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## Let's Talk Chanting

- Pastor Sorenson

There may be no more musical time of the year in the Church and even in the world than Advent and Christmas time. Of course, there are all of the Christmas carols, the music playing in the stores and on the radio, and the sound of bells ringing everywhere you go.

Beyond this, the Bible is full of music surrounding Christmas. The angels sing at the birth of Christ. Elizabeth and Mary break out into chant and song as they rejoice at the fulfillment of God's promises. Even Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, who had been mute for months, started to sing as soon as God loosed his tongue.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible gives witness to the fact that God's people sing and chant in response to God's wonderful salvation. This gives a basis for why we sing and chant in church today. First, because God commands and encourages us to sing praises to His holy name. Second, because we witness the countless times God's people respond this way in Holy Scripture. Third, because singing and chanting help us remember the words of God and take them to heart with ease. And fourth, because singing and chanting (even by those who are less than musical) adds beauty and grandeur to the words we are using.

This is all good, right, and salutary and we should take time to learn from the biblical and practical witness to singing and chanting. But I also want to take a moment to reflect personally on why singing and chanting are so important to me. I offer this as a sincere and humble reflection for you to consider, even as I put into words my own personal feelings on the matter.

First off, I realize that not everyone is musically inclined. This is something I have struggled with my entire life. No one will ever confuse me with being a great singer or chanter. I fully acknowledge this. In fact, I am often very self-conscious of my voice and it has taken years for me to even feel comfortable being heard in public singing, and even more so when it comes to chanting. If this is a struggle for you, I completely understand where you are coming from on this.

I share this because, at least for me, it highlights why chanting is so important to me. Even though it is a struggle and even though I am far from great at it, nevertheless there has been such a great benefit to chanting for me that I want everyone to share that same joy and benefit as well.

I never grew up with chanting. The first few times I heard a pastor chant the liturgy, it was strange for me and I wasn't sure I even liked it. Over time, however, something strange began to happen. I started to learn the liturgy. Which meant I started to have phrases and verses of God's Word stuck in my mind. "Glory be to God on high... and on earth..." you can probably fill in the rest. (Luke 2:14, in this case)

That was just the first benefit. The second was that the liturgy, that is our weekly worship and the Word of God that makes up our liturgy, started to come to my mind randomly throughout the week. As I would be working on something, walking to class, or even driving in the car, these different chanted portions would start running through my head. What a joy it is to have the Word of God that readily available that I could recall it throughout my day!

Third, and finally, the chanting of the liturgy helped me on Sunday morning. Even though I struggled to get the notes and movement right for quite awhile (and still do sometimes), when the pastor began chanting his portion, I didn't have to try to find what the words of the response would be. The music led the response to my lips and I could focus more on what I was chanting in response, which, again, is the very Word of God. What a blessing that is!

This is merely my personal experience with chanting. I realize not everyone will experience it the same way. But it highlights for me that, though it may be strange or difficult or even distracting at first, over time chanting and singing bring great benefits and even greater joy.

I pray that all of us would be able to experience that joy of having God's Word in our hearts and our minds at a moment's notice. I pray that all of us would be able to focus more on what we are saying or singing or chanting because it is the very Word of God. I pray that all of us would recognize that we are the body of Christ and while something may not be a preference for one, it may be of immeasurable help and aid and joy for another.

I, for one, can say that chanting has been an immeasurable help and aid and joy for me. It has also been that way for countless other Christians throughout the ages and even in our congregation today. I do not chant because it is my preference musically. I chant because it has brought me great joy and I know it can do the same for all of us who are in Christ Jesus.

In the end, our focus should always turn to Christ and what He has done and is doing for us in worship. That is of the utmost importance in all the things we do. And in this season in particular, all of our words, our songs, and our chants, remind us of how Christ became flesh in order to save us from our sins. Thanks be to God for that! Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to men!

#### WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY INFORMATION

**Worship Service Update:** We are now back to having one service each Sunday at 9:00 AM. As we do so, we will continue to follow the state guidelines regarding social distancing and other safety measures. For each service, the radio transmitter will still be used and the sermon and readings will be posted on the website.

#### Bible Studies In-Person:

- **Sundays:** We are studying the minor prophets Sunday mornings after worship. This month we will continue studying the prophet Amos. Sunday School will also meet every week, beginning at 10:15 AM.
- **Wednesday Night Bible Study:** On break until after the new year. If you have any suggestions on topics to study, please let Pastor know.
- **Book of Concord Study:** Second Sunday of the month, December 12th, beginning at 5:00 PM. We will continue studying the Smalcald Articles. A pitch-in dinner will follow. Everyone is welcome to attend and invite a friend!

**Online Bible Study:** Resources, including full Bible studies and devotional videos are available on our church Youtube page (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzA1mStTKU8Sb0ia1OjDrPg>).

#### Sermons and Devotional Resources:

- Weekly sermons will be posted on our church website (<http://www.stpeterwaymansville.com>) on the sermon page under the "At St. Peter" tab. (Direct link to that page - [http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page\\_id=417](http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=417))
- You can also find helpful resources for your home devotions on the "Devotional Resources" page under the "Resources" tab ([http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page\\_id=489](http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=489)). Now is a great time to begin, continue, and strengthen a home devotional pattern by yourself and with your family.
- Portals of Prayer are available in the Narthex. You can drop by and pick one up or contact Pastor or the church office to have one delivered.

**Lord's Supper:** If you would like to receive the Lord's Supper during this time, please contact Pastor Sorenson via call, text, or email. His phone number is 812-371-1151 and his email is [pastoresorenson@gmail.com](mailto:pastoresorenson@gmail.com). He would be happy to meet you at the church for this purpose or to bring it to your home, making sure at all times to take the necessary safety precautions.

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May these resources assist you as you continue to hear the Word of God and cry out to Him in prayer.  
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### 150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY FOLLOW-UP

**Cookbook:** The 150th Anniversary Cookbooks are here! They are available for \$20 each. Proceeds will benefit the 150th anniversary celebration events and the general fund. Grab one for yourself, your family, and your friends! They also make great birthday and Christmas gifts!

**Cat's Meow:** Cat's Meow cutouts of the church to celebrate the 150th anniversary are available for \$20 each. You can pick one up on Sunday mornings or during the week.

**Anniversary Book:** 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary books are available in the Parish Hall for free.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Library:** The Book of the Month will be available in the Parish Hall library for you to look through and read. You may take the book home to read as well, but we ask that you please do not hold onto it for too long so other people can enjoy it as well. The December Book of the Month is *Saint Nicholas: The Real Story of the Christmas Legend* by Julie Stiegemeyer. Here is an excerpt from the book: "Nicholas is a real historical figure who lived in the fourth century. He was Bishop of Myra, a city in Lycia, Asia Minor (what is modern-day Turkey).... As a Christian, Nicholas suffered persecution under the Roman Emperor Diocletian and was imprisoned until Constantine came into power and showed tolerance to Christians.... The significance of Nicholas for us today is that his response to God's great love for us in Jesus was to care for other people. His kindness and care for children are modeled every time we give a gift out of love."

**Weekly Communion Resources:** There are some free resources on the topic of weekly communion in the narthex of the church. If you would like to learn more about this topic, feel free to pick up a book or the articles any time.

**Advent Midweeks & Suppers:** Our Advent midweek services begin on Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM. Before the service each week, we will have a pitch-in dinner beginning at 6:00 PM. Feel free to bring a dish to share or just come and enjoy what your fellow saints brought before worship!

**Advent Devotionals:** Available for pickup in the narthex. Large print are also available.

**From Matt Riley:** This past year we have been supporting seminarian Matt Riley. We will also be supporting him this year with our midweek Advent and Lent offerings. It is a wonderful thing for us to support a future pastor in Christ's Church! Each month he has been sending us a letter, which is posted on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. Be sure to check it out and keep Matt and his family in your prayers.

**Usher & Communion Sign-Up Sheets:** We are in need of volunteers for both of these roles. The 2022 sign-up sheets are up now on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. We are always looking for additional people interested in filling these roles. Please feel free to sign up even if you have never before helped in these ways. Someone will be happy to show you the ropes. *(At this time, communion assistance will be clean up only. Pastor will continue to set up communion so that there is only one contact prior to communion distribution.)*

**Altar Flowers:** If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, there is a sign-up sheet in the hallway between Pastor's office and the church office. The cost to sponsor the flowers is \$20, and the payment can be put in the offering plate or in the mail rack outside the church office door. The flowers are yours for the taking after the worship service. Please contact Sue Anne Lee at (812) 717-0167 if you have any questions.

**Circuit Meeting Meals and Worship:** Tuesday, December 7th, we will be hosting a circuit meeting. If you would be willing and able to organize and/or head up serving a light breakfast and a lunch, please let Pastor know. Also, we will have a worship service that day at 10:35 AM which is open to the whole congregation.

## YOUTH GROUP & YOUTH CLASSES

**Youth Group:** The youth group will meet on Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, for our youth night. We will have a meal, time to study God's Word, and a fun activity. Feel free to bring a friend! If you would like to be added to the text group to receive youth group notifications, please let Pastor know.

**December Outing:** The youth group will be having a special outing in December, either on December 11<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> (both are Saturdays). Keep an eye out in the bulletin and in the text group for more information.

**Sunday School Teachers:** If you would like to volunteer to help teach or be a substitute teacher, please speak to Kevin Schultz or Pastor.

## EVENTS

**Game Night:** Game Night will be on Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> beginning at 6:00 PM. We will do a soup night for supper as well as a hot chocolate bar. Feel free to bring a dish to share, your favorite games, or a deck of cards. Mark your calendars and invite your friends and family to come along as well!

## LCMS COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

**Bethlehem Walk:** Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3496 E. Morgan St., Martinsville, IN, will present its ninth annual Bethlehem Walk on Saturday, December 4 from 5:00-8:00 PM. This expanded, live Nativity will take participants back in time to experience a night like no other – the night our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born. The event will begin in the church Sanctuary with a brief introduction and end in Luther Hall (lower level of school) with optional cookies and hot chocolate. Tickets for this event, issued in 10-minute time increments, are free and may be secured online through Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ninth-annual-bethlehem-walk-tickets-200400291667>) or by calling the church office at 765-342-2004 or emailing the church at [popchurchlcms@hotmail.com](mailto:popchurchlcms@hotmail.com)

**Chili Supper:** The Trinity Youth Football League will host a chili Supper on Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-7:00 PM at Trinity Lutheran High School. A free will donation will be collected.

**Trinity Auction:** Preparations for the 19th annual Trinity Lutheran High School Dinner Auction are in full swing! This year's event will be held on February 26, 2022, at TLHS. The auction steering committee is currently seeking donations of items such as desserts, one-of-a-kind items, event tickets, memorabilia, handcrafted items, experiences, gift cards or gift certificates, and more for our live and silent auctions. For more information, to donate items or purchase tickets please contact Erin Brooks [ebrooks@trinitycougars.org](mailto:ebrooks@trinitycougars.org) or 812-524-8547.

**Redeemer Ladies Tea:** This year our program is titled, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" and the Redeemer Evangelism Board would like to invite the ladies of the church to attend. Tickets are \$15 per person or you can buy a full table of (6) for \$80. Tickets will be \$16 at the door, so call and order your tickets. The proceeds from the Tea will go for missions that we support. They are: Heart 4 Haiti, 4 Kenya Kids, and Crosslife Ministries. Come and enjoy a delicious meal and listen to a very important program. We will also have a raffle for a handmade quilt. Contact Katrina Miller (812-522-8693) or the Redeemer Church office at (812-522-1837) for tickets or information.

**Lakeview Opening:** Lakeview Ministries is in search of their next Director of Operations to join the incredible team already in place. They are seeking a strong leader to supervise the staff at Camp Lakeview and Lakeview Villages and lead all aspects of the summer camp and retreat season programming. This is a year-round, full-time position with competitive salary and full benefits. To view the job description and submit a resume, visit [www.lakeview.camp/work](http://www.lakeview.camp/work).

## FROM THE OFFICE

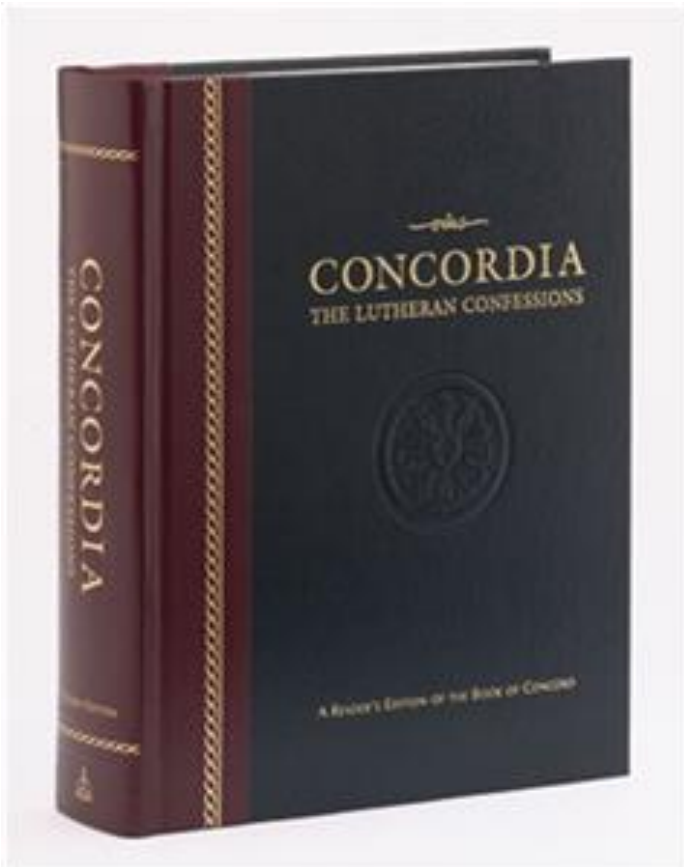
**Offering Envelopes:** Happy holidays! I hope everyone is enjoying their holidays so far! I have set out the new 2022 contribution envelopes for the new year in the Parish Hall. I have gone through and depleted a lot of people who have not taken theirs or who no longer are members of the church. If you are a new member, and wish to have contribution envelopes, please get in contact with me so we can get you added. God's blessings! – Camden Jeffries

**Contact Information:** As the situation around us continues to change daily, we would like to be able to contact everyone in a quick and timely manner. If you could please contact Camden or Pastor to update your contact information, especially phone number and email, that would help us tremendously and be greatly appreciated. Keep an eye on the church Facebook page for the most up-to-date information. Thank you!

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### **Book of Concord Corner**

“Our churches teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God (John 1:14), assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures – the divine and the human – inseparably joined in one person. There is one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. He did this to reconcile the Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of mankind (John 1:29).

He also descended into hell, and truly rose again on the third day. Afterward, He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. There He forever reigns and has dominion over all creatures. He sanctifies those who believe in Him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts to rule, comfort, and make them alive. He defends them against the devil and the power of sin.

The same Christ will openly come again to judge the living and the dead, and so forth, according to the Apostles’ Creed.” (Augsburg Confession, article III)

# Advent and Christmas Services

Advent is a season when the Church prepares for the coming (or advent) of Jesus Christ. This preparation is done by gathering together to hear the Word of God, repent of our sins, and receive the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

Throughout this season, God reveals to us the three advents of Christ. First, He came in the flesh by His birth in Bethlehem. Second, He comes to us here and now in His Word and in His Sacraments. Third, He will come again on the last day to raise us from the dead.

As such, the Church uses this season to prepare for all three advents of Christ, celebrating the first, experiencing the second, and longing for the third. May this Advent and Christmas season be a blessed time of preparation for all of us here at St. Peter as we join together to delight in the Christ Child who comes to us now and will come again!

## The Midweek Services –

### O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**Wednesday, December 1, 7:00 PM – Jesus Is Wisdom & Adonai**

**Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 PM – Jesus Is the Branch of Jesse & Key of David**

**Wednesday, December 15, 7:00 PM – Jesus Is the Dayspring, Desire of Nations, & Emmanuel**

## The Christmas Services

**Friday, December 24, 7:00 PM – Children's Christmas Program**

**Friday, December 24, 11:00 PM – Christmas Eve Candlelight**

**Saturday, December 25, 9:00 AM – Christmas Divine Service**



## St. Peter Lutheran Church Calendar

**Ushers:** Robert Stiles

**Communion Clean-up:** Lynette May (5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>)  
 Danny & Judy Strasser (25<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>)

**Acolytes:** **December 1** – Jonah Sciano

**December 12** – Rayleigh Acton

**December 24** (11 PM) – Laurie Schultz

**December 31** – Trevor Acree

**December 5** – Joe Acree

**December 15** – Anslee Hawkins

**December 25** – Jonah Sciano

## December 2021

**December 8** – Trevor Acree

**December 19** – Max Hoene

**December 26** – Joe Acree

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Upcoming Dates:</b> 1/6: Joint Epiphany service @ Jonesville			<b>1</b>  6 PM – Pitch-in Supper 7 PM – Advent Midweek Service	<b>2</b>  10 AM – Elders' meeting	<b>3</b>  6 PM – Game Night	<b>4</b>
<b>5 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent</b> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor's Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Circuit meeting here (worship service @ 10:35 AM)	<b>8</b>  6 PM – Pitch-in Supper 7 PM – Advent Midweek Service	<b>9</b>  7 PM – Board Meeting	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>  <i>Possible youth group event</i>
<b>12 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent</b> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor's Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis 5:00 PM – Book of Concord Study	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>  6 PM – Pitch-in Supper 7 PM – Advent Midweek Service	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  <i>Possible youth group event</i>
<b>19 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent</b> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor's Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis 5:00-7:00 PM – Youth Group night	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  7 PM – Children's Christmas Program  11 PM – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	<b>25</b>  9 AM – Christmas Day Divine Service
<b>26 Feast of St. Stephen</b> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor's Bible Study & Sunday School	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  7 PM – New Year's Eve Divine Service	