



Concordia Lutheran Church

"Learning, Living, Sharing the Gospel"

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Friends of Jesus!

I came across this article written by Philip Britts. It spoke to me ... I wanted to share it with you. The article is titled "Yielding to God." Blessings in Messiah Jesus!

Luv ya'!

Pastor Craig

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When the wise men came from the East, they went to Jerusalem, the capital, to inquire, "Where is he who has been born King of the Jews?" And today those who are "wise" make the same mistake in looking to worldly power to solve the world's problems. Others go to magnificent cathedrals and follow spiritual paths that appear much more splendid and much more clever than anything which accompanied the birth of Christ.

All this is misguided; it concentrates on the question of "how" instead of the question "why." We can easily get overwhelmed. How are we to carry out all the tasks laid upon us; how are we to plan our next year; how shall we find the strength both for securing our economic needs and in reaching out to the needs of others? But as important as these questions are, it is more important to remember the ancient question "Why?" Once we realize why Christ came to earth, why he was born as a helpless baby in a manger, and why his whole life was lived as an outcast from the best society, then can we begin to answer the question "how" – "how can we find God again; how can we experience peace on earth?"

We are human and finite, and thus cannot live perpetually in a sense of expectation, or in a continuous Advent. We are distracted by many things. Our spiritual awareness waxes and wanes in intensity.... The swing of emotions is natural to us, and some are more subject to extremes than others. We mustn't despair about this. But we should be aware of cultivating religious emotions under the delusion that these are the workings of the Holy Spirit. Such emotions are unstable; they risk getting in the way of our communion with God.

It is here that we need to see why it was necessary for Christ to come to the earth. God has come to us because we, by our own power of soul, by our own emotions, even the noblest and most sublime, can never attain redemption, can never regain communion with God.

True expectancy, the waiting that is genuine and from the heart, is brought about by the coming of the Holy Spirit, by God coming to us, and not by our own devices. Spiritual depth, if it is true, is the working of God coming down and penetrating to the depths of our hearts, and not of our own soul's climbing. No ladder of mysticism can ever meet or find or possess God. Faith is a power given to us. It is never simply our ability or strength of will to believe. The spiritual experience that is truly genuine is given to us by God in the coming of his Spirit, and only as we surrender our whole lives to an active expression of his will.

To put it quite simply, spiritual experience, whether it be of faith, hope (or expectancy) or love, is something we cannot manufacture, but which we can only receive. If we direct our lives to seeking it for ourselves we shall lose it, but if we lose our lives by living out the daily way of Christ we shall find it....

This pattern of complete abandonment of human strength in total surrender to God's will is of vital importance for us, both in our lives of activity and of spiritual experience. It was in the surrender of herself to God that Mary became the mother of Christ. It was in her acceptance of Gabriel's message that the great decisive event of history took place. And in our own daily lives, in our efforts to do right, what is decisive is that we accept and live by and surrender ourselves to a strength which is not our own, to the piercing white light of God's love....

Although we are tempted to exert ourselves and push ourselves forward in our search for God, the desire to climb nearer to God is nothing but egotistical satisfaction and self-aggrandizement. The way that Christ took was the low way. His way is abandonment. He not only descended from the presence of God, but he came as a baby in the poorest conditions. It is not that we, as pilgrims, climb to a celestial city, but that the Christ child is born in the poverty of our hearts....

The meaning of Advent and Christmas is thus the coming down of God's love. This love alone revolutionizes our lives. Only God's love, not the elevation of human souls, can effect a transformation of the world. Those who mourn the futility of their own efforts receive the comfort of the love of God. Those who are meekly obedient to his will are filled by the love of God, not as a prize to be won after death, but as redeemed life for this earth.

Happy December Birthdays

12-1 Judy Sherrod
12-2 Jeff Oamek
12-8 Nancy Mayer
12-9 Melanie Scheer

12-20 Ben Bradfield
12-21 Raya Duryea
12-26 Eryn Rinck
12-28 Rebecca Duryea

Happy December Anniversary

12-20 Kim & Charlyn Vance
12-23 Ron & Donna Wentzel
12-28 Steve Gunberg & Sherry Carrier

THE ANGEL TREE

Sun Valley Angel Tree is up!! Please take an angel and sign out the tag number. Bring wrapped gift to church by 12/14. Thank you for blessing these at risk kids for Christmas. Call Suzanne Holm at 813 843 6429 for any questions



ISRAEL FALL 2019!

If you would be interested in going on a tour of Israel in the Fall with Concordia, please reply to this email.

DETAILS TO FOLLOW IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS...

Click here to watch a video from the Israel Ministry of Tourism.



UPCOMING EVENTS & ADVENT / CHRISTMAS SERVICES!!

2nd Advent: Tonight , December 5th Soup Supper at 5:30pm, 6:30pm service.

Men's Bible Study Breakfast: This Saturday, December 8th at 7am @ the Egg & I

3rd Advent: Wednesday, December 12th Soup Supper at 5:30pm, 6:30pm service.
(Please reply to this email if you can bring a soup or dessert.)

4th Advent: Wednesday, December 19th CHRISTMAS CAROLING 6pm.

Christmas Eve Services: Monday, December 24th at 3:30pm, 5:30pm and 7:30pm (Communion)

Christmas Day: Tuesday, December 25th at 9am (Communion)

Combined Service: Sunday, December 30th at 10am



REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Each day add an item to a box
or bring your item(s) to church to add to
the Concordia Box. After Christmas,
donate the contents to Lift-Up.
(Idea from passionatepennypincher.com)

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni & cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beansizes