

Meanwhile Advent raises his hand and drags his feet, while the winsome among us are already singing *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* and *Joy to the World*.

In a world of double espresso shots, iPhones, text messaging, social media sites, and status updates, we've simply no time or patience for Advent's questions. In fact we do our very best year in and year out to cut off his arm so that he can't raise it, so he can't slow us down, so that we can skip over Advent and get straight to Christmas.

And even though Advent is only four weeks long, it is a monstrously slow time of the year in the Church because it bridles us from getting to Christmas when we want to. But it is that way by design. Advent is that time of the year to stop, and to reflect upon the reality that while Christ has come in the flesh, that the Virgin has conceived, that the cross has happened and the resurrection of Him who was crucified is part of history, we still wait for when He will come again to take us to Himself.

And so, we live our lives in a perpetual Advent. Advent is our year-round default because we live our lives waiting and watching, looking and listening for what has been promised to come at last. Advent is the reality of our daily lives. And Advent forces us to deal with that reality. And doing that can be painful because it is work.

We don't like to wait. No one does. But the answer to Advent's persistent questions is not to ignore or avoid them. The answer is to embrace them. To let them burrow into your minds and hearts, so that the answer embedded in Advent's questions may become clear: The one who once came to fulfill the promise of God is coming still to do the same.

There is joy in that reality. There is joy in that waiting because the promise is sure and God cannot lie. The one who once came in the flesh of the Babe of Bethlehem is still coming. He is not a footnote in history. He is an ever-present reality because He still comes. He comes in His Word and in His Sacraments. And He is coming again. Let that take hold of you this Advent. For what we celebrate on Christmas and Easter is not simply a past event or an escape from reality. We celebrate the joyful reality that the Lord remains actively involved in our present and future because of what He has done in Christ in the past.

So, are there any questions? Oh, geez, why did I even ask? Yes, Advent, now what . . . ?

Disclaimer: Advent-as-the-annoying-guy example shamelessly stolen from Rev. Ken Kelly, a seminary classmate.



The Book of the Month The Very First Christmas

Many children's Christmas books are long on fancy and short on fact. Most of them ignore the themes of the first Christmas and opt instead for fairy tale settings or winter tableaux.

This beautifully illustrated book, a Gold Medallion Book Award winner, fills the gap by presenting fresh insights into the Christmas story from both the scriptural and secular context.

The book tells the story of a young boy Christopher, who no longer wants to hear fairytales; he only wants real bedtime stories. So his mother tells the amazing and miraculous story of Jesus' birth. Along the way, Christopher learns the answers to some challenging questions about the Christmas story. And all the answers are right from the Bible.

This book makes a wonderful gift for children, families, and friends.

From the President

Pastor and Congregation 101

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

The basics of a pastor maintaining a healthy relationship with his congregation are not complex:

1. Preach a decent sermon (2 Tim. 4:15).
2. Love and visit your people (1 Peter 5:24), and pray for them!
3. Be visible in your community (1 Tim. 3:7).

When things aren't going well, sermons can become temptations to deliver subtle or even veiled messages to antagonists, visitation (even of shut-ins) can slow or cease and pastors may begin to absent themselves from the community (church and beyond), which they may perceive as unsupportive or even threatening.

Likewise, being a healthy congregation with respect for the pastor is simple too:

1. Love and care for your pastor (especially pray for him!).
2. Openly address concerns and be clear about expectations, starting with the list of passages in the ordination/installation rite. (See LSB Agenda, pgs. 160–165.)
3. Confront and call to repentance members of the congregation who are disruptive and undermine the ministry of the congregation, especially through gossip and lack of charity.

All this is quite simple, but it all becomes very complex in real life, as we've all seen.

It does happen that a pastor may be called to a congregation that has a history of poor practice based on a weak or even wrong doctrinal understanding. Let's be honest. Our seminary graduates are taught the position of Synod (and we



believe the Scriptures and Confessions) that non-LCMS members should not ordinarily be communed. But a graduate may well be called to a congregation that has been communing non-Lutheran folks every week at the rail for decades! It's a touchy subject. If a young pastor doesn't have the best people skills, is a bit insecure and elects to try to change things too soon, it's likely to be a disaster. Both seminaries have been working very, very hard to prepare students for these and many other challenges. Part of that preparation is helping graduates to understand themselves and how they are likely to react to challenging and potentially conflicted situations. Not only new pastors, but experienced pastors get into problems in congregations when they push forward change too

quickly. As a Synod, walking together, it's particularly important as a congregation is preparing to call a pastor that the circuit counselor, vacancy pastor or even district president let the congregation know (very charitably, to be sure) that its practice in this or that area needs to improve before they call a new pastor.

Satan absolutely loves it when he can twist and distort the relationship between pastor and people. If he can set people agossiping, if he can get them to lambaste their pastor, especially to people outside the church, he's giddy with delight. He knows that no disgruntled congregant is going to be doing any inviting to church, much less evangelism. Gripping is much more pleasing to the flesh. Satan knows that if he can bring enough angst to a pastor's life, wife and family, he might even pick off the shepherd and cause the sheep to scatter for good! If the old devil can cause an impatient pastor, who needs to grow in his knowledge and application of the Scriptures, to bring the hammer down and lead by coercion and not conviction, it's a short trip to congregational chaos. If Satan can get a pastor to wrap himself in the church's confession while being absolutely unwilling to confess that he's not Jesus and could have acted more patiently, could have been a much better teacher, could be much more diligent in visitation, could improve his preaching skills then the trap's been sprung, and the devil is laughing all the way to hell.

Pastors and people, check out the ordination and installation rites in the LSB

Agenda (pgs. 160–181). Pastor, the first word of the first verse spoken over you is "Go" (Matt. 28:19). That one word is enough to cause me lamentation in my own ministry. How I've failed! People, on the basis of Heb. 13:17, you promised that you would support your pastor "by your gifts and pray for him always that in his labors he may retain a cheerful spirit and that his ministry among you may be abundantly blessed." How have you failed? Repent. Believe the Gospel. Resolve to do better by the grace of God.

reprinted with permission from The Lutheran Witness.

Education Corner

Carbon-14 in Fossils, Coal, and Diamonds

Carbon-14 (or radiocarbon) is a radioactive form of carbon that scientists use to date fossils. But it decays so quickly—with a half-life of only 5,730 years—that none is expected to remain in fossils after only a few hundred thousand years. Yet carbon-14 has been detected in “ancient” fossils—supposedly up to hundreds of millions of years old—ever since the earliest days of radiocarbon dating.

If radiocarbon lasts only a few hundred thousand years, why is it found in all the earth’s diamonds dated at billions of years old?

Even if every atom in the whole earth were carbon-14, they would decay so quickly that no carbon-14 would be left on earth after only 1 million years. Contrary to expectations, between 1984 and 1998 alone, the scientific literature reported carbon-14 in 70 samples that came from fossils, coal, oil, natural gas, and marble representing the fossil-bearing portion of the geologic record, supposedly spanning more than 500 million years. All contained radiocarbon. Further, analyses of fossilized wood and coal samples, supposedly spanning 32–350 million years in age, yielded ages between 20,000 and 50,000 years using carbon-14 dating. Diamonds supposedly 1–3 billion years old similarly yielded carbon-14 ages of only 55,000 years.

A sea creature, called an ammonite, was discovered near Redding, California, accompanied by fossilized wood. Both fossils are claimed by strata dating to be 112–120 million years old but yielded radiocarbon ages of only thousands of years.

Even that is too old when you realize that these ages assume that the earth’s magnetic field has always been constant. But it was stronger in the past, protecting the atmosphere from solar radiation and reducing the radiocarbon production. As a result, past creatures had much less



radiocarbon in their bodies, and their deaths occurred much more recently than reported!

So the radiocarbon ages of all fossils and coal should be reduced to less than 5,000 years, matching the timing of their burial during the Flood. The age of diamonds should be reduced to the approximate time of biblical creation—about 6,000 years ago.

Old-earth advocates repeat the same two hackneyed defenses, even though they were resoundingly demolished years ago. The first cry is, “It’s all contamination.” Yet for thirty years AMS radiocarbon laboratories have subjected all samples, before they carbon-14 date them, to repeated brutal treatments with strong acids and bleaches to rid them of all contamination.⁶ And when the instruments are tested with blank samples, they yield zero radiocarbon, so there can’t be any contamination or instrument problems.

The second cry is, “New radiocarbon was formed directly in the fossils when nearby decaying uranium bombarded traces of nitrogen in the buried fossils.” Carbon-14 does form from such decay of nitrogen, but actual calculations demonstrate conclusively this process does not produce the levels of radiocarbon that world-class laboratories have found in fossils, coal, and diamonds.

Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters List

2 Dec	Tim & Teri Pollock - East
	Harold & Irene Wattjes – West
9 Dec	Donna & Gunnar Campbell - East
	Jim Dyer - West
16 Dec	Joan Vukelich - East
	Laverl Byers - West
23 Dec	Ruth Sims – East
	Becky Kappes – West
31 Dec	Tim & Teri Pollock – East
6 Jan	Harold & Irene Wattjes – East
	Donna & Gunnar Campbell - West
13 Jan	Jim Dyer – East
	Joan Vukelich – West
20 Jan	Laverl Byers – East
	Ruth Sims – West
27 Jan	Tim & Teri Pollock – East
	Donna & Gunnar Campbell - West

Coffee Committee

Dec	Laverl & Dolores Byers
Jan	Janet Stumeier

Altar Committee

2 Dec	Ann Hilgendorf
9 Dec	Ann Hilgendorf
16 Dec	Ann Carroll
23 Dec	Ann Carroll
24 Dec	Ann Carroll
25 Dec	Lauren Braaten
30 Dec	Lauren Braaten
31 Dec	Lauren Braaten
6 Jan	Carol Munson
13 Jan	Carol Munson
20 Jan	Carol Munson
27 Jan	Judy Legg

Elder On Duty – Communion

2 Dec	Josh Whitson
9 Dec	Josh Whitson
16 Dec	Josh Whitson
23 Dec	Greg Nau
24 Dec	Greg Nau
25 Dec	Geof Danielson
30 Dec	Geof Danielson
31 Dec	Jack Appleby

ATTENDANCE			OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
11/4	21	92	\$3,638.30	\$25.00	\$0.00
11/11	16	84	\$2,054.78	\$25.00	\$0.00
11/18	21	80	\$2,247.50	\$0.00	\$20.00
11/22	45	0	\$745.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
11/25	18	82	\$1,553.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	121	338	\$10,239.08	\$50.00	\$70.00
Total	459		\$10,239.08	\$50.00	\$70.00

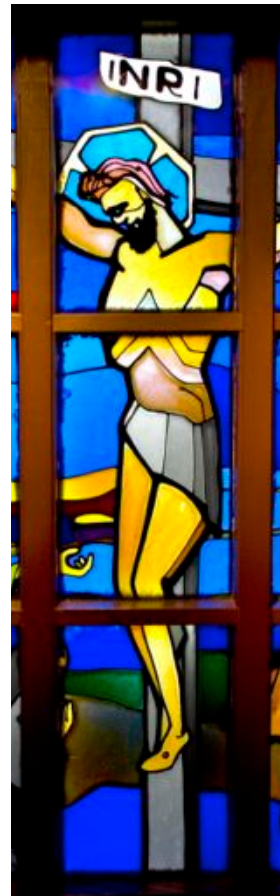
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tuscola, Illinois, Contacts' birthdays and events

Dec 2012 (Central Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<p>Catechism Recitation</p> <p>Barbel Bepko's birthday</p> <p>9am - Divine Service w/</p> <p>10:30am - Bible Class</p> <p>10:30am - Sunday</p> <p>11:30am - Catechism</p>	<p>Cara Jabucka's birthday</p> <p>Janet Pollock's birthday</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>9pm - Board of Elders</p>	<p>Ned Oiger's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>Wilhelmina Braaten's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>8:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm - Advent Midweek</p>	<p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>Christina Gustafson's</p> <p>John Moore's birthday</p> <p>Lystene Hobb's</p> <p>Paster's Day Off</p>	<p>David Gustafson's</p> <p>Dawn Stokes's birthday</p> <p>Virginia Oubonere</p> <p>9:30pm - Divine Service</p>
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<p>Children's Sermon</p> <p>George Crawford's</p> <p>Regann Bowles's</p> <p>9am - Divine Service w/</p> <p>10:30am - Bible Class</p> <p>10:30am - Sunday</p> <p>11:30am - Catechism</p>	<p>Patricia Romine's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>9pm - Board of Mission</p>	<p>Nicholas Ciar's birthday</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>11am - Circuit Pastors'</p>	<p>Oliver Braaten's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>8:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm - Advent Midweek</p>	<p>David Stumpfer's</p> <p>Justin Norman's</p> <p>Torkar Bowles's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>12am - Ladies Aid</p>	<p>Emily Goprowska's</p> <p>Jacob Wright's birthday</p> <p>Paster's Day Off</p>	<p>9:30pm - Divine Service</p>
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<p>Catechism Recitation</p> <p>David Alexander's</p> <p>9am - Divine Service w/</p> <p>10:15am - LWML</p> <p>10:30am - Bible Class</p> <p>10:30am - Sunday</p> <p>11:30am - Greening of</p> <p>7pm - Sunday School</p>	<p>Arligh Jones's</p> <p>Bill Brough's birthday</p> <p>Leigh Ann Whitson's</p> <p>Mark Whittop's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>9pm - Board of Ed</p> <p>7:30pm - Veters</p>	<p>Ava Whitson's birthday</p> <p>Kelci Hobb's birthday</p> <p>Tiffany Croun's</p> <p>Tonia Pollock's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>Nichole Pop's birthday</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>8:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7pm - Advent Midweek</p>	<p>Janice Arthur's birthday</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>Les Wycluff's birthday</p> <p>Paster's Day Off</p>	<p>9:30pm - Divine Service</p>
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<p>Catechism Recitation</p> <p>James Dyer's</p> <p>9am - Divine Service w/</p> <p>2:30pm - Nursing Home</p>	<p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>7pm - Christmas Eve</p>	<p>Sabrina Fax's birthday</p> <p>9am - Christmas Day</p>	<p>William Koss's birthday</p> <p>8:30pm - Choir Practice</p>	<p>Sharon Allen's</p> <p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>Guy Steens's birthday</p> <p>Margaret Simwell's</p> <p>Paster's Day Off</p>	<p>Norma Utba's</p> <p>Ray Utba's anniversary</p> <p>Ray Utba's birthday</p> <p>9:30pm - Divine Service</p>
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
<p>9am - Divine Service w/</p> <p>2pm - Nursing Home</p>	<p>7:30am - Matins</p> <p>9am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>7am - New Year's Eve</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>

In This Issue . . .

From Pastor's Desk	1
Book of the Month	2
From President Harrison	3
Education Corner	5
Calendar	7



Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.