

The Kaiserslautern Lutheran

Nr. 12

Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr' vergehet nun und nimmermehr

December 2022

Reflections on the Church Year at the Beginning of Another Church Year

By Pastor Nathaniel Jensen

The season of Advent, the beginning of a new Church year, leads me to reflect on change in this fallen world and how we find something eternal in the church and her worship, even here on earth. In many ways change is beneficial. To change one's mind for the better or change jobs for one more enjoyable can be relieving for a person. Many embrace change with exuberance, as they feel entrapped or suffocated by the tedium of daily life. Change, however, can also be a devastating force physically, psychologically, and spiritually. The changing of our bodies with age leads us towards death. The change from one school year to the next often brings about a feeling of depression. A change of pastors, for holy reasons or not, can be devastating for members of a congregation. The axiom that "this, too, shall pass" has been a reminder to those high on life, as well as those in the dumps, that change is the only realistic

expectation in this world. Amidst all this change the Church offers a message of permanence and continuity; a message reflected in the church year.

It makes sense that the church on Earth is organized temporally as that's how all mortal life is organized. To make anything manageable, most especially time, it must be broken into segments. The whole must be understood in terms of the parts. The year is divided into months, the months into weeks, the weeks into days, the days into hours, the hours into minutes, and the minutes into seconds. Without such division we could not keep track of the change all around us. We would lose sight of goals and accomplished goals. We would have no way of reckoning when one event occurs in relation to another event. This has been understood by all cultures (all of which have calendars of some sort), all businesses and governments (fiscal years), and by schools (the school

year). The diversity within continuity makes both routineness and change manageable and bearable.

The Church in its reckoning of time, though, is different than any worldly institution in that the Church's time is not just set in relation to other time, but to eternity. Where the world can only measure change in relation to other change, the Church measures change in relation to eternity. The unity and diversity of the church year will reach its fulfillment when Christ returns at the end of time. This cannot be said of the change from season to season, month to month, or any fiscal or school year. Those things only resemble the church year.

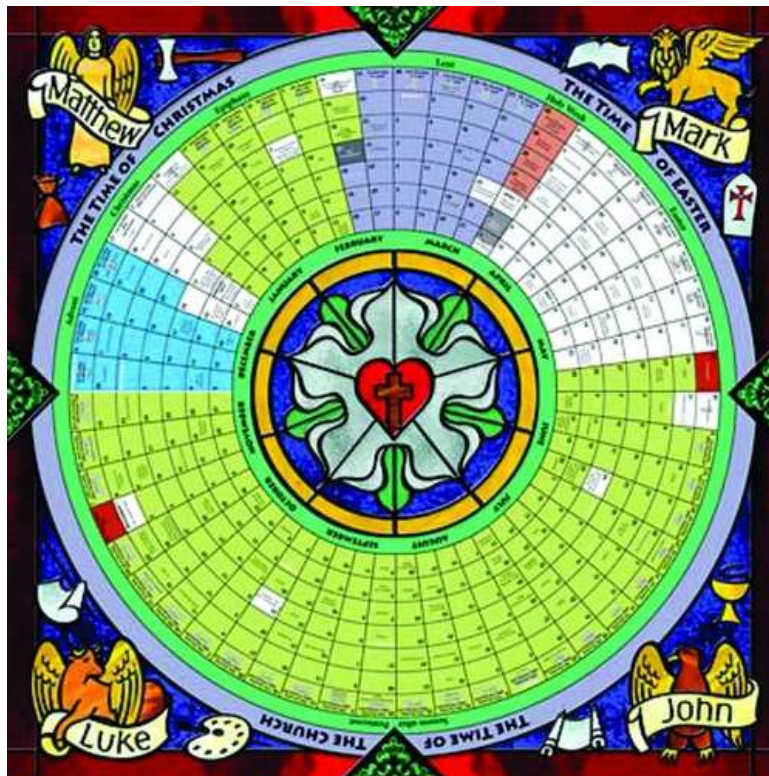
The church year, in its message of time and measure of time in relation to eternity, is incarnational. Just as at the incarnation the eternal God united Himself to our flesh, so the church year is a unification of eternity with time. Temporally we mark the change from season to season, church year to church year, but the eternal perspective is always there. In the church year, we celebrate the life of Christ and His body, the Church. We hear the Scriptures, that divine and yet

human word, preached. We see baptism, that divine Word of God with the earthly element of water, make eternal children of God out of those who were lost and condemned. We eat the body and blood of Christ, united to the earthly elements of bread and wine. The Divine Service, where heaven meets earth, occurs within the framework of the church year. The unification of the divine with the temporal, a fundamental theme within Christianity, has its place in speaking of the church year as well.

Such an understanding of sanctified time draws in those seeking respite from a changing world. Although in this life man can reckon time and the change it measures in manageable ways, he cannot escape the inevitable end of that change. One school year to the next leads to graduation and moving on with one's life. One fiscal year changes into another until the closing of the company. Year after year leads to death. The church year, however, is the redemption of time. The cycles of the church seasons and festivals do not lead to the conclusion of anything, but rather into eternity.

After understanding the profundity of the church year as something beyond our temporal

reality, we may also look at how the temporal church year benefits the congregation. The most important function of the church year is that it grounds Christians in the entire life of Christ. Each year we hear readings, sing hymns, listen to sermons, and pray collects that relate to Christ's earthly life, or that of His body, the Church. The organization of the church year is not arbitrary, but each season flows into the next and



provides a bigger picture that Christians may keep in mind in their own prayers and reading of Scripture. The repetition from year to year enforces the Christian's understanding of the entire narrative of Christ's life.

The church year also prevents the pastor from preaching the same thing constantly. Not that the overarching message is any different, but the specific way God's Law and Gospel are

proclaimed is given necessary variety by way of the church year. The Church year allows the pastor to preach the whole counsel of God, rightly dividing, or apportioning, the divine Scriptures for what the people need to hear at a specific time and during a specific season.

It also must be noted that the church year provides continuity not only from year to year in one's own life, but also continuity with the entire Church from the Apostles until today. We may take comfort in the fact that we are following in the footsteps of all the Saints who went before us, as well as those who will come after us. It is here that one most especially sees the connection between the temporal church year and the Church of all ages. In the Divine Service throughout the Church year, we worship our Lord

with angels, archangels, and all the company of Heaven. Our worship on earth unites with their worship in Heaven, the worship of all those who have gone before us, until our Lord returns and ushers in the new heavens and the new earth. The world is constantly changing, but our Lord's Word endures forever and it is in the context of the Church year that that eternal Word comes to us here in time. A blessed Advent season and a happy new church year to you!

KELC SCHEDULE

Date	Time	Holy Day/Event
Sunday, November 27, 2022	08:30	Ad Te Levavi (Advent I) , Divine Service*
	10:15	Bible Study
	11:30	Catechesis*
Wed., November 30, 2022	19:00	Advent Midweek Vespers (St. Andrew)*
Thurs., December 1, 2022	19:00	Confessions' Study/choir rehearsal*
Sunday, December 4, 2022	08:30	Populus Zion (Advent II) , Divine Service*
	10:15	Bible Study
	11:30	Catechesis*
Wed., December 7, 2022	19:00	Advent Midweek Vespers (St. Nicholas)*
Thurs., December 8, 2022	19:00	Confessions' Study/choir rehearsal*
Sat., December 10, 2022	17:00	Choral Vespers at Alte Nikolaikirche, Frankfurt
Sunday, December 11, 2022	08:30	Gaudete (Advent III) Divine Service*
	10:15	Bible Study
	11:30	Catechesis*
Wed., December 14, 2022	19:00	Advent Midweek Vespers/Ember Wed. (St. Lucy)*
Thurs., December 15, 2022	19:00	Confessions' Study/choir rehearsal*
Fri., December 16, 2022	19:00	Vespers for Ember Friday*
Sat., December 17, 2022	19:00	Vespers for Ember Saturday*
Sunday, December 18, 2022	08:30	Rorate Coeli (Advent IV) , Divine Service*
	10:15	Bible Study
	11:30	Catechesis*
Wed., December 21, 2022	19:00	Advent Midweek Vespers (St. Thomas)*
Sat., December 24, 2022	19:00	Service of Lessons and Carols*
	21:00	Christmas Eve , Divine Service*
Sunday, December 25, 2022	08:30	Christmas Day , Divine Service*
	10:15	Bible Study
Sat., December 31, 2022	17:00	Service of Evening Prayer for New Year's Eve*
Sunday, January 1, 2023	10:00	Feast of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus , DS*
	11:15	Bible Study*
Fri., January 6, 2023	19:00	Epiphany of Our Lord , Divine Service*

*indicates location at
St. Michaelis
Karpfenstraße 7,
67655 Kaiserslautern

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

By Emma Jensen

Did you know that the familiar Christmas carol "The 12 Days of Christmas" is actually a secret code? Legend has it that it comes from Roman Catholics in England during the sixteenth century who were not allowed to worship openly. The hidden meanings in the song were used to teach children the faith in secret. Whether that is true or not, we can all still learn during this Christmas season about the precious and costly gifts given to us by our True Love, the God who loves us and cares for us.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change (James 1:17).



On the first day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me a partridge in a pear tree.

The partridge in a pear tree reminds us of Jesus who died on the cross for us. Just as a partridge

is willing to die to protect its young, so Christ willingly gave His life on a tree to save us from eternal death.



On the second day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me two turtledoves.

Two turtledoves remind us of the two parts of the Holy Bible: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Two turtledoves were the required sacrifice brought by Mary and Joseph to the temple in Jerusalem forty days after Jesus was born, showing how Jesus came to fulfill everything written in the Old Testament.



On the third day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me three French hens.

Three French hens remind us of the three gifts brought by the Wise Men to the infant Jesus. French hens were so valuable that only the rich could afford them,

just as the Wise Men presented Jesus with the most costly gifts fit for a king.



On the fourth day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me four calling birds.

Four calling birds remind us of the four Evangelists, the writers of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Like calling birds, the Gospels ring out in a clear voice about the saving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



On the fifth day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me five golden rings.

Five golden rings remind us of the five books of Moses, the first five books of the Bible, also known as the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Here we find a treasure more precious than any gold as we learn about the very beginning of salvation history: creation, the Fall into sin, and the promise of Jesus, the coming Messiah.



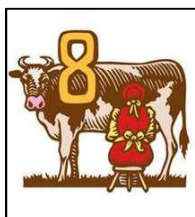
On the sixth day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me six geese a-laying.

Six geese a-laying remind us that God made the world and all that lives in it in six days, just as an egg is a symbol of new life and creation. The Bible tells us that the same Jesus who was born of the Virgin Mary is the eternal Word of God through whom all things were created.



On the seventh day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me seven swans a-swimming.

Seven swans a-swimming remind us of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit recounted by the apostle Paul (Romans 12:6-8). Just as swans grow from being ugly ducklings into beautiful graceful birds, so we as God's baptized children grow in our faith according to the various gifts given to each of us by His Holy Spirit. We then use our gifts to love and serve our neighbor in the same way God has loved us.



On the eighth day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me eight maids a-milking.

Eight maids a-milking remind us of the eight special sayings of Jesus from His Sermon on the Mount called the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10). Just like babies

need milk to grow strong and healthy, so Christians need the pure spiritual milk of God's Word to grow in our faith.



On the ninth day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me nine ladies dancing.

Nine ladies dancing remind us of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit listed by the apostle Paul (Galatians 5:22-23). Like someone dancing for joy, baptized children of God are filled to overflowing with wonderful gifts such as love, joy, and peace.



On the tenth day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me ten lords a-leaping.

Ten lords a-leaping remind us of God's Ten Commandments given to us through Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:2-17). Our Heavenly Father is the Lord of lords and ruler of heaven and earth, whose laws are more important than those of any earthly government, because He alone knows what is best for His children.



On the eleventh day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me eleven pipers piping.

Eleven pipers piping remind us of the eleven faithful disciples of Jesus, not counting Judas, the twelfth disciple, who betrayed Him. Like children following after a piper, so Jesus' disciples followed Him where He led. They in turn spread the news to others to follow Jesus as well, including even us who are here today.



On the twelfth day of Christmas, my True Love gave to me twelve drummers drumming.

Twelve drummers drumming remind us of the twelve parts of the Apostle's Creed, the ancient confession of faith listing the most basic and fundamental truths of the Christian faith. Like drummers in a marching band keeping everyone together by beating time, so the Creed keeps us walking together in the true faith.

This was originally written as part of the children's Christmas program for St. John Ev. Lutheran Church of Amelith, Michigan, in December, 2020, and based on the children's book, *The 12 Days of Christmas: The Story Behind a Favorite Christmas Song*, by Helen Hajdler

A Letter from the Mission Field

Pastor Christian Tiews

Yesterday one of my Iranian parishioners asked me: "The Prodigal Son...who is Jesus talking about?" "I replied: "The Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is you, me, and every Christian who recognizes his or her sins and repents. But the main character here is the father who had been waiting for his son to return. As soon as he sees the boy in the distance, he throws dignity to the wind, and runs to forgive him. The father in this parable here is our perfect Father in heaven—manifested in Jesus Christ—who is always

ready to forgive you when you repent." "Hmmm...And the older brother? Who is he?" I replied, "The older brother is like the Pharisees. He lives by the law and has a hard heart toward his forgiven brother." My friend scratched his chin and after a moment said: "So, the younger brother is forgiven by فیض (feyz; grace), while the older brother operates only by شریعت (šari'at; law), which keeps you estranged from God." I

thought for a moment: "Yes, that's an excellent way to put it. The two brothers are like Law and Gospel." He turned away and murmured: "But what if you don't have a father like that? My grandfather was a mullah—an Islamic religious leader. He used to hit me if I didn't pronounce my Qur'an properly, and my father approved. And now my family



has rejected me because I—the grandson of a mullah—am a Christian." I squeezed his arm. "Did you know that among Jesus' own direct ancestors there was a prostitute (Ruth) and murderers (Moses, David)?" I reached for my phone. "Look: this is **my** grandfather—in Germany in the 1930s (see image). He was a Nazi—in a way, a lot like a mullah... That makes you and me brothers twice over: we are both grandsons of men who, tragically, were misled. Yet even though our family members might have been far from perfect, we are also brothers redeemed by Christ and His grace. You, and I, and all Christians are prodigals—and we have a perfect Father in heaven who has forgiven us by **His Son.**"





Elder's Corner

Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

With the arrival of advent and the Christmas season, our hearts and thoughts turn to celebrating our savior's birth with family and friends. Sharing this time together with those we love and care for is important and precious, especially for those whose family members may be a distance from us.

You are no doubt familiar with the phrase; "Blood is thicker than water". In today's world, we understand this to mean that the bonds of our family, by blood and biology, take higher priority over the bonds we share with others. Family comes first, so to speak. Though this text first appears in German literature in the 12th century, its origins have been proposed to go back even farther than that, to biblical times...

The earlier phrasing proposed by some researchers, though without written substantiation thus far, is; "The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb." This quite turns the meaning of our abbreviated, contemporary phrase on its head, and should give us pause for thought.

In ancient times a covenant, or agreement, was often sealed with blood by means of a sacrifice, or the cutting of one's palms before shaking hands so the blood between the parties would mingle. I bring up this

Bonds of Blood and Water

By Stephen Guzik

graphic illustration to point us to a most important covenant, the one we as faithful, repentant, believing Christians all share in...

"In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:25. We celebrate this covenant each Sunday when we come to the Lord's table.

Through our baptism, we are all united in Christ, our sins washed clean by his blood, in the new, ever enduring covenant. As Paul states in Romans 12:5: "so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

In this light, we can begin to look back on the deeper meaning of "The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb." We are

truly brothers and sisters in Christ. What's more Jesus tells us just how significant that relationship is in Matthew 10:34-37: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Christ says this, not so that we are to disparage each other within our families, but to show that loyalty to Him comes first, above our earthly families. The precious blood we share together in the new covenant through Christ, takes precedence over our temporal, familial bonds here in this life.

With this in mind, as we share together this advent season, looking forward to the humble birth of our savior Jesus Christ, take joy and comfort in knowing we are indeed among family. Many of us are separated from those we love, by time and distance. However, here in Christ, we are blessed with a family who shares an eternal bond, which has been gifted to us by our loving Father in his grace and mercy.



Thank you to everyone who helped support Operation Christmas Child this year by filing a gift box or donating money for shipping costs.

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK & MESSENGER

Kaiserslautern
Evangelical Lutheran
Church (KELC)

For news, worship sign-ups
and fellowship events.



Sundays at KELC

Divine Service

Sunday Mornings
8:30-9:30 AM

Fellowship Time

Sunday Mornings
9:30-10:15 AM

Sunday School & Bible Study

at Kirche Mittendrinn
10:15-11:15 AM

Catechesis

St. Michael's Basement
11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Sat. Dec., 10th

Pastor Jensen will be preaching at the Choral Vespers at the Alte Nikolaikirche on the Römerberg plaza at 1700. Hannah, Emma and the choir from Trinity will be participating in the service as well. Then we can enjoy the market afterwards.

Or Sun. Dec., 18th

The Sunday before Christmas gives us another chance to go to the market together.

Join us for a beautiful evening of fellowship
at the Frankfurt Christmas Market.



December
Wedding
Anniversaries



Happy 17th Anniversary
to
Paul and Karleen Hester
On December 31st



Thank you to
everyone who was
able to come to
Rhema Café in
November to help
serve dinner to our
Ukrainian friends.
It was a fun evening
of dinner, prayer and
fellowship.

CONFESSIONS STUDY

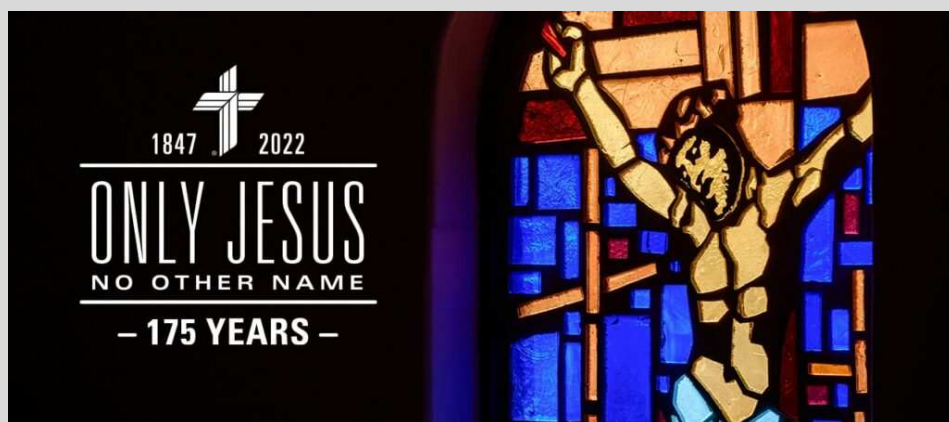


Thursday Nights
at 7:00 PM
Location: St. Michaelis

Service of

*Lessons
and Carols*

Saturday, December 24th
at 7:00 PM



Please join us in
praying for the
important work of
the Kaiserslautern
Military Resiliency
Center in Landstuhl,
Germany.



December
Birthdays



18 Marion Anglin
26 Sol Grosskopf