

Apostles Epistle

January 2012

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:8-9)



Prominent People in the Bible: Adam and Eve

The Tree of Life was God's gift to Adam and Eve, representing their eternal life through him. The forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil led to God's plan of saving people from eternal death through Jesus.

More information is located online at WhatAboutJesus.com. Look for the *What About...Prominent People* link.

Adam and Eve

"Where are you?" The Lord God called to Adam and Eve, the first man and first woman. It wasn't because the Lord God didn't know where they were. He knows all things. Nothing escapes his notice. Rather, he called to them so they would know where they were. He had created them sinless like him. He had created them to enjoy a relationship with him that would be their highest delight.

But they had sinned by disobeying him. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie of Satan. So they cowered in fear as they heard God approaching and foolishly tried to hide from him. They knew that because of their sin their kind and generous Father had now become their Judge.

In love, the Lord God came and called Adam and Eve so they would know where they were. Though still in Eden, they were no longer in paradise. They were now far from God, living in sin and fear and death. But he also came and called them to tell that he would rescue them and restore them to a right relationship with him. He would send the Seed of the woman, a descendant of Eve, to take away their sin, remove their fear, and restore their life with him.

In love, the Lord God still comes and calls us sinners today. Through his Word, the Holy Bible, he comes and calls us so we know where we are—far away from him in the condition of sin and shame and fear and death. But through his Word, he also tells us that he has kept his promise to send the Seed of the woman, who crushed the power of sin and Satan forever. He sent his Son, Christ Jesus, from heaven to earth, to bridge the distance between the holy God and sinful human beings and draw us back to him.

Where are you? Through Christ alone, God gives us a new answer to that old question. In Christ, God has reconciled us to himself, restoring us to a right relationship with him. In Christ, **we don't need to run from God. Rather, in Christ we not only want to—but are able to—eagerly run to the Lord God daily for the forgiveness we need, the fellowship with him we desire, and the faith that looks forward to a forever with him in paradise.**

Laboring for the Lord

You are invited for a short congregational meeting on January 29 after the 10:30 service, which will inform you of current happenings with the building project. At that time, elevation drawings will be available, along with more detailed floor plans. Many individuals are putting time, energy and offerings toward this project. For that we thank the Lord and praise his name as he continues to move people with his love. Please take time on January 29 to become more familiar with our building project plans and to contribute your input.



Bible Information Class

Praise God for the ten souls who have recently finished four months of Bible Information Class (BIC). Six of those souls were non-members who now have come into membership. God is strengthening faiths and capturing hearts with the Gospel! There are several private BICs being conducted on a weekly basis as well.



The next public BIC is scheduled to begin on January 24 at 7:00 p.m. If you would like to sign up for the class, please speak to one of the pastors and put your name on the list in the entry way.

Elder Notes

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

Another year is over! We can be so thankful for all the blessings God has given us this past year. He may have blessed you with a new car or good health or a sickness or a lost job. We have to remember they are all blessings from God. He knows what is best for us and he loves us very much.

~ Kirk Cooper, Elder

Council Notes

I hope everyone had a chance to spend Christmas with family and friends. I would like to extend a special thank you to the kids, parents, teachers, musicians and pastors that were involved with the **children's program**. **Everyone did a great job. I have a new love for the song "Angles We Have Heard On High."** Another thank you to all who participated in the **Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve**. It was nice to see members of the church involved in the readings. Most of all, I would like to say thank you to our pastors, who lead our flock. It is their tireless work that continues to move our church forward. We are truly blessed to have two wonderful pastors serving our congregation!

It has been very quiet on the council during the holiday season. We are saying goodbye to a few council members and saying hello to new ones. But that is what the New Year is all about, new starts. However, as we start another year, it is time to roll up our sleeves and get back to work. We continue to make progress on our building project. The maintenance of the church is always a high priority. The weekly calls to our delinquent list and shut in members continue to take time for the elders and pastors. 2012 will be a historical year for Apostles. This will be the year that the building project will take shape as we prepare to break ground in 2013!

~God's Blessings. Trey Adkins, Council President

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Events Team News

Happy 2012 from the Events Team! Start out the year by attending our first meeting/activity of the year on Saturday, January 7th at 10:00 a.m. We'll take down the Christmas decorations, discuss the next day's Voters' Meeting lunch, and review plans for 2012 events! It's a great time to get a sense of what this team is all about! Join us! Blessings on your New Year!

2012

Fellowship Team News

This year the Fellowship Team combined the annual Christmas dinner and the decorating of the church with the Events Team on December 3. A large group helped with the decorations and then stayed and joined those who came to share in the potluck dinner. After that we went into the sanctuary and sang Christmas hymns and enjoyed the beauty of the church. Thanks to all who helped and who brought all the delicious food.

On December 15, we served cookies and punch to the preschool parents. There was a nice group that came from the both the morning and afternoon class. A lot of fathers came this year! Thanks, Karen, for making the punch, to Rosemary and Glenda for serving and to all the team members who brought cookies and helped set up, serve and clean up.

We sent a box to each of our college students with goodies, mittens, gift cards, popcorn, anything to help them feel not too lonesome for their home.

Our ladies Christmas/Valentine gathering will be Saturday, January 29 at 3:00 p.m. at **Lynette Scott's home. More information coming soon** - watch the bulletin announcements. Be sure to save a gift you want to recycle or get rid of - **we will have the popular "White Elephant" exchange again. Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 4 at 1:00 p.m. at the church.**

We want to wish you a blessed New Year and we hope you enjoyed the season of Christmas and got to hear the story of the birth of our Savior.



-Sherry Mansheim

Thank You!

There were many cards and special Christmas greetings shared with the staff of Apostles over the Christmas season. We thank everyone who extended their best wishes to us and spoke prayers for us.



With the presence of the Lord we look forward to a blessed year in the name of Christ Jesus.

From all at Apostles, *Thank You!*

Preschool Outreach



Christ has blessed us with many opportunities to share the Gospel with others through the preschool. During the Christmas "cookie social" before Christmas break, many new relationships were established with preschool families and some appointments were made for visitations. A preschool child was baptized in December. A family from the preschool recently finished a Bible Information Class and several more are showing interest.

Continue to pray for the great ministry that God has established through you, his church and the ministry that he is continuing to bless richly.

Evangelism

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road - the desert road - that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him... Then Philip ... told him the good news about Jesus. (Acts 8:26-31,35)

Personal Proclamation for a Personal Message

Driving down Zimmermann trail is a neat sight at night. There are thousands of lights spread **out in all directions unveiling the size of our city. But the lights aren't there just for decorations** (at least most of them). Lights have a function and a purpose. The lights that were set in the sky on the day of creation mark the seasons, days and years for us. The lights around Billings allow us to navigate around town and see in the dark. The lights of a city indicate that people are living there. God allows us to see all of the lights at night to remind us that there are many souls who are lost in the darkness of sin and death. On one trip down the hill a good **friend of mine once said, "Wow, look at all of the souls that need to be saved."**

So many souls, so little time. So much area and not enough man power. So much darkness and not much light. Where do you start? What do you do? Who do you talk to? The words from Acts 8 remind us beautifully that evangelism is not about saving one city at a time but one soul at a time. Yes, we are to go out into the entire world and preach the good news to all creation. Make disciples of all nations is the command. But we do it one soul at a time.

Philip did something extraordinary that we would call very ordinary. He walked along the road until he saw the chariot that God told him about. When the opportunity presented itself, he asked a simple question. Then the extraordinary happened. Philip sat down. No bolt of lightning ripped through the sky. No paralyzed man leaped to his feet. Philip simply sat down. Philip took time with a man struggling in his faith. Philip sat with someone who needed to hear the Word of God. That is truly extraordinary because it was the Spirit who was working through Philip.

So, where do you begin? We begin by repenting for the missed opportunity to simply sit with a friend and share our faith. We repent for thinking we are so busy that we cannot reach out to **others or that evangelism isn't our concern. Repent for being so overwhelmed by the many souls that need to be saved that we forget about the one soul that we come into contact with who doesn't know Christ.**

Start with trusting in the forgiveness that Philip spoke about on his chariot ride. You are forgiven by the same Savior Philip shared with a complete stranger. Start believing the good news that you are holy in Christ and God has claimed you to be his child.

Armed with that truth, you can now do the extraordinary and sit. Yes, ask God to give you opportunities to sit with a friend or a neighbor. Look for opportunities to sit with someone at Costco who is eating one of those huge polish sausages. Sit down and be a light for Jesus in this dark world by sharing the good news about your Savior. Then watch and marvel at how God speaks to a soul whom he loves, through you, as you simply sit and share Jesus.

~Pastor Bickelhaupt

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, give to me the boldness to reach out to others with the good news of forgiveness. Raise up among your people here in Billings people who are willing to simply take time and sit with others in order to share their faith. Amen.

Pray, Praise and Give Thanks!



Evangelism and Prospects

Holy Spirit, through the many Christmas services this past month, you have allowed many visitors to hear the life giving message of Jesus. We now ask that you give us opportunities to follow up with those who do not have a church home or who do not have a good understanding of your free forgiveness. With the Gospel, let us win souls for you. May your kingdom increase first in our hearts so that your love flows from us to others. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

The New Year

God the Father, you have brought us to another year by providing for our bodies and souls graciously. We ask that you would continue to preserve us, giving to your people all that they need for body and life. Jesus Christ, you have renewed us by washing us free from all sin. We are your new creations and we ask that you give to us the spiritual strength to be shining lights in this dark world. Holy Spirit, teach us the way you would have us to walk this year. Guide us with your Word and preserve our faith with the Gospel. Work powerfully in the hearts of those at Apostles Lutheran Church so that we see ourselves as your ambassadors who reach out to souls with the message of salvation. Do great and mighty works among us as we move forward in your name on earth, looking forward to praising your name in heaven forever. Amen.

Building Project

Dear Lord, the building committee continues to meet and make plans for your glory. I ask that you would be with them, giving them wisdom and direction. Allow the building project to be supported by the congregation as they give of their talents, time and treasures. Let us as a congregation not only think of the current ministry but also think about the generations who will worship and serve you in the years to come. Let the building project and the process that we are going through be a blessing and not a hindrance. Bring the congregation together as we work for your glory. Amen.

Ministry

Lord, bless the ministry at Apostles. Give wisdom to the pastors and the teachers as they plan and lead your people forward. Open your hand to us so that we have many individuals who are wanting to go through a Bible Information Class in the near future. Move hearts to fill the Bible classes so that your people can be strengthened, healed and encourage through your Word and through their brothers and sisters. Grant that Apostles Church grow and increase first in faith and, if it is your will, secondly in size. We ask all this knowing that we need not be afraid, for you are with us wherever we go! You are our shield, our very great reward! Amen.

PRESCHOOL

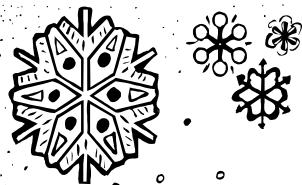
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You could hear the excited countdown to Jesus' birthday throughout the month of December. You could also hear singing and recitation of lines as the children practiced for the program. The children were busy making, painting and decorating Christmas trees. They also had Christmas tree counting and matching games, made Christmas pictures with different shapes and built and created with our new Magformers construction set. It was a busy and exciting month!

We learned about angels and made some to correspond with our Bible lesson of the angel Gabriel appearing to Mary. We heard more about them when they appeared to the shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth. The children definitely knew the Christmas story and could tell it to us. They wanted to be like the shepherds and tell everyone the good news...."The Savior is born!"

We had a great turnout when the Fellowship Team invited the families to come in at the end of preschool classes one day and enjoy a time of fellowship and friendship. They served cookies, coffee, punch and juice in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Thank you, Fellowship Team, for providing an opportunity for members and families to get to know one another.

We also had a tremendous turnout for the Christmas program. The children did a wonderful job of sharing the true meaning of Christmas through greeting cards that told the story of our Savior's birth. The large poster cards were decorated by three of the preschool parents- Pamela Shafer, Jacqueline Becktold and Christine Obenauer. Thank you to these ladies for the beautiful work they did! The children also



made cards to give to their parents at the end of the program. We again had time to visit with one another over cookies and beverages. Thank you to Julia Bollman, Karen Davis, Glenda Feldsien, Bea Leichner, Sherry Mansheim, Lori Stepper and Rosemary Weinhold for setting up, serving and cleaning up after a wonderful evening. A special thanks to Della Rohlfing for organizing the cookies.

The week after the program we went to work making and wrapping gifts for our parents. We also went back to work learning the letters with "I i". The children had fun doing ice cube art and eating ice cream. We also learned about winter and made snowmen to decorate the room. Stop in after the New Year to check them out.

We enjoyed a week of vacation before starting the New Year. Thank you to everyone for supporting the preschool with your prayers, gifts and talents. May God bless you and we wish you a Happy New Year.

-Lynette Scott



Worship Etiquette

What is good Church Etiquette? Do I turn my phone off or put it on vibrate? When I leave to go to the bathroom do I wait for everyone to be standing or sitting? And when do I come back in? What should I wear? What shouldn't I wear?

The reality is that many churches can answer these questions in many ways. But I'm sure we've all wrestled with the "Good Church Etiquette" question at one time or another. Here is a list called "The Ten Commandments of Church Etiquette" by Pastor Paul Prange of the LC-MS. These are not meant for finger-pointing, or to make people feel bad, or to judge. It is simply meant to educate and create a starting point for each of us to ask: How do I act in

church and what is God-pleasing participation?

The key question we want to ask in every single situation is this: *"How does my action affect another person's worship? Am I aiding or distracting?"* Or, to put it another way, *"What if every other person were doing what I am doing right now?"*

These are simply offered in the spirit of love and with the intent of making our worship fit for our Lord and Savior, who refused no pain and accepted all sacrifice in order to save us.



Ten Commandments of Worship Etiquette by Paul Prange

1. Give your best to God who has given you all that you have.
2. Because we are a communion of saints in Christ Jesus, talk to your neighbor before and after worship in the parking lot, on the porch, in the Fellowship Hall, in the narthex, in the atrium. But reserve the sanctuary for a place to talk to God.
3. Take care of your bodily needs (restroom, drink of water, etc.) prior to worship. Frequent ins and outs are very distracting.
4. Plan to arrive on time. If, however, you are late, you should not enter during the words of welcome and/or introduction, during the Confession of Sins and Absolution, or during a Scripture reading. Enter at a "transition" time and as quietly as possible.
5. Keep your eyes and ears open to visitors, who are not familiar with the liturgy, and help them. Once you too were a stranger to the liturgy and someone helped you find your place.
6. Sing the hymns, listen to the reading of God's Word, and the proclamation of that Word by the pastor. Join in praying the prayers, and participate in the celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar, your spiritual food along the way.
7. Take note of "who's who in the pew" with you, especially the people whom you do not know. Give them a smile during worship and a greeting afterwards.
8. Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me ... for of such is the kingdom of God." We want children in worship, for positive patterns are established at a very young age. Remember that the attention span of young children is short. If they become restless, let them rest outside the worship area.
9. Help us keep God's house neat and in good order. Therefore, leave the worship space in a uniform, pleasing appearance following worship.
10. Go in peace and serve the Lord.

Now Available through Apostles!

Professional, Christian counselors at *Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services* have been specifically trained to provide counseling over the phone or on video over the internet, and have been offering this service to our WELS members since 2007. This is a wonderful opportunity to receive short-term counseling for challenges you or your family members may be facing, such as depression, anxiety, marital discord, parenting concerns, job loss or other areas. You can meet with a counselor from any private location that has an internet connection and web cam. Telephone counseling is available if you do not have a web cam.

If you are interested in utilizing this new resource, please talk to one of the pastors.

Through my Bible in Three Years

This Bible reading series is designed to take only a few minutes each day. To help you through your Bible study, consider this anecdote: Peter the Barber once asked Martin Luther how he, an ordinary kind of guy, could read the Bible with profit. Luther answered: Ask yourself: 1. What does God tell me here? 2. What makes me glad? 3. What makes me sad? 4. What do I want to pray for?



January

1. 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:16
2. 2 Cor. 8:1-15
3. 2 Cor. 8:16-9:15
4. 2 Cor. 10
5. 2 Cor. 11:1-21a
6. 2 Cor. 11:21b-12:10
7. 2 Cor. 12:11-21
8. 2 Cor. 13
9. Micah 1 and 2
10. Micah 3:1-4:7
11. Micah 4:8-5:15
12. Micah 6:1-7:6
13. Micah 7:7-20
14. 1 Timothy 1
15. 1 Tm. 2
16. 1 Tm. 3:1-13
17. 1 Tm. 3:14-4:5
18. 1 Tm. 4:6-16
19. 1 Tm. 5:1-6:2
20. 1 Tm. 6:3-21
21. Titus 1
22. Tit. 2
23. Tit. 3
24. 2 Timothy 1
25. 2 Tm. 2
26. 2 Tm. 3
27. 2 Tm. 4
28. Leviticus 1
29. Lev. 2 and 3
30. Lev. 4:1-6:7
31. Lev. 6:8-7:38

Our Gifts to God

	Offerings	PS Tuition	Misc	TOTAL	Budget
1st Sun	3,094.00	570.00	0.00	4,474.00	4,468.00
2nd Sun	2,863.13	1,008.00	0.00	3,841.13	4,468.00
3rd Sun	2,848.00		0.00	2,848.00	4,868.00
4th Sun	4,519.50	70.00	0.00	4,589.50	4,868.00
TOTAL	\$13,324.63	\$1,648.00	\$0.00	\$14,972.63	\$17,872.00

	Nov.	YTD	Balance
Building Expansion	\$7,517.00	\$29,817.00	\$66,638.72
Building Improvements	1,600.00	1,600.00	6,935.18
Preschool	6,112.00	11,457.00	62,506.47
Interest/Misc.	3,519.32	3,717.44	4,867.63
Missions	3,954.50	12,821.50	
General Acct Income	14,972.63	86,560.80	
General Account Expenses	19,985.61	98,598.87	

Mission Statement:

As God's disciples, we the men, women and children of Apostles are united in the preaching, teaching and sharing of God's Word in its truth and purity. By God's grace, we will nurture believers and joyfully spread the Word of God in our community and throughout the world, all to His glory.

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