

Te Deum

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DECEMBER 2004

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Reason For the Season

By Pastor Bucher

"Jesus is the reason for the season." As I've grown in my understanding of Christ's birth and the history of Christmas, I've also grown less fond of this slogan. Let me tell you why.

I don't care for this slogan because I don't know what it is supposed to mean and to whom it is supposed to be directed. "Jesus is the reason for the season." Maybe. It depends what "season" one means. If the "season" refers to the season of Christmas, well, of course, Jesus is the reason for Christmas. But if "season" refers to December or the time of the winter solstice, then, no, Jesus is not the reason for that season.

If the slogan is intended for Christians who, in their busyness and obsession with customs and traditions and parties and gift-giving, have lost focus of the whole point of Christ-

mas, then the slogan has merit. Christians definitely need to be reminded this time of year.

But if the slogan is intended to be a rant against the world by huffy Christians who feel that the season has been hijacked by other celebrations, as well as by commercialization and customs, it has little or no merit. But isn't that exactly the context in which "Jesus is the reason for the season" is often used? Christians hear someone say "Happy holidays" and they become offended. "It's Christmas!" they want to say. "It used to be that everyone celebrated Christmas this time of the year," they think to themselves. "Now all these Johnny-come-lately festivals have sprung up, and now we have to give them equal billing. Ridiculous! *Jesus* is the reason for the season!"

(Continued on page 2)



Lines from LWML

DECEMBER 12th! Everyone is invited to stay after worship for three things

- First, hands are needed to trim the Christmas tree
- Second, goodie bags will be filled for the children's Christmas program which is being held on Friday, December 17th and
- Third, we will have a friendly togetherness while doing these activities. And for this, would you bring a plate of your own

cookies (either baked by you or a store) to share?

Remember the Advent meals on Wednesdays, December 1, 8 and 15 at 5:30 p.m.. At each meal, there will be a card for our seminary student, C. J. Ransdell and a basket for a gift collection for C.J. and his family. This will be our last Christmas gift for C.J. as he will be ordained this spring. Mark your calendars: Jan. 11, Beauty Secrets of Christian Women. ✝

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- See the back page for scheduled services of the Christmas celebration.
- Children's Christmas program is Friday, December 17
- Don't forget to visit the web site and see what's new

Christmas

(Continued from page 1)

But since when do Christians have a monopoly on December and the time of the winter solstice? From ancient times many cultures and religions have held celebrations at the time of the winter solstice (which falls on or around December 25). The winter solstice is that time of the year when the days begin to lengthen again. Darkness begins to give way to light. The increase of sunlight gave hope and joy to ancient people in the darkness and cold of winter. Some believed that their gods were in charge of the increase light and this led to religious celebrations. For example the Romans celebrated Saturnalia from Dec 17-24.

If anything, Christians were Johnny-come-latelies. Many cultures had been holding festivals at the time of the winter solstice for centuries when Christians decided to celebrate Christ's birth on December 25 in the Third or Fourth Centuries. Recall that the Bible does not tell us the day or month that Christ was born. The best theory of why the Christians chose that day to celebrate Christ's birth was to counteract the pagan festivals held at the same time (such as *sol invictus*, the feast of the Unconquered sun god).

The truth of the matter is that after a fairly long period of "having December to ourselves" in Europe and America, the field is becoming crowded again. Thus Christians have to learn to share. There is something in people that compels them to celebrate at the time of the winter solstice. And we are not going to stop them, nor should we.

Instead of anger we should try persuasion. Instead of responding to "Seasons greetings" or "Happy holidays" with irritation, we should see these greetings as opportunities to proclaim the good news. When a clerk hands us our bag at the mall and says,

"Happy holidays," why not say, "Thank you. I celebrate the birth of Jesus my Savior. How about you?" In Bible-belt Kentucky you will find that most people will say "Me too" and they will be strengthened in their faith. But some will be the unchurched who need to hear exactly what Christians are celebrating.

If we send out cards we should make sure that we send cards that clearly articulate the good news of what Jesus' birth is all about; not cards that simply say "Merry Christmas" or, even worse, "Seasons greetings/happy holidays."

And what is Jesus birth all about? The Christmas angels knew the answer. The angel said to Joseph: "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). The angel said to the trembling shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Two statements of Paul complete the picture: "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost;" (1 Tim 1:15) and "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:4-5).

The eternal Son of God becomes man in order to save us from our sins and to restore to us the life of God. When we believe that he did this for us, we are forgiven and restored. That is Christmas.

"Jesus is the reason for the season." Not bad, if used correctly. Even better would be something like "To forgive us, God sent Jesus, *that* is Christmas."

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" Luke 2:11



Adult New Year's Eve Party
Hosted by Steve and Donna Komplin
December 31
8:00 p.m.

Please bring an appetizer and your favorite beverage.



Children's Holiday Assistance 2004

Board of Human Ministries

The Board of Human Ministries would again like to ask the congregation to help in supporting needy families at Christmas.

Traditionally, we have helped with the adopt-a-family program through the Salvation Army. This year we would like to assist needy children and their families who attend Dixie Elementary. This is a neighborhood school located on Eastland Parkway. They have indicated a greater than usual need for support this year and we would like to contribute by sponsoring 6 children.



A Tradition of Excellence

We ask that you stop by the table with the Christmas tree on it and pick an item from the table. Please sign the paper indicating which gift you are taking (they will be numbered) and return it wrapped and tagged with the child's name by December 12 to the fireplace in the fellowship hall. The board will be purchasing shoes, socks and underwear for these children and any coats that were needed.

We appreciate your help in this as we share the blessings of Our Savior at this time of year. †

Flowers are Blooming

The 2005 Flower Chart is now available for sign-ups. It is located on the bulletin board in the back classroom of the church.

Flowers may be given in honor or memory of someone or to commemorate a special event. After you sign up, a reminder is placed in your mailbox a few weeks prior to your chosen Sunday, and a seasonal mix of flowers is ordered if no other special instructions are given. The cost is \$18.00. You can

include the payment with your normal offering, just designate "Flower Fund - \$18" in the memo of your check. Your annual contributions statement will reflect the amount.

Christmas poinsettias are also available for purchase this year. The cost is \$9.00 for a 7.5" pot with 3 plants per pot. A sign-up sheet is on the back bulletin board. Call Beverly Jacobson for more information. †

Did You Know ...

...Our congregation has decided to begin a pre-school! Tracy Conrad has been asked to chair the committee that will begin the project. We hope to have it up and running for the 2005-2006 school year. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers on the committee: Kristin Stevens, Amy Bucher and Chuck and Lisa Saylor

...You can read past issues of the Te Deum on our web site? Visit www.orldutheran.com, go to Church

CHURCH NEWS

News and select Te Deum Archives.



...You can read the Genesis newsletters on our web site? Check them out to keep up with the latest developments on the coming Lutheran School in Lexington. Visit www.orldutheran.com and click the link for "Steps closer to a Lutheran school in Lexington".

...We have over 20 articles on the web site about the Christmas season? Visit www.orldutheran.com and click the

CHRISTMAS

page. †



Welcome to these new members who joined Our Redeemer during September & October : Ken & Jenny Burner (joined us through adult confirmation); Jim & Cheri Clemons, Steve & Debby Lemp, Sharon Mayo, and Lisa Beckham were received through transfer or reaffirmation. Welcome!

“Walk Thru” Was a Hit

Board of Christian Education

On Saturday, November 13, 72 dedicated participants took a fantastic “Walk through the Old Testament” at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. Rebecca Riskedahl Mitchell of Lutheran Bible Ministries impressed all as she engagingly led those in attendance from Genesis to Malachi, and creation to Christ. Using memorable hand motions, maps, cartoons, sayings and props, Rebecca covered the major Old Testament people and events. By the time they finished, retreat attendees:

- understood the overall history of the Old Testament and where the different books fit into that history.
- were able to briefly tell what each of the 39 Old Testament books was about
- learned about the judges, and the faithfulness of Ruth and Samuel.
- know the difference between the united kingdom, the northern and southern kingdoms, and which prophets were sent to each
- learned that King Saul had no heart for God, David had a whole heart, and Solomon had a half heart.
- were trained to rise, applaud, and perform when they heard the words, “Let’s take it from creation!”
- discovered the total number of Biblical kings and how many were good and bad
- learned about the world empires of the Bible--Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, and how each was used by God to accomplish his purposes
- understood what the exile was all about and the leaders who led Judah back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem: Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.
- learned how God never gave up on his people despite their sin, and saved them again

and again.

- understood how the entire Old Testament points to Jesus Christ.

The 72 participants were not only from our congregation but also from Our Savior Lutheran in Danville, St. John’s of Lexington, Grace Lutheran of Winchester and 3 guests. We are anxiously awaiting the opportunity to Walk Through the New Testament!

Many thanks to the following people for arranging this retreat – Donna Granderson, director; Christine Vanderhoof, facilities; Susan Thuringer, food; Ruth Johnson, prayers; Wendy Trivisonno, babysitting; and Carol Smith, our Danville coordinator. And also special thanks to everyone who pitched in and helped during and after the retreat. We cleaned up and were out of there in record time! God bless you all.

Below are some of the comments we received:

“Rebecca Riskedahl Mitchell is a fabulous speaker”

“It was a wonderful workshop. I found it inspiring. The speaker did a marvelous job of portraying the story in today’s activities & experiences.”

“There was never a dull moment. So very informative and presented in such a way that was easy to understand and comprehend. I am so happy that I came today. What a wonderful speaker!”

“Wonderful class. It inspires me to read the Old Testament.”

“I certainly appreciated the style of presentation. As usual, I learned more about the Bible and God’s love for even me.”



In Loving Memory...

The family of Emma Radakovich Fronko offers thanks to God for the congregation of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, for its loving friendship that blessed her life and for the prayers of its faithful that comforted her Christian close.

Nord and Barbara Froehlich



The friends and family of Our Redeemer send our thoughts and prayers to you Nord and Barbara during this time. May God comfort you and bless you.

Psalm 119
76 May your
unfailing love be my
comfort,
according to your
promise to your
servant.

Issues, Etc. Radio Program to Begin Airing



Beginning November 28, a new Lutheran radio program will begin gracing central Kentucky airwaves each Sunday night. The program is Issues, Etc, an hour long nationwide Christian talk show that is broadcast by the Missouri Synod's radio station, KFUU, out of St. Louis. Our Redeemer is joining Our Savior Lutheran Church of Danville and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Lexington in sponsoring the program each Sunday night at 10:00 p.m. on WJMM, 99.1 FM.

Each week, host Todd Wilken (an LCMS Pastor) interviews some of the world's top theologians, philosophers, or apologists on a variety of topics of interest to Christians. Recent topics have been "The DaVinci Code," "Working Moms," "Gay Marriage," "The Creation Evolution Debate," "The Complaint Psalms," "Christianity and Pop Culture," "Prayer," "Christ-Centered Fatherhood," "Early Church fathers and Reformation solas," "The Ten Commandments," "The Feminization of the Christian Church," "21st Century Mormonism," "Stem Cell Research," "Healing," "Bioethics," and "Hate Crimes." The show is call-in, and callers certainly take advantage of it.

In my opinion this is the best Christian talk show of its kind on the radio, bar none. It is growing in popularity. It is a wonderful way to promote Biblical and Lutheran teaching to the central Kentucky area. Below is a description of Issues, Etc., that comes from their web page (www.issuesetc.org):

Issues, Etc. is a live theological talk show for the thinking Christian. It has a two-fold mission:

First, Issues, Etc. defends and teaches the truths rediscovered during the 16th century Lutheran Reformation: grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone on account of Christ alone.

Second, Issues, Etc. challenges today's postmodern culture with its unbiblical and illogical ideology. Todd Wilken leads discussions with some of the world's top theologians, philosophers and apologists.

Issues, Etc. can be heard here and on AM 850 KFUU weekday afternoons from 3:05-6:00 PM CT. Issues, Etc. and is heard nationally on Sunday nights.

Each week when the show is promoted, the names of the sponsoring congregations will be mentioned, so it will be a good form of publicity for our congregation.

We hope you can tune in often in the weeks ahead to listen to Issues, Etc. on WJMM 99.1 FM every Sunday at 10:00 p.m.



Men's Group Meeting Scheduled

The men at Our Redeemer will be holding the second men's group with breakfast, fellowship, and Bible study on Saturday, December 11. Pastor's topic is 'being a man of God' and has something for all men - single, married, young or older. It's a great time for fellowship and getting to know each other and you may even learn a little more about yourself.

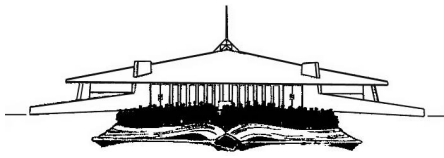
Coffee and juice are out by 8:15 a.m. and the study will be over by 9:30 a.m. sharp so that all the 'honey-dos' and chores of the day can get done.

Participation at the first meeting was excellent as was Pastor's preparation and delivery. We hope that you can join us!



With 36 new members in the last year, you may be having trouble putting a face with a name. You will be happy to hear that we now have picture boards located in the narthex . . . Many thanks to our faithful photographers: Bill Gruber, Lisa Saylor, and Tracy Conrad





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Rev. Dr. Richard P. Bucher, ThD
Pastor
drbucher@alltell.net

Sunday School9:00 a.m.

Divine Service10:15 a.m.

Wednesday Service7:00 p.m.

Missouri Synod

We're on the web!
www.orlutheran.com



Please note that the church office has a new email address - update your address books! churchoffice@orlutheran.com

ORLC Upcoming Events

- November 30, 7:00 p.m.Adult Bible study at the Trivisonnos
- December 3, 7:00 p.m.....Adult Bible study at the Grandersons
- December 4 & 11, 9 – noon.....Children’s Christmas program practice
- December 11, 8:15 a.m.....Men’s group breakfast and Bible study at church
- December 12Trim the Tree after service

Services

DATE	TIME	EVENT
December 1, 8 and 15	5:30 p.m.	Meal in Fellowship Hall
December 1, 8 and 15	7:00 p.m.	Advent Wednesday Services
December 17	7:00 p.m.	Children’s Christmas Program “The Jesse Tree”
December 24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service
December 24	11:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service Scriptures & Carols, Candlelight
December 25	10:00 a.m.	Christmas Day Service
January 6	7:00 p.m.	Epiphany Service



Join us Friday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m. as the children of Our Redeemer perform “The Jesse Tree” Christmas program.