

# Christ Lutheran Church

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## Quarterly Newsletter

Dear Members of Christ,

We now have a full year of stats to dive into since I arrived here to serve you as your pastor. I must say there are many positives to look at. As it was reported at the voter's assembly, we have been blessed with thirty-nine percent of the congregation worshipping in our sanctuary on an average Sunday. This has gone up one percent since I arrived last July! With the goal for any congregation to get to the coveted fifty percent, it is great to see there has been changes for the good. Let's continue that trend of hearing some more positive news.

We have been averaging around fourteen people on any given Sunday, which for our group is great. The only change again with that number is that it went up from last year. We also have been blessed with growth. We welcomed members in February, September and October. What a joy to not only bring these members into the flock, but one of them was also brought in by Holy Baptism. It shows us that whatever the age, whether brand new to the world or advanced in years, the Lord certainly knows who are His and He brings them into His loving arms.

We also saw some blessings but not in the way the world sees it. For the world, when we experienced the loss of loved ones, it can be confusing and a time of great sorrow and distress. The first death our congregation was affected by was a former member and relative to a family in our congregation. In His many years here, he helped out in many ways to make sure the church was running on all cylinders. Very recently, on the fifth of this month, we lost one of our members. Her residency was up in the memory care unit, but even in the end, she could confess her Lord and Savior with the words of the Apostles Creed and say the prayer her Lord taught her to pray (The Lord's Prayer). Now, while God sometimes reveals a timeframe when He might take a loved one from us to their heavenly home, it is never easy even when we know it is okay their mansion is prepared. Ye, as this time of year can bring heartache for us, it is this time of year we rejoice our loved ones are sleeping. While their bodies are sleeping in heavenly peace, their souls are seated at the marriage feast, all because of the season we are in. The season where our Savior put on our flesh to save us from our sins. We may mourn now, but because of the work of our Savior, we are one hundred percent certain we will see our loved ones again!

While we see the blessings that God has given us, it is during this season, which can be a dark and dreary season at times, where we look outside and see the warmth God brings us. As many know, in conversation, I'm always quick to point out the sun that we get to see almost every day. I point this out because being from the Midwest, my wife and I remember the weeks you can go and not see it. The sun is such a wonderful creation by God as it brings light and warmth. As it brings us light and warmth, in these elements we also see it bringing life. So, when the sun is out,

it's not hard to find a smile on my face. This joy found in the light of the sun is recorded many times in Scripture, with this one sticking out to me.

Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD!  
Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised! (Psalm 113:1-3)

The name of the Lord be praised! We praise God because in the sun alone that we witness cross the sky, we see how God is continuing to care for us. We praise Him because we know we don't deserve even the smallest of kindnesses He gives us. In the dreary times of the year, we can get sucked up in the darkness and maybe think God is just hiding on the other side of the darkness. As we look out the window and see the rising sun coming over the horizon and shining brightly in the sky, we can put a smile on our faces because the name of the LORD is to be praised. In this life we will continue to have to deal with crosses. While no one ever wants to carry a cross and we can't carry our crosses on our own because we do fall, the Sun of Righteousness comes with healing on His wings, and we put all our problems on Him. He alone carries us and our problems, and He will keep our path lit. We can look to the sun and see our Savior come.

The bright light of our Savior certainly did shine out for our community to see this year as well. Not only did we host the first area Reformation service since Covid, we participated in two community Bazaar's. The first one took place in the hospital and the second one took place at the fairgrounds with the quota club. Again, I have said it many times, but thanks again to all who helped with the set-up, take-down, working the booth and making items. Everything we sold was homemade and the community appreciated what we had to sell. We had a very busy booth and because of you and your contacts in the community making our booth busy, it brought in many more to check us out and I was able to hand out information about who we are. We look forward to seeing if the prospects we encountered will continue to look for more information about us, knowing it is all in God's hands.

As we end the year of 2024 and head into 2025, while there will be challenges and we don't know what could try to block our road, like all our brothers and sisters in Christ, we find hope in the new year by finding hope in the manger. In the manger we see God keeps His promises to us. We see His great love. Here is the light of the world, and the light that will shine on us forever.

May the Lord bless and keep you in this joyous Christmas season!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you,



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