.m. in the Modular*. Join us for a time of fellowship and Bible study as we study **The Love of Ruth**. Living the fruit of the Spirit through the best times of your life. Please contact Dana Stigdon (dstigdon@gmail.com) or Debbie Geiger (geigermama14@gmail.com) with any questions regarding this event.

Visual Faith Monthly Meetup: Tuesday, January 8th, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Modular)

Join us for a time of fellowship and learning as we gather to share Visual Faith ideas and engage in fun and creative faith building activities. For more details, please contact Kim Schlauch (kimschlauch@gmail.com) or Tabatha Hohenberger (Minky0127@msn.com). For more information about Visual Faith, please visit www.visualfaithmin.org.



Missions Ministry Team

This month's Highlighted Mission Envelope effort will be in support of:

“Brazil Mission Society–Holy Trinity Institute, Moreira, Brazil”

Holy Trinity Institute (a LCMS recognized service organization) is an oasis of hope for children in Brazil. The goal is to assist children in all aspects of life: material, emotional, spiritual, psychological and social. Located on the institute's complex are a children's home, senior's home, elementary school, church, farm and mechanical workshop. Most of the children and seniors who come to live at Holy Trinity Institute have no other place to go. Many are homeless, while others who have families still have to work in the streets to find money for food.

Our congregation was able to share our blessings with The Shepherd's Staff by donating \$675.00 for the month of November 2018.



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**SAVE THE DATE!!** Our Annual Women's Retreat to be held **April 26th – April 28th, 2019**. Watch for more details!



### Youth Sunday School Mission Statement

Making Christ the center of each lesson, we will teach the children the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, show enthusiasm for Jesus so they will want to share it with others, and make the Gospel message relevant to every age or level of learning.

#### Sunday School

##### **Sunday School Envelopes**

New envelopes are being sent home. Please remember to continue bringing in your offering to support our missions.

##### **Sunday School Opening begins promptly at 9:30 a.m.**

Please join us for openings worship. Connie Simmons continues to enrich us as we prepare our children to be a special part of our worship service with their voices.

**Ages 3, Pre-K and K**  
**“Hands on Bible Curriculum”**  
Learning Lab

**Grades 1-8**  
**“Growing in Christ”**  
**God Sends His Son to Save Us**

**High School**  
**More Than A Carpenter**  
(Josh McDowell)

#### **Sunday School Envelopes**

2018 Servant Event Youth Works program to send materials for children when our Servant Event team goes this summer.  
<https://www.youthworks.com>

#### Winter Adult Bible Study Classes

**Gods Worn for Today: Acts**  
Curt Thomas

Acts is the story of God’s grace flooding out to the world. Nothing is more prominent in Acts than the spread of the Gospel

**Young Earth**  
Don Hall

Young Earth or Old Earth?? 7 day creation or millions of years of Evolution??

**The Nine Practices of the Proactive Parent**

Stan and Dana Stigdon

Parenting success won’t happen by accident ... it takes prayer, planning, and yes, just plain old hard work.

**See bulletin Board for More Information**