

Share n Care

*There is no one holy like the LORD;
There is no one besides you;
There is no Rock like our God. —1 Samuel 2:2*

Volume XLIII, Issue 12
December 2017

Emmanuel

The name means "God with us." It means God living, breathing and experiencing life alongside of us. It means God Coming as a perfect baby in human flesh. It means that God has come, as the Messiah – the Christ, to show us the way back to our heavenly Father.

Why would God do this? Because we can't do it ourselves; that is, to find our way to our heavenly Father, our creator, on our own. We have absolutely nothing in us that enables us to find our way to Him. So God in His wisdom, providence and grace comes to be with us. He sends His son, the Christ child, to live along side of us. We need Christ to come alongside and show the way.

It goes beyond this – Jesus redeems us from this life; so that we can find the way to the heavenly father. Before ascending

back to his place with the Father, Jesus promises us his Counselor – so that we would never be alone.

So we celebrate more than just the coming of the Child – Immanuel; we also celebrate that we are never left alone. God with us – is an important truth that we need to take to heart.

We are never alone, you're probably thinking – that's nice. Thanks for the reminder Pastor. Here's the catch – God came to us in the depth of our sin and separation from him, in essence we are completely alone until found by God. When found by God our lives are transformed.

Is this not more the reason for Christmas than anything else? Redemption. We can't do the work of redemption – but we can definitely show the way. Christ said we would do greater things

than he, before he ascended. What about those in your life who are separated from God and don't even know it? What if we were to look for those separated and lonely? What would happen if we were to show them the love and grace of Christ, as it was shown to us? Who in your life is lonely? Who in your life is separated from God?

Who is God pointing you toward that needs to experience grace? Love? Forgiveness? Who can you befriend that is lost and lonely? Whom can you open not only your home but your life too?

This is what Jesus came to do – open the gates of heaven for the lost, and commit his life to that cause. Let us do the same.

Blessings,
Pastor Jeff

A decorative graphic for Christmas featuring the words "Merry Christmas" in a blue, cursive script. A snowflake is positioned to the left of the word "Merry", and three small stars are scattered around the text.

Birthdays



December

- 13 Chris Reimer
- 15 Curt Marcus
Justin Van Eps
Natalie Jurgenson
- 16 Edith Ahrenholz
- 24 Lois Kennard
- 25 Gary Ruis
- 26 Rick Rolffs
- 27 Drew Ryder
- 29 Jesse Lefever

January

- 1 Linda Kamstra
- 2 Mike Dahlseid
Alyssa Marcus
- 7 Linda Mikelson
Chris Lorensen
- 8 Jan Kleinhuizen
- 11 Burton Ulferts
- 13 Isaiah Iedema
- 15 Duane Noordmans

Anniversaries



December

- 2 Don and Clara DeRonde
Larry and Marilyn Stulen
- 9 Clinton and Linda Kamstra
- 10 Roger and Cindy Groen
- 19 Bob and Joanne Ver Steeg
- 21 Duane and Joan Starkenburg
- 22 Sam and Barb Modderman
- 28 Corey and Melanie Pavelko
- 30 Marv and Sandy Moorlag
Jay and Kris TeBrake

January

- 3 Jack and Caroline Kreps
- 6 Ray and Carol Chapman

2nd Sunday Offering

December 10

- CCS
- Salvation Army
- Bethany Christian Services
- Bible League

January 14

- CMCS
- World Renew-AIDS Relief
- The Fortress
- Calvin Seminary

Worship Events

Rock of Life CRC
Join us this season to celebrate our Savior's birth!
Sunday December 17 4:00 pm
 Sunday School Program "Candles of Christmas"
Sunday December 24 10:00 am
 Worship Service
 5:00 pm Candlelight Service
 1708 SW 8th St, Willmar • 320.235.3060
 rockoflifecrc.org

NEW Donation Option

Rock of Life CRC is now accepting electronic donations. If you would like to automatically deposit your offerings directly from your bank account, please see or call Renae in the office-320-235-3060.

Benefits of Direct Pay:

- Save the cost of a check
- You can automatically schedule recurring payments and never miss a title
- You will have a printable record for all donations

Opportunities

NO 25 REGRETS MEN'S CONFERENCE
1993 2018
FEBRUARY 3, 2018

Rock of Life CRC
1708 8th St SW, Willmar MN 56201

STEVE SANDERSON STUART BRIDGE KEVIN LOCK RAY JONESTON CHRIS BROWN MILES ROBERTSON

8:00 am-4:00 pm
Just \$25 and includes lunch
Register online at rockoflifecrc.org
Or email: willmarcrr@gmail.com or call Renae at 320-235-3060

rockoflifecrc.org

Live via satellite

Saturday, February 3, 2018

8:00 am-4:00 pm

Rock of Live CRC

1708 8th St SW, Willmar

The No Regrets Men's Conference is an annual one-day event, designed to create an environment for men to be challenged in their relationship with the Lord at home, in the workplace, and in their ministry.

This event will transform men's lives by empowering them to walk in loving, trusting obedience of Jesus Christ. Men will be encouraged to be the men God created them to be and to walk in step with the Holy Spirit on a moment-by-moment basis.

Men: Registration forms are on the table in the Gathering Place and please pick up some forms and share with your Friends and Neighbors.

More information to follow in the next few weeks.



Redeemer Lutheran Church is excited to be hosting the class Perspectives on the World Christian Movement. Perspectives is a 15 week discipleship course that highlights the Biblical, historical, cultural, and strategic aspects of God's global purpose to draw all people into loving relationship with him. Each

week we will have a different speaker ranging from a missionary doing business as missions work in Minneapolis to a missionary who worked with cannibals in Papua. Although the class sounds very missions oriented, it is more about what God has done and is doing in the world and how we can be a part of His plan. Here's what Pastor Steve Van Zanen, former minister of Raymond CRC and current missionary in Lithuania said about the class: "Taking the Perspectives course was a spiritual landmark for me. It provides information and inspiration to engage with God in His work of transforming the world through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether you are considering overseas service or just want to be a faithful disciple in West Central Minnesota, I can think of no better resource than Perspectives for deepening your vision and preparing your heart."

Rock of Life CRC will offset the cost in half for any of our members who would like to attend this class.

The class is from 6-8:30 pm on Tuesdays starting January 16. You are not required to attend all classes to pass the course. Cost is \$245 per person but you may attend the first 2 classes for free. *There is a \$30 discount for registering before December 15.* For more information and to register visit www.perspectives.org or contact Jayme Van Beek at vanbeekjs@gmail.com

Prayer Corner



What will make this Christmas season more meaningful for you? A visit from family? A favorite Christmas song? A children's program at church? Something else? Whatever your answer(s) may be, a sure-fire way to make the countdown to Christmas more meaningful is prayer. There is no better time to turn your heart to prayer than this season leading up to the celebration of the Incarnation. So here is a list of 20 Christmas prayer prompts to follow, one each day perhaps, to point your heart to the Bethlehem manger:

1. Give thanks for the joys of family and friends this season.
2. Ask God to "close the doors of hate and open the doors of love" this Christmas (from a prayer by Henry Van Dyke).
3. Give thanks for your favorite Christmas carol.
4. Pray for Salvation Army bell ringers and others who help the needy during this special season.
5. Pray for gifts you give to be well chosen and well received.
6. Give thanks for your favorite fragrances of the season.
7. Pray for those who are lonely this holiday season—widows, widowers, invalids, etc.
8. Give thanks for the Gospel writers—Matthew and Luke—who recorded the story of Jesus' birth.
9. Pray for those who will be working over the holidays—police, firefighters, hospital and nursing home staff, etc.
10. Give thanks to Jesus, who though He was rich, for your sake became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9).
11. Pray to be shielded from the noise, turmoil and empty promises of the season.
12. Ask God to protect and deliver those who must celebrate Christmas amid persecution and oppression.
13. Give thanks for your favorite Christmas movie.
14. Pray for the children you know and love to grasp the true meaning and blessing of Christmas.
15. Pray for health and strength to meet the demands of Christmas week.
16. Pray for refugees, immigrants and other travelers who will be far from home at Christmas.
17. Give thanks for the obedience of Mary, who submitted to the privilege and challenge of giving birth to God's Son.
18. Give thanks for the faith of Joseph, who believed the angelic message and provided and cared for Mary and Jesus amid bewildering circumstances.
19. Give thanks for your favorite holiday foods.
20. Ask God to make your Christmas celebration reflect the beauty and wonder of the first Christmas and for the miracle of the Incarnation—"God with us"—to be a reality in you and those you love.

(<https://www.guideposts.org/faith-and-prayer/prayer-stories/pray-effectively/20-christmas-prayer-prompts>)

Remember in Prayer

Those who are unable to join us

Carol Faber
Shirley Jensen
Martha Kiel
Hilda Nieuwbeerta
Jean Rolighed
Henrietta Tanner
Doward and Sylvia Visser

Our Servicemen

Jacob Lefever

Our College Students

Christine Hoekstra-Dordt
Miranda Roelofs-NSU
Kyle Stulen-U of M
Logan TeBrake-Ridgewater
Michael Vanderhooft-Alex. Tech
Kailey Van Eps-St. Scholastica

Missions

Hannah Vanderhooft-CTI Tour

Missions Update-COTP



ANNUAL BOARD MEETING HELD IN HAITI.

October 19-22 the board held their annual board meeting in Haiti. During this time, the board was able to focus their time on connecting with the missionaries, Haitian and North American staff, along with hearing updates on each different departments and programs. We are grateful for a wonderful and qualified group of individuals who serve on our board!



SAYING "GOODBYE" TO THE VANDER POL FAMILY.

After 5 years of ministry alongside COTP, the Vander Pol family is officially closing out their time with us. During these 5 years, Kirk has served in the roles of: Field Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Development Director and Adoption Liaison. We are grateful for the many years of service with the Vander Pols! Our prayers are with their family as they go from here!



SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHER ARRIVES IN HAITI.

Rachel Walker is from Nashville, TN with a degree in Special Education and a minor in Psychology from Tennessee Wesleyan University. At the end of October, Rachel moved to Haiti to serve in the role of Special Education Teacher. Rachel has a heart for serving children with special needs and has sought that out in many stages in her life. We are excited to have her join our team!



Jamie Groen
Executive Director
Children of the Promise

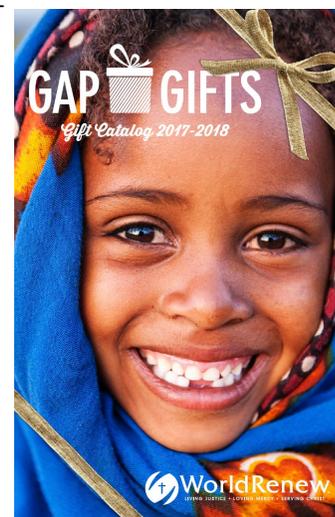
Gift Giving Ideas-World Renew

In Ezekiel's day, God was looking for a faithful person to repair the wall around the city of Jerusalem so that the Israelites would be saved from destruction. But God didn't see anyone. He knew that His people not only had a wall problem, they had a heart problem. He was looking for a go-between who would fight against oppression and injustice — and He couldn't find one in all of Israel. God was looking for people with willing hearts who walked in His Spirit, people who would hold each other up before Him when life got hard. He was looking for someone who would "stand . . . in the gap" in His plan for His people, to brace the parts that were broken. He wanted people to build their lives together into a strong tower for each other in Him.

We need intercessors to work and pray hard for us today. And God looks for us to "stand in the gap" against poverty and injustice for others, too. We do this because God graciously invites us into Jesus' redemption plan for the world. Thank God that He gives this work to us and others.

The World Renew 2017-2018 Gift Catalog is a way to "stand in the gap" on behalf of people who face oppression and poverty. Each duck, seed, and water pump is a powerful intervention that can repair harm and help build resilience in peoples' lives. Praying for and helping others is the stu- that holds us together as followers of Jesus Christ, even as we are standing in the need of help and prayer ourselves. What about you? Has God strategically put you in a place to help build people up? Take a stand against poverty, disaster, and hunger. Your donation to World Renew's gift catalog provides people with a sturdy foundation on which to build a future with hope. (<https://worldrenew.net/giftsP>)

Find out your options at <https://worldrenew.net/gifts> or go to www.rockoflifecrc.org and click on Publications and select Gift Catalogue. If you would like a hard copy of the catalogue, please contact Renae in the office at 320-235-3060



Thoughts on Christmas

Pastor John and His Young Parishioner

It was the Sunday after Christmas at Church and Pastor John was looking at the nativity scene prior to packing away the figures when he noticed the baby Jesus was missing from the scene.

Immediately, Pastor John turned towards the parsonage in order to call the police. But as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant, Jesus.

Pastor John walked up to Harry and said, 'Well, Harry, where did you get the little infant?' Harry replied honestly, 'I took him from the church, Pastor John.'

'And why did you take him?'

With a sheepish smile, Harry said, 'Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride around the block in it.'

"One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas Day. Don't clean it up too quickly." - *Andy Rooney*

"I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph." - *Shirley Temple*

"Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas . . . perhaps . . . means a little bit more!" - *Theodor Seuss Geisel, How the Grinch Stole Christmas*

"I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas with a note on it saying, toys not included."
- *Bernard Manning*

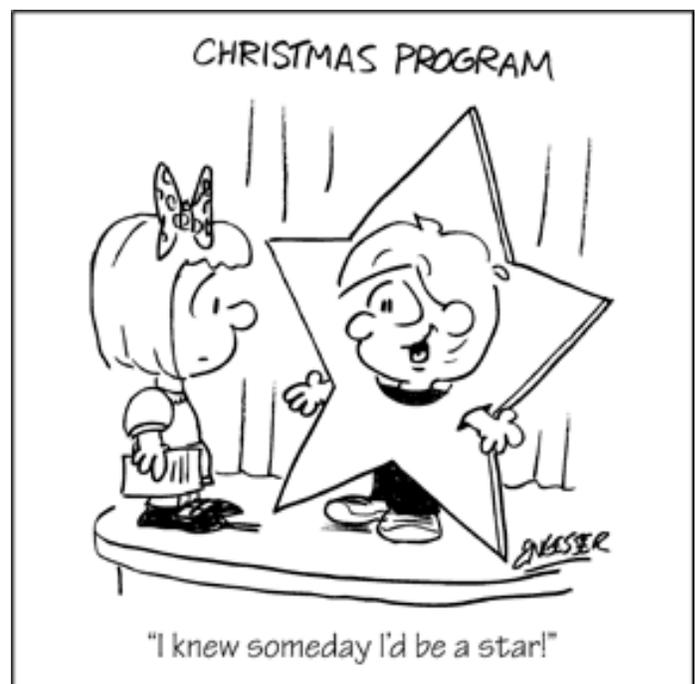
"Adults can take a simple holiday for Children and screw it up. What began as a presentation of simple gifts to delight and surprise children around the Christmas tree has culminated in a woman unwrapping six shrimp forks from her dog, who drew her name."
- *Erma Bombeck*

"People are so worried about what they eat between Christmas and the New Year, but they really should be worried about what they eat between the New Year and Christmas."- *Author Unknown*

Christmas to-do list

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among brothers,
to make music in the heart. —Howard Thurman

"Some gifts you can give this Christmas are beyond monetary value: Mend a quarrel, dismiss suspicion, tell someone 'I love you.' Give something away — anonymously. Forgive someone who has treated you wrong. Turn away wrath with a soft answer. Visit someone in a nursing home. Apologize if you were wrong. Be especially kind to someone with whom you work. Give as God gave to you in Christ, without obligation, or announcement, or reservation, or hypocrisy." —*Charles Swindoll*





Rock of Life CRC

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Willmar CRC Statements

Purpose Statement

Worship

God in obedience to His Word

Equip

God's people to do His work

Proclaim

God's love and grace to His World

II Timothy 3:16&17

Values Statement

Loving

God above all, and our neighbors as ourselves

Praying

in all circumstances because God controls our ministry

Preaching

and teaching from God's Word, the Holy Bible

Giving

of our time, gifts and money which are blessings from God

Seeking

the Lord's will and direction in everything we do

Helping

others to find and follow Jesus.

Ephesians 4:1b-2

Vision Statement

Reaching Up

to God as we listen for His voice in our prayers of thanks, confession and praise.

Reaching In

becoming more Christlike, clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness

Reaching Out

Boldly through the power of the Holy Spirit, with words and deed, in our Community and worldwide.

Kid's Corner

The star of Christmas
When Jesus was born, a star led the wise men to him.
Directions: Place the words in order, by their numbers, on the blanks below to complete Matthew 2:10, NIV.

“ _____ , _____ : _____ , NIV”

The gospel of Luke tells about Joseph and Mary taking the baby Jesus to the temple “to present him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22, NRSV). An old man approached and said the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he wouldn't die before he saw the Messiah. Seeing Jesus and being moved by the Holy Spirit, this man proclaimed that the baby was indeed the Messiah.

What was the man's name?

- A. Simeon
- B. Simon
- C. Phanael
- D. Zechariah

When Jesus was born, which two earthly rulers were in power?

- A. Quirinius
- B. Pontius Pilate
- C. Caesar Augustus
- D. King Herod

Answers: A and C (See Luke 2:1-2).

Answer: A (See Luke 2:25).