

December 2011



The Messenger

The Second Faith

Martin Luther concludes his 1530 “Sermon on the Afternoon of Christmas Day” with these words: “What we have said then, has been about that second faith, which is not only to believe in Mary’s Son, but rather that he who lies in the virgin’s lap is *our* Savior, that *you* accept this and give thanks to God, who so loved *you* that he gave *you* a Savior who is *yours*.”

You recognize, of course, John 3:16, in the last half of this sentence. I believe that our focus on this verse for summarizing the Gospel comes from Luther. That Gospel is clear from this Christmas sermon and also clear in the sermon preached at Luther’s funeral, where his pastor completed the eulogy by telling the congregation that Luther’s last words were a triple repetition the familiar words that...”God so loved the world and he is my Savior....”

There it is! That “second faith” about which Luther speaks. He begins this afternoon sermon [imagine coming back to church on Christmas Day afternoon!] by comparing two faiths: a first faith and then the more important second faith. What might each of these “faiths” be? The first faith is all about the facts: the infant born to Mary is true God, the infant is born to a virgin named Mary, Christ is God, yet Christ is human. This “first faith” was finalized in the Apostle’s Creed, debated for centuries, and documented in other creeds. The facts are important. But then, Luther asks...”*But for whom was he born and whose Lord and Savior is he?*”

The answer to this all-important question separates Christianity from Islam. Islam fully accepts the virgin-birth of Jesus Christ. Academic scholars can fill your head with arguments vouching for her baby being God at conception by the Holy Spirit and being human at the same time. Luther didn’t get those worshippers back to church for a second time to conduct a seminar in the facts; he wanted to make sure his congregation knew that Mary’s baby was more than hers, but theirs as well. Listen to his bold statement about a mother: “Mary, you did not bear this child for yourself alone. The child is not yours; but for me, even though you are his mother...you have my treasure...I know no one else who can help me except this child....” Try telling this to the mother of any new-born!

But Mary, who pondered all these things in her heart, already knew this. I believe Mary, if she could speak today, would say that it’s not about her, but her baby! For Mary, as an early disciple, knew her baby was not only her flesh and blood but simultaneously her Savior. And this is precisely Luther’s point...that second faith...that I make this baby my own...Savior and Lord. Yes, he recounts the angelic “Blessed are you among women!” but then adds Mary’s own words from the Magnificat paraphrased as “he was born for you and for your benefit, not only for my honor.” So “first faith” adherence to God’s virgin birth is less important than “second faith” this baby is my Savior and Lord.

The message is greater than the medium: Mary’s virgin-born baby boy is your Savior and Lord---may *that* put the “merry” back into your Christmas 2011.

Pastor Paul

BCC Student Ministries

Ralphie is a household name around the Christmas TV screen. Who can forget the Bumpus hounds, Miss Shields, Flick and the flag pole, Scott Farkas, the decoder pin, the fishnet stocking leg lamp, pink bunny pajamas and the Red Ryder BB gun? Look for this classic to flood the television screens and I hope you love it as much as I do. I'm talking of course about the timeless movie entitled A Christmas Story. I'm glad they picked that title because it's true; it is "a" Christmas story, but not "the" Christmas story. Take a minute to clear your head and focus on the real deal from Luke 2: 1 – 20:

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to **Bethlehem the town of David**, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was **expecting a child**. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son**. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **An angel of the Lord appeared to them**, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, **"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."** When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, **"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."** **So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger**. When they had seen him, they **spread the word** concerning what had been told them about this child, **and all who heard it were amazed** at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary **treasured up all these things** and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, **glorifying and praising God** for all the things they had heard and seen, **which were just as they had been told**.

On behalf of our student ministries, Merry Christmas Broadway! As you enjoy the Christmas season, may you inject the joy and wonder of Jesus' birth into those you meet in checkout lines, escalators, classrooms, office cubicles, dining room tables, sanctuaries, parking lots and wherever else you may find yourself. May "the" Christmas story flood our world this season...I wonder what that might look like!

Due to much interest but a lack of fundraising commitment, I've adjusted our fundraising schedule to acquire a better idea of who is serious about joining us for CHIC '12 in Tennessee next summer. Because of that, our flamingo fundraiser will be rescheduled to springtime and our "Parent's Breakaway" night will be Saturday, December 10th, from 3 to 10PM. Here's the revised scoop:

During these hours, we will be waiting to responsibly care for your child/children at church. We'll provide loving care, food, and laughs for them and also peace of mind for you as you enjoy your afternoon and evening! Drop the kids off for just a few hours while you Christmas shop, or leave them with us the whole time! It's up to you! Infants through 5th grade are welcome and this fee structure is for the total amount of time, not per hour. \$30 for one child, \$45 for two children, \$55 for three, and \$70 for four children. If you have more than four, call me n we'll chat! J Also, we'll cut the price in half for you if all you want is 3 hours or less! Enjoy the day!

Also, our CHICsters will be having a rummage sale at Broadway in January! We're still working through our winter retreat schedules and will have the sale date nailed down soon. In the meantime, be planning to bring up donated items to the youth room beginning in January. For bigger items, please call the church and we will arrange to have your items picked up. We look forward to making this a congregational effort that both enables our kids to work and serve in addition to providing funds to them and needed items to many in our community!

Peace, **Derek**

December

1	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	5 9:00 Patchwork Quilters	6 8:30 Morning Prayer Meeting 6:15 CWM Banquet 7:00 Overhaul	7 12:00 Prayer 4:30 Journey 5:30 Supper 6:00 Roots Adults Crosswalk 6:30 Choir 7:30 Band	8 6:30 Homeless Breakfast Program	9	10 3:00—10:00 Parent's Breakaway
11 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	12	13 8:30 Morning Prayer Meeting 11:30 60 Plus @ Thunder Bay 6:30 Leadership Team Mtg. 7:00 Overhaul	14 12:00 Prayer 4:30 Journey 5:30 Supper 6:00 Roots Adults Crosswalk 6:30 Choir 7:30 Band	15	16 5:00 Overhaul Christmas Party	17 5:00 Roots Christmas Party
18 9:00 Christmas Carol Sing 10:30 Worship Smorgasbord Dinner	19 9:00 Patchwork Quilters	20 8:30 Morning Prayer Meeting	21 12:00 Prayer 6:30 Choir 7:30 Band	22 6:30 Homeless Breakfast Program	23 Office closed at noon	24  4:00 Christmas Eve Service
25 10:00 Worship  <i>Merry Christmas</i>	26 Office Closed	27 8:30 Morning Prayer Meeting	28 12:00 Prayer	29	30 Office closed at noon	31

Birthdays

3 Florence Boyer
4 Carl Ecklund
Emily Schweiger
6 Crystal Burdick
13 Judy LeGault
17 Jill Page
19 Christiana Melin
20 Nancy Ilgen
28 Kim Anderson
Kay Forsen
Jeanine Parker Heck

Anniversaries

27 Gary & Lois Ecklund
28 Fred & Darlene Pearson

Pecans

The Schermer pecans have arrived. The one pound bag of pecan halves is \$10.00. The 12 ounce bag of chocolate covered pecans is \$9.00. They make wonderful gifts. Please see Carolyn Augenson or call her at 398-6814 with your order. Proceeds benefit Covenant Women Ministries.

Financial Update

My estimated amount of donations needed during December to pay all bills and missions commitments is: \$65,000

Received 11-6	(6,585)
Received 11-13	(5,424)
Received 11-20	(8,946)
Received 11-27	(3,888)
Need next 4 Sundays	40,157

Averages \$10,039 per Sunday.

New Members

Please welcome our three new members Danny Jones Jr., Jake Stufflebeam, and Alice Tsai. The Leadership Team brought the recommendation for membership during the Nov. 17, 2011, Congregational Business Meeting.

Serving in December

Head Usher: Brad Gasmund
Counters: Dave Holmertz & Robin Robinson
Nursery Workers:
12/4 Carl & Cheryl Ecklund and Mary Beth Adams
12/11 Christi Melin, Alice Tsai and Colleen Felts
12/18 Ann & Jeff Chapetta and Paula Rasanen
12/25
Coffee Schedule
12/4 Nancy Ilgen
12/11 Marcia Johnson
12/18 Arlene Schweiger
12/25 Gary & Lois Ecklund



Remember in Prayer

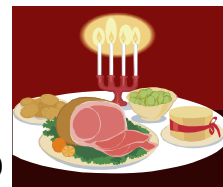
Kristi Swanson recovering from knee replacement surgery.
Pastor Joyce Cosman home from the hospital.
Betty Lockett recovering from hip replacement surgery.
Steve Schweitzer recovering from surgery.
Orville Roen in Swedish American Hospital.

Women's Christmas Banquet

Buy your tickets now for this year's Christmas Banquet on Tuesday, December 6th at 6:15 p.m. Our guest musicians will be Renee Scrivano and friends. Tickets are \$12 per person. Dinner will be catered ABC Catering with babysitting available at church.

Christmas Smorgasbord Dinner

You are welcome to attend the Annual Swedish Smorgasbord on Sunday, December 18th following the morning service. Invite friends and family for a wonderful dinner and fellowship. Please bring a dozen cookies for dessert. The cost is \$8.50 per person or \$30 for a family of 4 or more. This will be our last dinner for the year. Please sign up in the church office before December 13th. Merry Christmas, Dennis and Nancy Norman



60 Plus

Join 60 Plus for a 11:30 A.M. lunch December 13th at Thunder Bay Grille. Following lunch we will go back to church for a Christmas Carol Sing-a-long followed by dessert. Please call Peggy, 815-282-0640 by Sunday, December 11th with your reservation and let her know if you need a ride. 60 Plus is a group of people 60 years of age and older who meet monthly for lunch and fellowship. Be thinking of restaurants or things you would like to do in 2012. We are open to new ideas.

Congregational Survey 2011 Summary

The Search Committee would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey. We were very pleased that we received surveys from 97 people since our average attendance has been around 118 for the past several months. The following report is a summary of that Congregational Survey completed by the members and friends of Broadway Covenant Church.

97 (40 men and 57 women) people returned the survey. Almost 60 were 60 years old or older, 19 were 50-59, and the remaining 16 under 50. Only 3 people who responded were 20-29. The majority were married with under 10 people in each of the other categories. Almost 70% have been attending Broadway for over 20 years and 90% attend on a regular basis.

80% of the responders were involved in at least one ministry of the church with many being involved in several ministries, but only 40% involved in ministries outside the church.

The survey indicated that there is an overall excitement about having a new pastor who can provide us with a vision and inspire us in new directions toward having a greater impact on our neighborhood. At the same time many were concerned about the lack of young people, particularly young couples with children, the decreasing membership, the advancing age of the core group and our financial situation.

The congregation sees its strengths as Skills Camp, our ministry to youth, our worship service, the music ministry, and caring for each other. We see our weaknesses as our lack of ministry to young adults and men, our lack of openness to change, few Bible Studies/small groups, and an unwillingness to accommodate each other's preferences.

We would describe our church as having strong leaders who are worthy examples. The church sees itself as ready to give whole hearted support to our next pastor. We also describe the church as needing to improve our ability to provide a safe haven for people with broken lives and to give more generously to the ministries of our church.

Our congregation prefers a worship service that is musically blended between traditional and contemporary with a sermon that is either a topical series based on Scripture or a series that preaches through a book of the Bible. Better transitions before and during the service, plus serving communion in the pews were common suggestions. Prayer is an important part of the church as a whole and many would like to see more time devoted to prayer during the service and more participation at prayer meetings. In addition, we are encouraged to share the gospel through our preaching and teaching ministries. But it is felt that we need more encouragement to share our faith with those around us and not just through church ministries.

We feel that for us to be more involved, to give more, pray more, etc. we need to be encouraged more by the pastor and the leadership. In particular, we need to be taught about stewardship more often.

The majority of our expectation for our new pastor are that he/she should be between 30 and 50 years old and have 5-10 years experience with a spouse that is supportive and uses their gifts in the congregation. A little more than half want a male pastor and a little less than half have no preference between a male or female pastor. Preaching, establishing a vision for the church and developing a strong leadership were the three most important tasks for the new pastor as he/she begins his/her ministry. The skills that topped the list of what we desire in a new pastor are the ability to set a vision for the church, to work well with both the other staff and the church leadership, to conduct the worship service, and to care equally for all parts of the congregation.

**December 2011
Broadway Covenant
Church**

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Music Director - Jerry Jacobs
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www.Broadwaycovenant.com

Mission Report

Carpenter's Place had a Walk-A-Thon Fundraiser during the month of October.

Bridge Ministries of Rockford has been in existence for 18 years and would like your prayers to help them "build up and unite the Body of Christ for the spiritual, social, and physical transformation of the city."

MARC, or the Missionary Aviation Repair Center, which helps fly people and supplies to places where there are no roads in Alaska, is asking for people to share information about them and to give their contact information to MARC, at marc@marcalaska.org.

MARC asks people to pray that the Lord will help them with maintenance and flights now with the winter. Also pray for a finance manager.

The Salvation Army could use bell-ringer volunteers for 2-hour Christmas shifts by calling 815.962.7207.

Look for a KICY Christian Alaska Radio Station Salmon Fundraising Dinner in our area near the end of January 2012.

Tim Sales now has a female budgeting employee with his Intervarsity Ministry. Please pray

that he continues to reach football players at Rockford College with the Gospel.

Local Habitat for Humanity recognized the help of Gary Ecklund and Al Damrose in their Winter 2011 newsletter. Their ReStore Shop at North Town Mall needs a brand new commercial vacuum and volunteers.

The five strategic priorities in 2012 for the Covenant Church are to:

1. Make Disciples
2. Grow Churches
3. Develop Leaders
4. Love Mercy and Act Justly
5. Serve Globally.

Missionaries Tim and Andrea Johnson ask us to continue to pray for Japan in the aftermath of the tsunami and earthquake 9 months ago.

Missionaries BCC Supports:

Robert & Joyce Widman
Leonid & Leanna Regheta
Tim & Andrea Johnson
Peter & Ruth Dutton
Byron & Sue Bruckner
6 David & Judy Dolan