



first Lutheran Church

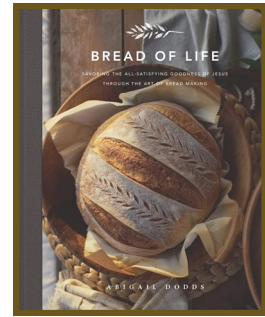


December 2023

a letter from the pastor



Bread of Life Series: Full Yet Famished



This month we take a look into the simplest of ways that we are pulled away from God. It is what we are never prepared for that trips us up all the time. Very few times are we faced with a colossal change, an apparent and decisive “No that is evil!”, moment in our lives. When we do have these moments it is because there was monumental build up to it. There were little steps all along the way that inched us closer and closer to that moment. The little whisperings of “You will not surely die” as we reach for the low hanging fruits of life. We question what God is saying to us through the Word and manipulating it to fit the world that we are in to justify our perceptions.

When life becomes different, difficult, and dangerous, we tend to change what God’s meaning is. We take verses out of context to justify our actions or feelings. This helps us keep our world view stagnant, never changing, and removed from the Gospel. We do this by asking a question out of the norm of God. “Surely God doesn’t mean (Insert a group of people/view point/football team/rival town) when we are told to love the neighbor?” This question exists outside of God’s intention. God intends for us to remember the key tenets of “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” We are given specific instructions by God with God’s intention and perspective and yet we become filled with doubt and uncertainty of the Truth that is before us.

However, this does not mean that we shouldn’t have questions. What we are faced with is how to ask questions without losing our faithfulness and recognizing what questions are antithetical to our christology. In the book of James we are told, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.” The whisperings of the serpent are the doubts, the waves and wind of the sea that threaten to capsize the boat of faith we find ourselves on. God encourages us to return to the Trinity with our questions, concerns, pain, and joys to seek out the faithful answers God puts into our hearts for the betterment of all people.

As we navigate this troubled and wounded world we all, myself included, must remember the personhood of Christ. The divine love of the Trinity and how we are called into this world to love our neighbors. *(Continues with Discussion Questions on Page 2)*

(Continued from Page 1)

Reminding them that they are loved by God and that through God we find our peace, reconciliation, grace, forgiveness, and life to move forward from the difficulties of our past to a more prosperous future. May we all remember the eternal love that God has for us and how God does not wish for harm and ill to befall upon anyone.

Pax et Bonum,
Friar Tuck

Bread of Life—Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of any times when you have separated or abstracted God's word from God's intention? How did this impact the way you dealt with God's words? How did it change your view of God?
2. What are some practical ways you can remind yourself to keep God's words and the loving disposition of God your Father connected as they really are?
3. Are there any ways in which you have stolen from God by taking something that was purposely withheld from you? Are you willing to repent and receive the "take and eat" from Jesus? If so, give thanks!



Celebrating
THE BIRTH OF
Christ

Bell Choir & Sr. Choir 7:00 pm
Liturgy 7:30 pm

Christmas at our House ...



Christmas decorating is

December 2nd at 9:30.

Taking them down on

Saturday, January 6th at 9:30.

These activities provide a great opportunity for members to come together and engage in some holiday spirit. May the decorating and undecorating process be filled with laughter, friendship, and the joyous spirit of the Christmas season.



As we get closer and closer to

Christmas, we are all planning our Christmas Eve and holiday plans with family. This Advent Pastor Tucker will be focusing on children and family growth throughout our readings. This will culminate in some wonderful participation of the youth in our congregation on Sunday (the 24th) morning's service, 9:30 am, with the Cherub Bells and a youth skit.



Our Christmas Eve Service will begin at 7:00 pm

with the Bell Choir performing two songs of praise and worship. This will be followed by our wonderful choir guiding us through the story of Jesus Christ through song and word. At 7:30 pm we will begin the liturgy of the Christmas Eve service. This lovely service will incorporate holy communion and we will close the service with *Silent Night*, sung by candle light, and Joy to the World, as we journey out into the world remembering the birth of a Savior who will bring forgiveness to all people!

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Love and Memory Tree

Make checks to First Lutheran Church

My gift \$ _____

Given by: (PRINT) _____

In loving memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Envelopes may be mailed to the church or placed in the offering plate

Please do not seal the envelope.

Envelope Number _____



Stewardship 101

Herr Professor

www.thelearningsite.info



A Duty and a Delight

I have been asked to describe how Christian stewardship is both a duty and a delight. This has been a challenge for me because while I see stewardship as a grateful and loving response to God for his goodness to me, I usually don't think of it as a duty, as something I am obligated or forced to do. However, in a parable that Jesus gave his followers in Luke, chapter 10, our Lord tells his followers to perform their duty to God like slaves who perform their master's command. Slaves are obedient not because they seek or expect a reward, but only because their obedience is expected. In other words, Jesus teaches that God expects his followers to be obedient to him — to do his will.

God calls us to love, serve, and obey him with the whole of our lives. This includes our time and abilities, money and possessions, and the whole of our hearts, or love. Why would we want to serve a god like this? Not because God is demanding or powerful or unreasonable, but only because God's saving goodness, mercy, and love is offered to us as a gift! Even more, we sinful people do not deserve such goodness! This precious God-given gift from the Lord of life is God's grace, and God offers it to all sinful people. God's grace has been made possible by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, on a shameful cross.

So, looking at the basis of our stewardship from the perspective of the Cross and the Empty Tomb, our duty to God as faithful stewards of God's mercies and riches is so much more than just some kind of obligation. Instead, the overwhelming, saving love of God in the person of Jesus makes the stewardship of our lives a true joy and delight. We want to be faithful stewards for God because of our gratitude for his love, because it pleases our heavenly Father, and because it is good for us and for all God's people. -Pastor Charles Horn



"...the Bible does present giving as something we ought to do [Romans 12:8, 13] and common sense dictates that people who belong to a congregation have some responsibility for supporting that body financially...By the same token, however, Paul insists that we should not give "reluctantly or under compulsion" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

People should not be pressured or manipulated into giving as a way that does not reflect their personal commitments. We give because we believe we should, not because someone else thinks we should."

Giving to God, Mark Allan Powell



Manna in der vilderness. Das ist gut! Gott ist gut!

Ven der people of Gott ver in der vilderness, Gott gave them manna. They said, "Vat izzit?" (dats vat "manna" means!) Vat a delight! Yews eat dis brot to remind them of Gott's abundant gifts! They delight in der brot, and they delight in Gott! Tink on dat ven you baken dis delightful brot!

December—A Duty and a Delight



CHALLAH—Egg Bread

1/4 cup warm water

1 tsp. Salt

1 pkg. Active dry yeast

1 egg

1/2 cup milk

1 Tbsp. butter

1 Tbsp. sugar

2 3/4 to 3 cup flour



CHALLAH

In a bowl, dissolve yeast in water. Melt butter in milk in the microwave. Add butter/milk mixture, egg, sugar, and all to yeast; mix well. Add half the flour. Mix until smooth. Add enough remaining flour to handle easily. Knead, let rise (about 1 hour), shape into a loaf (can be braided) and let rise again. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Bake for 20-25 minutes.



What is challah? "Challah" is "loaf" in Hebrew. It is a rich egg bread that is used in Sabbath meals in Jewish homes. It is similar to French brioche which also contains butter. [Our recipe is more a brioche than challah]. But true challah is braided. According to Jewish tradition, the three Sabbath meals (Friday night, Saturday lunch, and Saturday late afternoon) and two holiday meals (one at night and lunch the following day) each begin with two complete loaves of bread. This "double loaf" (in Hebrew: *lechem mishneh*) commemorates the manna that fell from the heavens when the Israelites wandered in the desert after the Exodus. The manna did not fall on Sabbath or holidays; instead, a double portion would fall the day before the holiday or sabbath to last for both days. In some Jewish customs, each loaf is woven with six strands of dough. Together, the loaves have twelve strands, alluding to the twelve loaves of the showbread offering in the Temple (Exodus 25:30).

"He (God) rained down on them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. Mortals ate of the bread of angels; he sent them food in abundance."

- Psalm 78: 24-25





Women of the ELCA



WELCA Calendar of Events for December 2023

Rachel Circle is in-service for the month of **December**

Through December 26 – Advent Food Collection for LSS

Monday, December 4 @ 7:00 pm – Hannah Circle; Christmas Party @ Maria Schell's home
Community Dinner Donation and Sock Exchange

Tuesday, December 12 – Martha Circle – Brunch with Rachel Circle – Bring a taxable item

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Sunday, December 31 – Cookie Sunday – Rachel Circle



A big Thank You to all who participated in the planning and participation for the WELCA ThankOffering Service.

A Thankoffering of close to \$1000 was collected and the monies will go to the national WELCA organization for support of their many projects. National WELCA funds all of its programs from monies donated from individual church WELCA units.



Celebrate with the
Rachel and Martha Circles

December 12th at
10:30 in Fellowship Hall.

Please bring a personal item or paper product
to be donated to the LSS Food Pantry.
Thrivent is sponsoring the event.



L.I.F.T. - Living in Faith and Trust

L.I.F.T. will meet on Tuesday, December 19 at **11:45**, please take note of the time change. Starting 15 minutes later will allow for those who want to attend the 11:30 Sacred Daily in the church chapel. Bring a brown bag lunch and relax before the holiday weekend.

Please contact Sue DeMoss at 419-306-9994 or Marilyn Dunn at 419-722-8543 for more information or if you need a ride .



**Elected to the
2024 Church Council**

**Marilynn Dunn, Elaine Miller,
Evan Pitt, Janet Wobser**

*Congratulations.
We are blessed!*

Food Cart Requests



*Laundry soap, cleaning supplies,
Potato mixes.*

**All donations benefit
Lutheran Social Services.**

*The food cart is in the
elevator room.*



The 2024 Flower Chart is up in the hallway, across from the church office. There is a full year of Sundays that need flowers to brighten not only the altar, but also either your home or the home of a shut-in. Please consider this ministry as a way to share God's love for His people.



**Send A Card
To Our Homebound**

Phil Bash	Ken Otte
Steve/Sally Rice	Ken/Jean Wynkoop
Beulah Bishop	Tom/Nancy Stearns
Joe/Debbie Baker	Carrie Howe
Annalee Cupp	Dick/Mary Kondik
Joan Swisher	Bob/Pat Stacey
Nancy Mullahy	Milt/Carol Peters
Mary Ann Chubb	

An Address list is on the bulletin board.



REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

**EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE THE CONTENTS TO A
FOOD BANK.**

December 1 - box of cereal
December 2 - peanut butter
December 3 - stuffing mix
December 4 - boxed potatoes
December 5 - macaroni and 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 beans

PASSIONATEPENNYPINCHER.COM

Library News

The time has come again to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. It is truly a very special time for me. Yesterday, Brook and I went Christmas shopping for his family gifts. First, I show him the names on the list. Then, the two of us walk into the store with no ideas in mind; we wander aimlessly up and down the aisles. All of a sudden he stops in front of a display or a rack; he points and signs "yes". I only shook my head "No" on the Keurig coffeemaker for his sister...it was very fancy and cost about \$200. He chose something else. We did fine and finished his job.

My celebration of the upcoming holiday continued today. The magic words "bring your Christmas music to your next lesson" were mentioned last week by my piano teacher, Debbie Snowden, of Kenton. So today was the day. I walk in with five books of music, because I have no idea what new music I want to work on over the holiday. For the next 60 minutes, we both play the music...songs I have never heard, my favorites, Debbie's favorites, new versions of the standbys. Debbie really gets into Christmas music. We have been together at least 20 years. I am not great as a pianist but we have fun. Incidentally, I taught English literature to all three of her children.

I think over lots of fun traditions in my world: My sister Mary Beth, when she was alive, would carry candy canes in her coat pocket when she went out. She would give one to the people at the checkout, people who needed a smile, etc. Sally and her family in California always made Yorkshire pudding on Christmas Eve when all the boys came home.

When I was still at home, Midnight Mass at Saint Teresa's was just a given. All four of my sisters and I all sang in the Church choir as we aged into it. Saint Teresa's was an old Church; built very simply. We didn't all hold candles. Just the altar candles with flashlights in the choir loft!

What a beautiful night ringing in song. It wasn't until we girls all graduated that the members built a new very modern Church.

My parents insisted that Santa brought the tree on Christmas Eve after we went to bed and took it down on New Year's Eve. I can only marvel at the pressure my parents created with that timeline. There was never a trace of the tree on New Year's Day.

On Christmas Day, we would visit the relatives who lived in Springfield and deliver cookies and candy we had been baking and decorating. And then home to the ham and sweet potatoes dinner with pecan pie for dessert. Yep, it was usually turkey for Thanksgiving and ham for Christmas.

After Paul and I married, we all met at Paul's parents where his Mom would dress up like the Christmas angel and read the legend of the candy cane, or the pretzel, etc. The only year that stands out is the year she made the kids re-enact the Christmas story. When she cast Rachael, our strong-willed young lady, as Mary, the comments began from Paul's sister-in-law pretending to be Rachael talking to God - "You want me to do what? Why?" I mean no disrespect. But some things should just be left well enough alone.

When the three then started their own young families they would come to Findlay late Christmas morning; everyone, including Paul's Mom, in pajamas to re-enact the Christmas morning when our kids were young.

Now we get together when it's convenient for all. This year, the date hasn't been chosen yet. But we will play games, eat too much, laugh, and enjoy the growing family. We are blessed.

My prayer for all of you is that you have a holy Christmas holiday. Enjoy others. Share the joy of the birth of Jesus. God bless and keep reading. Kathy Brooks (kathleenbrooks15@gmail.com)

December

Angel Hands



ALTAR GUILD

Tom & Cindy Fitzpatrick

COMMUNION BREAD

Dec. 3— Sharon Thompson

Dec. 10—Pat Needles

Dec. 17— Carolyn Bryant

Dec. 24—Arlene Schriner

Cyndy Rotman

Dec. 31—Devra Hall

COOKIE SUNDAY

Dec. 3— Community Dinner

Dec. 10—Church Council

Dec. 17— Social Ministry

Dec. 24—Endowment/Finance

Dec. 31—Rachel Circle

COUNTERS

Jerry Luth, Cyndy Rotman

DEACONS

Dec. 3

8:15—Marilynn Dunn

10:45— Bob Schriner

Dec. 10

8:15— Marilynn Dunn

10:45—Bob Schriner, Mike Zawisza

Dec. 17

8:15— Paul Brooks

10:45—Bob Schriner, Mike Sawisza

Dec. 24

9:30- Toni Poling

7:30

Dec. 31

7:30 Paul Brooks

DRIVERS

Dec. 3—Jerry Bryant

Dec. 10—Mike Zawisza

Dec. 17— Aaron Ried

Dec. 24—Jerry Bryant

Dec. 31—Jerry Bryant

FLOWER DELIVERY

Marilynn Dunn

LECTORS

Dec. 3

8:15— Marilynn Dunn

10:45— Gabby Cox

Dec. 10

8:15—Elaine Miller

10:45—Julie Buck

Dec. 17

8:15— Kathy Brooks

10:45—Makenzie Cox

Dec. 24

9:30—Harper Huling

7:30—Harper Huling

Dec. 31

9:30— Traci Roth

LSS DELIVERY

Kathy Brooks

SOUND ROOM

Dec. 3

8:15—Tim Roth

10:45— Toni Poling

Dec. 10

8:15—Tim Roth

10:45—Steve Roth

Dec. 17

8:15—Tim Roth

10:45—Jerry Bryant

Dec. 24

9:30-Tim Roth

7:30—Tim Roth

Dec. 31

9:30— Tim Roth

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

8:15/10:45

Dec. 3

Daryl Rotman, Traci Roth

Dec. 10— Kylee Timbrook

Dec. 17—Daryl Rotman

Dec. 24

9:30—Traci Roth

7:00—

Dec. 31

9:30—Pastor Chris

Daryl Rotman

January Newsletter Deadline

Monday, December 18th,

ALTAR FLOWERS

Dec. 3—

Dec. 10—Todd & Cindy Thompson

Dec. 17—Toni Poling

Dec. 24—Rich Jensen, Kris Orr

Dec. 31—Ted & Joann Stombaugh

Forms for your bulletin announcement are available on the bulletin board and at 1stLutheranChurch.org.

Flowers need to be delivered to the church by noon on Friday.



Current Resident or:



This newsletter was mailed:

November 28

Give or take a day

First Lutheran Church

A large, multi-pointed starburst graphic with a yellow center and purple points, set against a dark blue background with small white stars.

Worship
December 24th
9:30 am and 7:00 pm

December 31st
9:30 am