

# FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 12 - December, 2020 928-535-9575 2750 Mogollon Drive, Overgaard, AZ 85933

[www.faithlutheranovergaard.org](http://www.faithlutheranovergaard.org)

**SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES — 9:30 am**

## CANCEL CHRISTMAS?!



I heard it on the news. "They" are talking about canceling Christmas. "They", being some politicians who have expressed concerns over Christmas Holiday gatherings and the correlative COVID threats attached to those gatherings. Already, some governors have "outlawed" family gatherings for Thanksgiving which don't comply with their executive orders. No masks, no family get-together. No social distancing at the dinner table, no family get-together. More than 10, or 8, or 6, or ? people, no family get-together. It's AGAINST THE LAW!

It's scary to watch unfold, as our public servants indulge their already over-inflated egos in the name of "protecting us from ourselves" with ever more intrusive and arbitrary restrictions and removals of our private and personal freedoms. As they, more and more, insert themselves, their opinions, and their unsolicited, unsanctioned "authority" into every aspect of the private lives we are supposed to be free to live, they steal our freedom and become drunk with the power which this health crisis as given them the opportunity to seize. What is unfolding before our eyes is literally a hostile invasion by those who are supposed to serve and protect us.

I write this before Thanksgiving. You are reading it after Thanksgiving. I will see, and you now know how successful this latest power-grab over Family Thanksgiving celebrations will have been. The amount of "success" will determine the probability of initiating the next phase of the invasion; the canceling of Christmas.

The argument will go something like this:

Since Christmas is all about shopping and buying presents, it must be cancelled. Wanton shopping and public mingling with large disease-ridden groups of other shoppers makes for super-spreader events that will spread infection and disease. Christmas shopping is dangerous and irresponsible . . . it will lead to infection and DEATH. Christmas shopping must be outlawed and cancelled!

Since Christmas is also all about families gathering and reconnecting from different parts of the country it must be cancelled. Bringing infection from one part of the country to another spreads the disease and KILLS people! Furthermore, all those snotty-nosed little kids will be running around the host house sneezing and smearing slime on everything and everyone, INCLUDING Grandma and Grandpa! People probably won't wear masks (because they want to see the smiles on the faces of their loved ones) and probably won't space themselves six-feet apart the whole time ... especially at Christmas dinner! (some tables AREN'T even six feet long!) Family gathering for Christmas visits and Christmas Dinner is dangerous and irresponsible ... it will lead to infection and DEATH. Christmas visits and Christmas dinner must be outlawed and cancelled!

That's the "logic" I expect to hear behind the call to cancel Christmas. As so often happens with politics, the arguments presented in favor of taking away our freedoms in order to pad the pockets of politicians with more power are riddled with ignorance and insincerity. "Insincerity" because the politicians don't REALLY believe that celebrating Christmas (or Thanksgiving before it) is actually a COVID threat. No, it's an excuse ... and opportunity for them to "take" more from you and me. "Ignorance" because if they really believe that families who come together to celebrate being "family" are worse off than families who are kept isolated from each other, they are truly "ignorant"; either terribly unaware of the truth about what it actually is to be a family, or woefully, purposefully, and stubbornly ignorant of the "inconvenient" truth that family, by design, NEEDS social connection and closeness ... the very antithesis of "social distance".

With the above argument (or "logic") they also prove themselves to be totally ignorant about "what Christmas is all about." Christmas is NOT all about shopping. Not the real Christmas. It was NEVER about shopping, or buying, receiving, and giving presents ... not really. Neither was it ever all about family gathering around sumptuous holiday feasts, nor even love and peace with and for each other. It isn't about reindeer, or Santa Claus, or even about a cute and adorable little baby in a manger. It's not about angels or shepherds or three kings or even a little drummer boy beating "thrum thrum thrum".

**Christmas is about Christ.**

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## MONTHLY MEETINGS & EVENTS



Dec 21 – Elders Meeting 9:00am  
- Women's Ministry 1:00pm

Dec 22 – Council Meeting

*Dec 24 – Christmas Eve Service 6:00pm*

*Dec 25 – Christmas Day Service 8:00am*



Choir Meets Mondays at 4:00pm

*Midweek Advent Soup Suppers  
Wednesdays at 5pm. Midweek  
Advent Services follow at 6pm.*



## Women's Ministry

**Open to ALL women who attend  
Faith Lutheran Church!**

- Voted to gift Community Children's Christmas Party \$200
- Sending Christmas Gift Card to Winters Family (Seminarian)
- No Meeting in December

## Pastor's Office Hours

**Mondays** - 10am - 4pm *In the Office*  
**Tuesdays** - 10am - 12pm *In the Office*  
**Wednesdays** - Visitation Day  
**Thursdays** - 10am - 12 pm *In the Office*

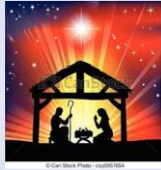
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**Call for appointment -  
928-535-9575 or 323-717-4390  
[revnwirtz@yahoo.com](mailto:revnwirtz@yahoo.com),  
or just drop in, or call anytime**



## CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE

- Met November 24
- reports received
- all maintenance up to date
- Elders report no concerns and continue to keep each of the members in prayer
- Next meeting: Tue, December 22



### **Birthdays**

- Dec 3 Karen Cassels**
- Dec 6 Bobbi Zeller**
- Dec 26 Bill Cassels**
- Dec 27 Betty Raveling**
- Dec 29 Bobbi Riege**

### **Anniversaries**

- Dec 18 Tom & Lori Mills**



On September 1st we began a new year of 1-1-1. This is exciting because 1-1-1 is based on the concept that many doing little can accomplish much. Much has been accomplished indeed. In the first two years of God's people to participating in 1-1-1 over \$100,000 was gathered and disbursed to the identified missions. That is the provision of God through his people joyfully placing "One dollar-per member-per week" into their congregation's 1-1-1 collection container. We have over sixty "1-1-1" participating congregations, which is a very good number! Truly, the 1-1-1 saying has proven true, "there is power and strength in many giving a little!" Thanks be to God! Bishop Hardy and the District Missions Council have identified English District Campus Ministry as the next mission focus for our 1-1-1 gifts from September 1, 2020 until August 31, 2021. Campus Ministry/Missions is different than helping to start a new congregation. Our pastors work with our own Lutheran young adults and young people from many different backgrounds. They also invest themselves connecting with students from different parts of our world, of different religions, and those who have been raised in a secular culture that know nothing of the True Lord of the world. Indeed, the campus is a tremendous mission field! Many of the students touched by the Word of God on campus will go into the world as Christian leaders and leaders in our churches. God works through it all for His good purposes, worked out for the good of His Church and people. Thank you again for your continued weekly dollar offering and for continuing to show that this model of giving can be effective for a greater churchly good!

# **Bible Studies & Sunday Services**

## **Bible Studies**

- Sundays – 8:00 am: Revelation*
- 10:45 am: Youth Confirmation*

- Mondays – 3:00 pm Adult Confirmation*

- Thursdays – 9:30 am: 1 Kings*

## **Sunday Services**

*9:30 am*

*Sunday Services can be listened to on the website*

[www.faithlutheran.org/worship](http://www.faithlutheran.org/worship)

*(audio usually posts by 1:00pm Sunday)*

### ***Advent Midweek Services -***

***Wednesdays 6:00pm***

***Dec 24 – Christmas Eve Service 6:00pm***

***Dec 25 – Christmas Day Service 8:00am***

**CANCEL CHRISTMAS?!** (Continued from page 1)

Christmas is about the advent (the “coming”) of the Christ into our broken, disease-ridden world to deliver us from the most deadly (100% fatal) and infectious (100% of everyone is infected) pandemic the world has ever known. There is no vaccine for this pandemic. You can’t “hide” from it either ... as you, I, and everyone else was born with it. We were *conceived* infected!

*“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* Psalm 51:5

“Christ” is a title that means “One anointed to carry out the will of God”. That “cute little baby in the manger” was born to die. He was the One chosen (anointed) by God to rescue ALL of us from the fatal pandemic of sin.

The chances that you or I or anyone we love will contract COVID are lesser than they are greater. And *should* we contract COVID, the chances that it will kill us are WAY, WAY lesser than greater. But you and I ARE infected with sin ... and *it* WILL kill us. 100% guaranteed.

The job of God’s Christ was to mitigate that death for us; to make it of no harmful nor permanent effect on us. The Christ would have to live a perfectly sinless life on our behalf, then receive the full consequence of OUR infections and die and be completely separated from his Father IN OUR PLACE. Only through that exchange of his righteousness for our sinfulness could we be rescued from the eternal consequences of our fatal infection.

THAT is what Christmas is all about. God, the Son, taking our humanity into himself, becoming one of us, to live for us and die in our place that we should be finally and fully cured of our pandemic of sin and certain death to then live forever in a perfect kingdom where no sin, no pandemics or sickness, no tears, no sorrow, no pain, and NO DEATH can or ever will exist.

Christmas is, always was, and always will be ALL about Christ, who loves you and has proven it. The only gift worth consideration at Christmas is the gift of His life for yours.

And that is why Christmas CAN’T be cancelled. First, it CAN’T be cancelled because you and I and the entire population of the world NEED it ... we all NEED the cure that Christ brings. Further, Christmas CAN’T be cancelled, because the advent of the Christ into our lives is God’s

doing. Politicians in the past have tried to cancel it to no avail. King Herod tried to wipe the infant Jesus off the face of the earth and out of history by murdering all the infant boys in Bethlehem ... but he couldn’t touch Jesus. God protected him and kept the day of his death for the time of *His* choosing and according to *His* purpose... His purpose to bring to completion His plan of our redemption and salvation from our deadly disease in and through His Christ.

Politicians and even kings may enact and do terrible things. They may take away our liberties. They may prevent us from visiting one another. They may break up families and isolate them from one another. They may even hurt the ones we love, threaten us with their “authority” and “power” ... even throw us into prison and execute us . . .

. . . but they, nor the powers above, nor the powers below can ... EVER ... cancel Christmas. Christ HAS come into the world. Christ has lived for you and for me. Christ has given his life as an atoning sacrifice for you and for me. Christ continues to come to us whenever we hear or remember His word and the gospel word about him. For the Christian, every day is Christmas. Every day is a day to celebrate the coming of the Christ of God into our world and into our lives. . . even as we wait for him to come back for us when He returns.

For you and your family, I pray you always know the joy and blessing of gathering together to hear and celebrate the real Christmas message of God’s deep and abiding love for you in and through His Christ Jesus, Emmanuel (“God with us”). Merry Christmas.

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:38-39)

*But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”* (Matthew 1:20-21)