



THE Messenger

Vol. 24, No. 1

A Newsletter of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church of Antioch, Illinois

December 2023



I Want to Get Closer to God... **Can God Help Me Get to Know Him Better?**

Steve and Caroline attended the Christmas party at Steve's company. It was a difficult moment for them both, though. Even though the partygoers were enjoying each other's company, Steve and Caroline were pretty much ignored. In the middle of all the holiday cheer, they really didn't fit in.

There's a reason for that. Steve very recently joined the company. He didn't know many people at work yet. He knew many of their names but didn't really know any of these people very well. They had all known each other and worked together a long time.

When you're the quiet type anyway, it's pretty hard to just jump into Christmas party conversation. If only someone could bridge the gap and help Steve and Caroline get to know some of those people better!

Do you ever feel distant from your Creator — you know there's a God, but you just don't feel close to him? It's a rotten feeling. But God actually bridged that gap to help us get to know him better.

The Bible tells us, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has

made him known" (*John 1:18*). The "One and Only" is Jesus, who came to our world to help us know God better. The birth of Jesus is a big celebration because it is what God did for us to get closer to him. On the night of his birth an angel told shepherds, "Today a Savior has been born to you" (*Luke 2:11*).

You see, the selfish things we have done or said create distance between us and our Creator. God knew that and sent Jesus to bridge that gap. He came to us and took the punishment for our selfish words and actions so we could clearly see and understand God's love. His birth we celebrate this month was just the start. His death and resurrection, they were the clincher.

Have you experienced the feelings Steve and Caroline must have had at that party? God has done the work of reaching out to you so you won't have that experience with him. That's what Christmas is actually all about. In Jesus *God came to us* so we all could and would know God better.

Join us this December at Faith to find out how Jesus made God and his complete forgiveness known. That's the very best way we get closer to God — through Jesus, whose birth we celebrate, whose birth changes everything.

FAITH...  **WELS**
Christ's Love, Our Calling.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

24300 W. Grass Lake Road (at HWY 59)
Antioch, Illinois 60002
847-395-1660

Worship Services Saturday at 5:30 PM
Sunday at 9:30 AM

Sunday School Weekly at 8:15 AM

Adult Studies Sundays 8:15 AM & Wednesdays 7:00 PM

Visit us online...
www.faithantioch.org
facebook.com/faithantioch

or on the radio!
WFEL 99.9 FM
Antioch

Wednesday Advent Evening Prayer

Special Advent evening worship services in December are a way we annually prepare heart, mind and soul for the coming of the Christ. While these quiet evenings focused on the Word of our God prepare us to celebrate the Christ's arrival in Bethlehem, we also prepare ourselves to meet him face to face on the Last Day. Until then we also meet him continually in his Word itself.

Our Wednesday gatherings this December are themed "Sing Advent Psalms of Deliverance." We focus on the psalms that are assigned to Advent Sunday worship and how they shape not only our preparation for observing Christmas but also meeting Jesus when he returns in Glory. We pray these meditations guide us in readying our hearts to meet our Savior every single day.

If your December often feels loud and hectic, consider joining us for a quieter, more thoughtful moment. Each Wednesday identical services begin at 3:30 & 7:00 PM.

A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS

Saturday 12/16 & Sunday 12/17

Every Christmas Eve tens of millions of people across the world tune in their devices to hear a truly glorious service: The Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols from King's College, Cambridge, England. As one of the great traditions of the Christmas season Lessons and Carols is also sung by church choirs large and small in every part of the English-speaking world. Faith Lutheran of Antioch will once again host a Lessons & Carols service this year.

A Service of Lessons and Carols has been an annual tradition at King's since 1918. But its roots go back even further to the 1880s. Beginning with *Once in Royal David's City*, sixteen boy and fourteen undergraduate male voices sing carols old and new. Lectors read nine Scripture lessons tracing the history of God's plan of salvation in Christ Jesus. Since 1928, the service has been broadcast worldwide to millions of listeners every year, even during World War II when the stained glass (and heating system) was removed from the cathedral for

safety reasons. Since its inception, the lessons and prayers have remained virtually unchanged.

As the creator of the Lessons and Carols service pointed out in the first program, the pattern and strength of the service resides with the lessons themselves and not with the music. "The main theme of the service is the development, through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, of the loving purpose of God in sending his Son. Carols and hymns simply guide us in our response to the word of God's promise."

Faith, Antioch has now held these holiday services for more than two decades, becoming a yearly favorite for both congregation & our friends in the community. If you have never experienced a presentation of the Christmas message in this format, you've truly missed out!

Your friends at Faith cordially invite you to join us for this special event. We also encourage you to let your friends know! Identical services will be held the weekend prior to Christmas on Saturday evening, December 16, at 5:30 PM and Sunday morning, December 17, at 9:30 AM.

Weekend Holidays Change the Shape of the Worship Schedule

Most years the December holidays fall on weekdays. For the second year in a row both end of December holidays begin on a weekend. This creates a significant amount of movement in the worship schedule at Faith.

First, it moves the observance of Lessons & Carols to an earlier Sunday than the Fourth Sunday of Advent. This year Faith will observe that last Sunday of the Advent Season on the morning of Christmas Eve with a single worship service at 9:30 AM.

The following weekend since New Year's Eve falls on a Sunday there will be only a single morning worship service at 9:30 AM rather than a New Year's Eve service in the late afternoon/early evening as would happen on a weekday. Worship that Sunday will acknowledge both that it is a Sunday of the Christmas season and the final worship opportunity of 2023.

The first weekend of January has Epiphany falling on a Saturday so Faith will have uniquely different worship services on Saturday, the Festival of the Epiphany, and the following morning.

You are most cordially invited to join us at Faith for...

HOLIDAY WORSHIP 2023

WEDNESDAYS December 6, 13 & 20

ADVENT EVENING PRAYER at 3:30 & 7:00 PM

SATURDAY December 16

FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS at 5:30 PM

SUNDAY December 17

FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS at 9:30 AM

SUNDAY December 24 **CHRISTMAS EVE**

ADVENT IV SUNDAY WORSHIP at 9:30 AM

& then two uniquely different services...

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP at 5:00 PM

CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP at 10:30 PM

MONDAY December 25 **CHRISTMAS DAY**

CHRISTMAS DAY FESTIVAL WORSHIP at 9:30 AM

SUNDAY December 31 *the morning of* **NEW YEAR'S EVE**

SUNDAY WORSHIP at 9:30 AM

SATURDAY January 6 **FESTIVAL OF THE EPIPHANY**

CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP at 5:30 PM

SUNDAY January 7 **THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD**

SUNDAY WORSHIP at 9:30 AM

Ever wondered why . . . ?

Poinsettias?

In its native Mexico, where it blooms at Christmas time, the flower is better known by its native name: *Flower of the Holy Night* referencing a legend that supports the name.

Dating back to at least the 1700s, the story tells of a small boy who had no gift to bring – as was local tradition – to the Christ Child's manger bed at the village church.

As he trudged toward the church a bush growing at roadside caught his eye. He decided he could at least offer the Holy Infant a branch of this bush. As he reverently knelt placing the greens before the manger other children of the village jeered and mocked his offering.

Rising tearfully, he looked down once more at the branches he had placed before the manger. Only now, miraculously, he looked down to find that everywhere his tears fell on the plant it now bloomed a brilliant, red, star-shaped flower.

Joel R. Poinsett, US ambassador to Mexico first introduced this legendary flower to American households. In 1828 he sent a cutting to a stateside friend who interested growers in producing the exotic plant, naming it after the ambassador who so enjoyed it. Today the Poinsettia has grown to be the most popular Christmas plant in the United States and throughout much of the world (and in many more colors than only red!).

Faith to Host a Performance of “The Messiah” on Sunday 12/17

Our December partnerships with community groups have been numerous over the years. You may remember “Tuba Christmas” annually attracting large crowds to the Faith campus the Sunday evening prior to Christmas.

Faith is pleased to begin a new partnership this year with the vocalists and instrumentalists of Festival Arts of Antioch as the Antioch Community Chorus performs the Christmas portion of Handel’s *Messiah*.

This annual endeavor is nearly a fifty year tradition for our community. The performing ensemble has enjoyed their rehearsals in Faith’s unique acoustical environment since October. The performance will begin in the main sanctuary at 7:30 PM, is for the public, and is free.

WFEL 99.9 FM - Your Source for THE MUSIC OF THE SEASON

Looking for “commercial free” traditional, Christ-centered holiday music to help you keep the spirit of the season all December through? We have a suggestion! WFEL 99.9 FM!

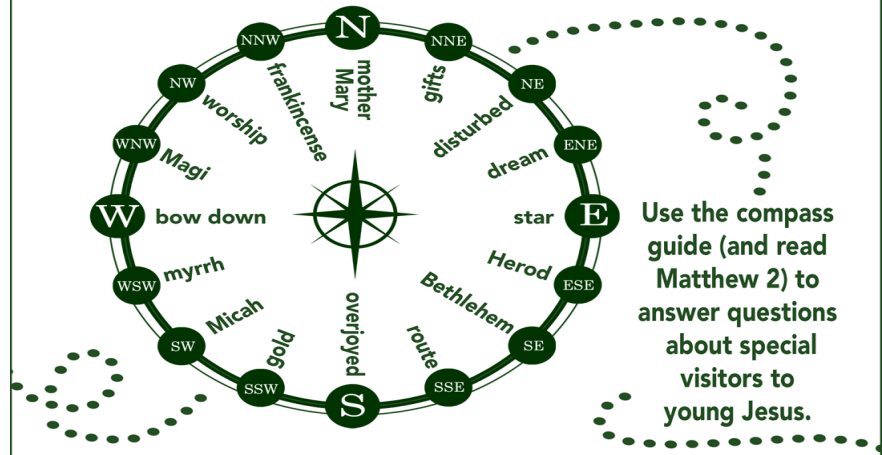
Hear traditional and sacred Christmas music at various times of the day throughout December. Enjoy choral variety from a selection of artists known throughout the world. Seasonal selections increase as December progresses.

Continuous SACRED Christmas music will be offered from noon Christmas Eve through midnight of Christmas Day.

WFEL 99.9 (LP) FM Antioch is Faith’s very own radio station. We broadcast family friendly variety programming locally to Antioch and immediate surrounding 24 hours a day! This December marks 18 years on the air! Check out our schedule on the Faith website to see the variety of programming we feature.

Christmas devotions and sermons, of Faith pastors and others, are also featured throughout the Christmas season until the Festival of the Epiphany on January 6 in both radio programming and also available at our church website - faithantioch.org. Enjoy!

Puzzle!



Use the compass guide (and read Matthew 2) to answer questions about special visitors to young Jesus.

1. Who was king at the time of Jesus’ birth? _____ (ESE)
2. Who came from the East to worship the one born king of the Jews? _____ (WNW)
3. How did King Herod feel about Jesus’ birth? _____ (NE)
4. Which prophet did the chief priests and teachers of the law quote when King Herod asked where the Christ would be born? _____ (SW)
5. In what city would Christ be born? _____ (SE)
6. King Herod lied to the wise men, telling them to search and report back so he, too, could do what to Christ? _____ (NW)
7. What did the Magi see in the east and follow to find Jesus? _____ (E)
8. When the star stopped, how did the Magi feel? _____ (S)
9. Who else did the Magi see with Jesus? His _____ (N)
10. Before they worshiped the child, what did the Magi do? _____ (W)
11. Name the three treasures the Magi brought for Jesus. _____ (SSW) _____ (NNW) _____ (WSW)
12. These three treasures were all brought for Jesus as _____ (NNE)
13. What warned the Magi not to return to Herod? A _____ (ENE)
14. The Magi had to return to their country by another _____ (SSE)

Answers: 1. Herod; 2. Magi; 3. disturbed; 4. Micah; 5. Bethlehem; 6. worship; 7. star; 8. overjoyed; 9. mother Mary; 10. bow down; 11. gold, frankincense, myrrh; 12. gifts; 13. dream; 14. route

Amazing Birth of Jesus

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord,” (Luke 2:11) and we smile in response to the good news. But implied within that good news is the sobering statement that we need to be saved. God, by his nature, is so good, that he came down from heaven so you could be with him forever. A Savior has been born to YOU! He is the Messiah, the LORD!

Pastor Mike Novotny
Time of Grace Ministries

Listen to “Time of Grace”

Monday at 9 am - Tuesday at 9 pm
Thursday at 9 am - Saturday at 9 pm



THE VOICE OF FAITH FOR THE ANTIOCH AREA

The Messenger

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church
1275 Main Street
Antioch Illinois 60002

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We are still located at TWO sites...

FAITH Evangelical...

Lutheran Church
24300 West Grass Lake Road
Antioch Illinois 60002
847-395-1660

Church Offices
(8 AM-5 PM Monday-Friday)
1275 Main Street
Antioch Illinois 60002
847-395-1660

Find out more about us at...

www.faithantioch.org
facebook.com/faithantioch

&

WFEL 99.9 FM Antioch
broadcasting locally 24 hours a day

This is a non-profit publication serving the members of Faith and residents of the surrounding communities with information on activities of the church and the surrounding community.



Our Mission:

The mission of every Christian and of Faith congregation is to help make more and stronger disciples by sharing with everyone the good news of Jesus Christ.

Highlighting Coming Events at FAITH of Antioch

*Unless specifically noted all ministry activity takes place on our **Church Campus...***

- ◆ December 6, 13, 20 **Wednesday Advent Vespers** at 3:30 & 7:00 PM
- ◆ December 16 **A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols** at 5:30 PM
- ◆ December 17 **A Festival of Nine Lesson & Carols** at 9:30 AM
- ◆ December 24 **Christmas Eve Vespers Worship** at 5:00 PM
Christmas Eve "Candlelight" Worship at 10:30 PM
- ◆ December 25 **Christmas Day Festival Worship** at 9:30 AM
- ◆ December 31 **New Year's Eve - Sunday Worship** at 9:30 AM
- ◆ January 6 **Epiphany "Candlelight" Worship** at 5:30 PM
- ◆ January 7 **"Baptism of our Lord" Worship** at 9:30 AM

We invite you to be with us for any of these occasions.

For questions look to our website www.faithantioch.org for more information or feel free to give Pastor Ungemach a call at 847-293-6101.