

Adoration Evangelical Lutheran Church

ETCETERA



• DECEMBER 2021-FEBRUARY 2022 •

Pastor Matt's Musings

In this season where we celebrate Christ's presence in our human form, and in this season where we share love through the giving of plenty of Christmas presents, I have an honest confession to make. It's hard for me to live in the present moment.

Not just as a pastor. But as a flesh-and-blood human. Being in the present; staying still in the moment; listening and noticing what is happening here and now. All of these do not come naturally to me. If you resemble these remarks, "Fear Not!"

Luke, our gospel storyteller in this season of stories about God's birth in our flesh—seems to understand this is a part of our shared experience of being human. Time and again, from the messenger Gabriel's visitation to Mary, to Simeon and Anna's joy, to Jesus' baptism and his Holy Spirit flung sojourn into the wilderness, Luke's stories are filled with reminders that these are not just historical memories or ancient lore.

The word NOW shows up all over Luke's gospel—as if Luke's trying to crack through our nostalgia and our future fear and remind us to be present and notice the healing and salvation of our God are NOW already present all around us. *Now! The feast and celebration begin. This IS the feast of victory for our God. Now your servant can rest in peace. Today you will be with me in paradise.*

Even if we can't be fully present, we believe God's presence in the gift of Christ's birth already has an impact and is, as his mother sings, "turning the world right-side-up again." Now. And forever more.

As we, dear church, enter this Christmas season, may we rest in the stillness, the presence, and the good news that Christ is born today. In this moment. May your seasons be filled with the signs of hope and promise that are here given for us and for *all*. Let us delight in Mary and Joseph, and the holy child Jesus in the manger.

Pastor Matt



In a time of drastic change, one can be too preoccupied with what is ending or too obsessed about what is beginning.

In either case, one loses touch with the present and its obscure, but dynamic possibilities.

What really matters is openness, readiness, attention, [and] courage to face risk.

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going.

What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith, and hope. In such an event, courage is the authentic form taken by love. --

-Thomas Merton.

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Pastor

The Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse

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A Few Notes...

** Pastor Matt will be taking vacation from December 26th-January 3rd.*

We welcome Pastor Jessica Short, who will lead us in worship for our Epiphany celebration on Sunday, January 2nd.

+ In case of pastoral emergency during these times, please contact Rev. Brian Hooper at (262) 271-8913.

ADORATION CHURCH COUNCIL CORNER

The Adoration Church Council met for its regular meeting on December 14th, 2021.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- The finances for the year are looking strong heading into December. There may be expenses related to fire and sprinkler updates on the horizon.
- The Council voted to resume serving coffee after worship.
- New Light poles with brighter lights have been installed in the parking lot.
- 2 new furnaces were installed and are working well.
- There has been interest by some members of Adoration in taking over the cleaning duties currently handled by a cleaning service. The Council approved taking the next steps to covering custodial tasks in house.
- The Council thanks Cheryl Stefanski, who has resigned from the Council, for her service as Secretary over the past years. A gift was shared with her, and we wish Cheryl and Dan the best as they continue their faith journey.

Mark Your Calendar...



AAA Meeting on Tuesday, January 4,
2022



Mark Your Calendars

It may be the first Christmas without a loved family member who has recently died; dealing with anxiety and depression; loss of a job; a divorce; estranged from a loved one; or it may simply be a time of year that has always been difficult.

This worship service will include musical reflections, readings, a brief meditation, and an bring before God our deepest sadness and burdens before we gather for our Christmas celebrations.

We remember our deepest sadness and the need for Emmanuel, God with us. We will hold this service on one of the longest nights of the year and celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion. You are welcome to invite friends and family who might need such a time of reflection.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Wednesday, Dec. 22nd

9:30 a.m.- Bible Study

6:15 p.m.- Blue Christmas service with St. Paul's. All are welcome!

Friday, December 24th

4:30 p.m.- Christmas Eve Worship with Holy Communion

9:00 p.m.- Christmas Eve Worship with Holy Communion

Saturday, December 25th

10:00 a.m.- Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, December 26th

9:00 a.m.- Worship with Holy Communion

Pastor Matt will be on vacation from Dec. 26th--January 3rd.

NO Wednesday Night Worship on December 29th

All offerings counting toward 2021 giving should be received by Friday, Dec. 31st.

Sunday, January 2nd

9:00 a.m.- Epiphany Worship with Holy Communion led by Pastor Jessica Short

Tuesday, January 4th

1:00 p.m. - AAA Meeting at Adoration

Wednesday, January 5th

9:30 a.m. - Bible Study

6:15 p.m.- Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, January 9th

9:00 a.m. - Worship with Holy Communion

10:10ish- Inspired Bible Study in Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, January 11th

6:00 p.m. Church Council



O COME LET US ADORE HIM!

CHRISTMAS EVE: 4:30 AND 9 PM
CHRISTMAS DAY: 10 AM
SUNDAY, DEC. 26TH: 9 AM

ADORATION LUTHERAN
3840 W. EDGERTON,
GREENFIELD, WISCONSIN

ADORATIONLC.ORG

Ushers are still needed for Christmas Day at 10 a.m.
If you would like to serve, please contact Bill Wakefield at: 414-761-2539
or see him at Sunday mass.

How Adoration is Making a Difference

Once again, we are hoping to fill up the hat and mitten tree. Your thoughtful donations will be helping kids from Katie Schmidt's school, Vieau Elementary, in Milwaukee. Our church family is so caring, and I know we can fill this tree up with needed hats and mittens. What a blessing we can be to these amazing kids!
Thank you in advance for your generosity!



This year, in lieu of a toy drive, Adoration will be collecting pre-packaged individual snack items to distribute to the Greenfield Police & Fire Departments as a show of appreciation for their hard work and service to our community. Many of these men and women will be spending the holidays away from their families, often with little time between calls. There will be a collection box in the Gathering Space through 12/19/21 for food donations. Cash and checks can be put in the offering plate with the word "Snacks" on the envelope. Items will be divided and distributed among the three stations. Recommended items include: beef sticks/jerky, chips, granola bars, trail mix, cookies, etc. Items must be pre-packaged due to Covid precautions. No homemade or previously opened snacks will be accepted.



Thank you, the donations for Elmdale and our former member were well above what we had hoped for.

The gifts were delivered to Elmdale on December 8th. We have additional funds for Elmdale for future needs. We will be discussing those needs during our January meeting.

Sandy was delivering the gift cards and contributions to our former member this past Sunday, December 12th.

We really appreciate your support and generosity. With your prayers and support, we continue to find ways to reach out to our community.

Thank you,

Community Outreach Committee



“WRAPPED IN LOVE” Ministry Blessed

On December 12th, we commissioned and blessed ‘Wrapped in Love,’ a ministry begun before the pandemic at Adoration focused on hand-crafting wraps and shawls to be shared with those (inside and outside our congregation) in need of a tangible sign of God’s presence and love. Wendy Haas shares a few insights into this ministry and how you might share a ‘Wrapped in Love’ item with someone you care for.

What is a prayer wrap?

It is a wearable hug crafted with love and prayers from maker to recipient.

It can be knitted, crocheted, woven or crafted with cloth in another way.

All wraps have a prayer card pinned to them, for the person receiving it.

We welcome and

encourage anyone to make these wraps.

When might a Prayer Wrap be shared with someone?

Going through multiple medical procedures

During prolonged illness and recovery

As a comfort after loss or in grief

Someone going through stressful times

How do you give someone a Prayer Wrap?

Select your wrap paying attention to the size. Some wraps are smaller and some larger.

Make sure there is a prayer card attached to it.

Take it and give it to the person in need. If there are no wraps, please be patient.

We are working on them! These wraps are handmade and take time.

If you are considering giving a congregation member a wrap, it would be kind to communicate to others, so that person receives only one.



Mt. Meru Coffee Project is once again offering 2 special holiday treats! The Holiday Blend (blue bag with ornament sticker) is among the highest cupping scores of the 2021 coffee harvest. With subtle natural flavors of honey, dark chocolate, and a winery aftertaste, this Vienna roast is sure to be a crowd pleaser. The second offering is the beloved Holiday Sampler. The sampler includes one 2 oz. coffee package of each of the six 'flavors' available (hazelnut, chocolate raspberry, butter pecan, French vanilla, peaberry and regular). These sampler packs make great gifts for the coffee lover or can be split up to make stocking stuffers or small gifts for your family, friends, coworkers, etc.! Pricing is \$15 for a bag of the Holiday Blend or \$18 for the Holiday Sampler box. Both are currently available in the Gathering Space. For larger orders, contact Jess Hodgson (jesstar_13@yahoo.com or 608-797-2948) with your order. While you can order online at [Mt. Meru Premium Tanzanian Coffee](https://www.mtmerucoffee.org), it is more cost effective to order through Adoration. Congregational ordering is done on Sunday evening with shipments arriving on Wednesdays.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.mtmerucoffee.org>



Secret Pals 2022

Adoration will be beginning a new year of “Secret Pals” in January. “Secret Pals” is a program through which members of our church commit to “secret” acts of kindness, communication, and care with the elder members of our congregation. Secret pals often send cards, mail, and small signs of friendship.

If you would like to participate in Secret Pals in 2022, contact Mardy Lazaris at 414.421.0848 or tmlazaris@att.net.

All are welcome to be senders.

To be a receiver, you must be homebound or 80+.



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Inspired Book Chats Resume in January

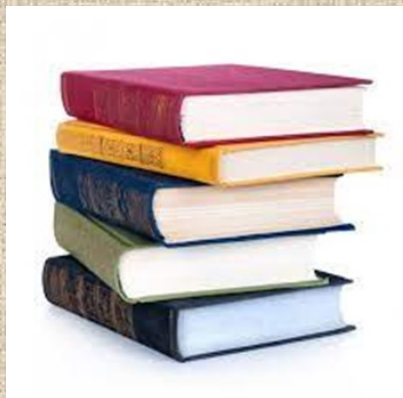
This January, we'll wrap up our Sunday morning chats about the book *Inspired*, by Rachel Held Evans! Join us after the 9 a.m. service as we explore the stories of the New Testament and unlearn some of the harmful ways the bible has been used in the lives of Christians.

January 9th: The Beast & Resistance Stories

January 16th: The Water & Gospel Stories

January 23rd: The Sea & Fish Stories

January 30th: The Letter & Church Stories & Epilogue



Let's Share the Good News!



The annual **"We Love Our Church"** auction on December 5th raised **\$2,665!!!**

Adoration Cookie Sale Success



- 106 pounds of cookies baked for this year's sale!
- Dozens of volunteers baking, sorting, packing, and selling
- 23 cars in line as the sale began at 9 a.m.
- 21 minutes before cookies were sold out!!!
- ∞ number of lives gladdened by friendly faces and yummy cookies shared among friends!

A Christmas Cookie Miracle—Recounted by Wendy Haas

*Three containers of cookies were left. The last **three** cars were in line at this year's cookie sale. Scarcity should have been in the air.*

The first of three cars came up to buy cookies. She inquired, "Is that all that's left of the cookies?" Yes, we replied. Looking in her rear-view mirror, she saw two cars behind her. She bought one container so the other cars could have one.

Car number two pulled up and asked to purchase one container of cookies. Were we about to have a loaves and fishes moment?

Car number three pulled up and asked for one container of cookies. With no more cars in line, the cookies had run out at the perfect time! What a lovely, generous, and fitting ending to a fast and joyous cookie sale.

Would you like to start a new Epiphany Tradition? Celebrate a *House Blessing*



Matthew writes that when the magi saw the shining star stop overhead, they were filled with joy. “On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother” (Matt. 2:10-11). In the home, Christ is met in family and friends, in visitors and strangers. In the home, faith is shared, nurtured, and put into action. In the home, Christ is welcome. The Church has a custom of blessing homes on the Feast of the Epiphany and the week following. Family and friends gather to ask God’s blessing on their homes and those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows.

During the time after Epiphany Pastor Matt would love to gather with you and celebrate the blessing of your home. Following an eastern European tradition, a visual blessing may be inscribed with white chalk above the main door; for example, 20 + CMB + 22. The numbers change with each new year. The three letters stand for either the ancient Latin blessing *Christe mansionem benedicat*, which means “Christ, bless this house,” or the legendary names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar).

If you’d like to have a blessing of your house, apartment, condo, or even a room, contact Pastor Matt to set up a time in January to begin this fun tradition!



Your End-of-Year Gifts to Adoration

May Have Added Tax Benefits in 2021!

The CARES ACT, passed by Congress in 2020, extended many charitable giving tax incentives. As you consider end-of-year offerings, note these one-time benefits.

Higher Deduction Limits: Extended for 2021, a provision allows individuals to deduct cash contributions made to qualified charitable organizations of up to 100% of their adjusted gross income (AGI). The limit was 60% prior to the CARES Act.

Extended \$300 Charitable Deduction for Non-Itemizers: Also extended is a provision that enables taxpayers who take the standard deduction to claim an above-the-line tax deduction for a total of \$300 in qualified cash donations on their tax return. This means that taxpayers, including married individuals filing separate returns, can claim a

deduction of up to \$300 for cash contributions to qualifying charities during 2021. The maximum deduction is \$600 for married individuals filing joint returns.

We have already received many generous pledges and increases in giving for 2022! There's still time to help us end the year in a strong financial position!

Thank you for your support of Adoration's mission and ministry, and for giving us the flexibility and freedom to dream big as we imagine the future of our outreach to the community as a place of sacred story and sacred rest.

Friendly Reminders

A Few Covid-19 Reminders from the Back-in-the-Building Committee

As we enter the Christmas Season, Adoration continues to practice care and caution amidst COVID.

We are continuing to follow CDC and Wisconsin Council of Churches guidance to ventilate the sanctuary with open windows, even as colder air surrounds us. Please keep windows ajar during worship, and feel free to move to a warmer zone if it's too drafty.

On account of increasing positive tests, and the presence of the Omicron variant in Wisconsin, we kindly ask you to wear face coverings, regardless of vaccination status!

Several of our members, including Pastor Matt, have already received vaccine boosters! If you haven't yet received a booster or vaccine, consider doing so for the sake of your neighbor!



If you or someone you love is hospitalized or for any reason
wishes Pastor Matt might visit,
please feel free to contact him at 920-484-8050