



Spruce Grove Newsletter

Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church, Wolf Lake, MN Vol. 22 No. 6 November - December 2017

Mary's Joy, Our Hope ~ Luke 1 ~ Author: Justin Lonas

Our gathered worship this time of year is structured very similarly across churches and denominations as we all turn our attention to the Advent of Christ's first coming. The celebration and ritual covers us with familiarity and warmth, tying together the generations and smoothing over divisions as few other events can. The relevant Scriptures we know by heart; the songs are so ingrained that many of us can sing every verse in perfect harmony without a hymnal in sight. The challenge for Gospel teachers is to allow the warm glow of Christmas traditions to reflect the blinding light of truth—that the infinite, holy Creator of the Universe became a tiny, helpless, baby boy on His way to save His people from their sins.

This has been done a thousand different ways through the centuries, but it seems best to proclaim the Christ of Christmas (as we ought to preach and teach all the things of God) from the text of His holy Word. Opening the Gospels (Matthew, Luke, and John at least, Mark launches into the story with Jesus' baptism as an adult), we find the rich facets of the story revealed to give full view to the whole event. We can preach the wonder of the Word made flesh from John 1, the tenderhearted righteousness of Joseph in Matthew 1, or the royal significance of the visit of the Magi (and Herod's brutality) in Matthew 2. Most often, we go straight to Luke 2 for the "play-by-play of His birth in a stable, heralded by angels, and attended by lowly shepherds.

Taking a short step back to Luke 1, though, gives wonderful perspective on the power and significance of Christ's coming. Jesus Himself is still in the womb, and Joseph is only mentioned in passing (1:27), but Mary's thoughts and actions are given their fullest treatment here. We Protestants are always careful not to put too much emphasis on Mary as a point of distinction with Roman Catholic doctrine, but sometimes we overly downplay her part in the story.

When the Mother of Christ comes into our songs and sermons, we usually focus on her tender age or her "predicament" of being with child and without a husband, her courage in the face of the prescribed treatment for unwed mothers in her culture, and occasionally her example of obedience to God's decrees even if she could not fully understand them. Seldom do we talk about Mary as a theologian, but it was her consistent knowledge of God, His character, and His promises that prepared her to obey as she did.

Luke writes that his account was "handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (1:2), and in his efforts must have come to know someone who provided him with these detailed descriptions of things that Mary alone would have witnessed (and thought), whether an aged Mary herself or some of her close family.

When Gabriel greeted her, she didn't recoil in fear (though he did tell her in verse 30 not to be afraid), but was "very perplexed at this statement" (1:29)—it's almost as though she expected to see and hear from angels, and was only taken aback that she was "favored" by the Lord. After his incredible message was delivered, she only had one rather innocent question, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (1:34). Gabriel's explanation was that it would be a miracle, summed up as "For nothing will be impossible with God" (1:37). Mary's response: "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word" (1:38). In those days, it was not customary to educate women in the Scriptures, but Mary had learned enough from her parents and from worship in the synagogue to know that the Lord was God and that He had promised deliverance. When Gabriel came, she put the pieces together to believe, and she worshipped and obeyed.

After hearing of the simultaneous miracle occurring with her relative Elizabeth, Mary "went in a hurry" (1:39) to her house, probably to rejoice with her (given

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the circumstances, Elizabeth was the only other person on earth who would understand), but also to help her during her pregnancy and delivery. “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb” (1:41). John, the “forerunner” knew the presence of his Lord even then. Then “Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord” (1:41-45).

Elizabeth’s blessing on Mary centered on two characteristics. First, God chose her “among women” to be the bearer of His Son. She did not do anything to earn that distinction, but received it as His free and gracious gift. Second, she responded in belief and obedience to the Word of the Lord. So it has always been and always will be with those whom the Lord blesses!

At this remarkable greeting, Mary burst into praise to the Lord, and it is here that we see the depth of her faith and understanding. “And Mary said: My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name” (1:46-49). Clearly, Mary saw God’s unmerited favor in her life, and she exalts Him for it. She knew that she needed a Savior, and that her Savior was God. She knew that the gift given to her was not of her doing, but that the Holy One of Israel was blessing “all generations” through her.

Mary began to grasp her role in God’s grand plan to redeem mankind. She quoted Psalm 103:17, “And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him” (1:50), and recalled the history of God’s dealings with Israel. Likely she would have also known of Isaiah’s prophecy, as the reality set in that she was the virgin who would conceive and bear a son as God’s sign of deliverance.

Though specific events are not named, her hymn to His faithfulness encapsulates the Exodus, the conquest of Canaan, the exile and return from Babylon, and His constant provision and justice: “He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were

proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed. He has given help to Israel His servant” (1:51-54).

Ultimately, she saw the coming of Christ through her womb as the final fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 to bless all nations of the earth: “In remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever” (1:55). Her son would be Abraham’s Son, David’s Son, God’s Son—the Great High Priest, the Eternal King. Mary expressed in her song what Paul later wrote, that all the Scriptures “were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor. 10:11). She knew that her call from the Lord had come in “the fullness of time” (Gal. 4:4), and she was ready to be used by Him as He saw fit.

Mary’s song overflows with joy in the recognition of God’s Word being fulfilled—He was doing what He had said He would do! His promises were being kept, His people were being brought His justice and righteousness, and His enemies were being scattered.

When she made this declaration of praise, she had not yet told Joseph (and probably not even her own family) what God had done. She knew the road ahead would be harsh, but yet she cannot hold back her rejoicing in the Lord’s goodness. Within her was growing the body of God in flesh, the Second Adam, the one who would bear her sin and the sins of all so that God could be both “just and the justifier” of men. What other response could there be but flagrant worship?

This Christmas, let us be awestruck with Mary and exalt the Lord for His great mercy from generation to generation for those who fear Him!

Justin Lonas is editor of Disciple Magazine for AMG International in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

God Bless you all this Advent and Christmas season!

Pastor Dennis Hannu

Birth Announcement



Nick & Megan Aho announce the birth of their 6th child. Lawton Richard was born on September 24, 2017 at Tri-County Hospital in Wadena, MN. Lawton weighed 8 pounds 15 ounces and was 21 inches tall. Lawton was welcomed home by his parents and siblings: Courtney, Marshall, Norah & Melory. His grandparents are Victor Sr. & Lola Aho of Menahga and Rick & Betty Estola of MI.

Grandchild Announcement

Jeff & Rosy Kinnunen announce the birth of a grandson. Baiden Parker Lance was born on October 17, 2017 to their daughter Cherae and her husband Lance of Greer, SC. Baiden's great-grandparents are Wilho & Diana Aho.

Advent & Christmas Services

Advent Services will be held at the church Wednesdays, December 6th, 13th and 20th at 7:30 PM.

There will also be a Worship Service on Christmas Day at 10:30 AM.

Milestones

Gloria Juntunen

~ 88th Birthday - 11/2/2017

Ellen Tumberg

~ 70th Birthday - 11/10/2017

Stacy Aho

~ 40th Birthday - 11/13/2017

Reuben Tumberg

~ 80th Birthday - 11/14/2017

Nate & Stephanie Siltala

~ 20th Anniversary - 11/22/2017

Tyrell Aho

~ 10th Birthday - 12/11/2017

Sunday School Christmas Program Practice

We will be practicing for the Sunday School Christmas Program on December 3 & 10 starting at 9:30 A.M. and also on December 17 starting at 9:00 A.M.

* Parents of Sunday School Students: Please help them to do the memory work & practice their songs for the program.

Sunday School Christmas Program

The Sunday School Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, December 17th, 2017 at the church at 11:00 A.M. Dinner will be served following the program.

YOUTH WEEKEND

GOD > WEAKNESS

(God is greater than weakness.)

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."
2 Corinthians 12:9

The Spruce Grove Church Youth is hosting a Youth Weekend for New Years! December 28th - December 31st. Youth in confirmation class and older are invited to join us.

Pastor Nick Kandoll & Pastor Alan Estola will be the guest speakers throughout the weekend.

Cost is \$25 per person, with a max of \$75 per family. If you plan on attending and are in need of housing, private message/call/text Kaisa Aho (218-849-2766) Hope to see you in Wolf Lake!

* If you are able to house youth, please let Kaisa know.

* If you are willing to provide bars, cookies or snacks, or with chaperoning please speak to Kendra Sikkila.

News & Notes

- Loren & Karla Impola & family traveled to WA.
- Nate & Carrie Aho & family traveled to WA.
- Jethro & Molly Impola and family have moved to South Dakota.
- Reuben & Ellen Tumberg's children were all here for their milestone birthdays early in November.
- Alisha Aho & children traveled to SC.
- Ashlyn Aho & children traveled to SC.
- Jeff & Rosy Kinnunen traveled to SC.
- Devon Kinnunen traveled to SC.

Some of the visitors the last few months were:

- Brent & Karen Seppanen & family from SD.
- Alan & Val Estola & family from MI.
- Greg Ruotsala from ND.
- Jake & Holly Latto from Canada.
- Jonas Impola from WA.
- Alethea Impola from WA.
- James & Clara Estola & family from MI.
- Jethro & Molly Impola & family from SD.
- Lois Mattila & daughter from WA.
- Michael & Caitlin Aho & family from NH.
- Stephen Aho from NH.
- Rolly & Sarah Seppala from SC.
- Heidi Niemitalo from WA.
- Bruce & Christine Sarkela from OR.
- Todd & Rhonda Niskanen from SC.
- David & Aila Somero from NH.
- Eno Yliniemi from WA.
- Raeann Malysh from Canada.
- Troy & Mia Reynolds and family from Bagley, MN.
- Bruce & Hannah Barney & family from Chisholm, MN.
- Kyle Aho from NH.
- Kevin Aho from WA.
- Ray & Rosanna Kulla & family from SD.
- Mona Matson from SD.
- Hector & Carmela Lopez & family from ND.
- Many, many others were here for the hunting season.

Thanks to those who visit here, we are truly blessed.

Remember in Prayer

"...pray one for another; that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16)

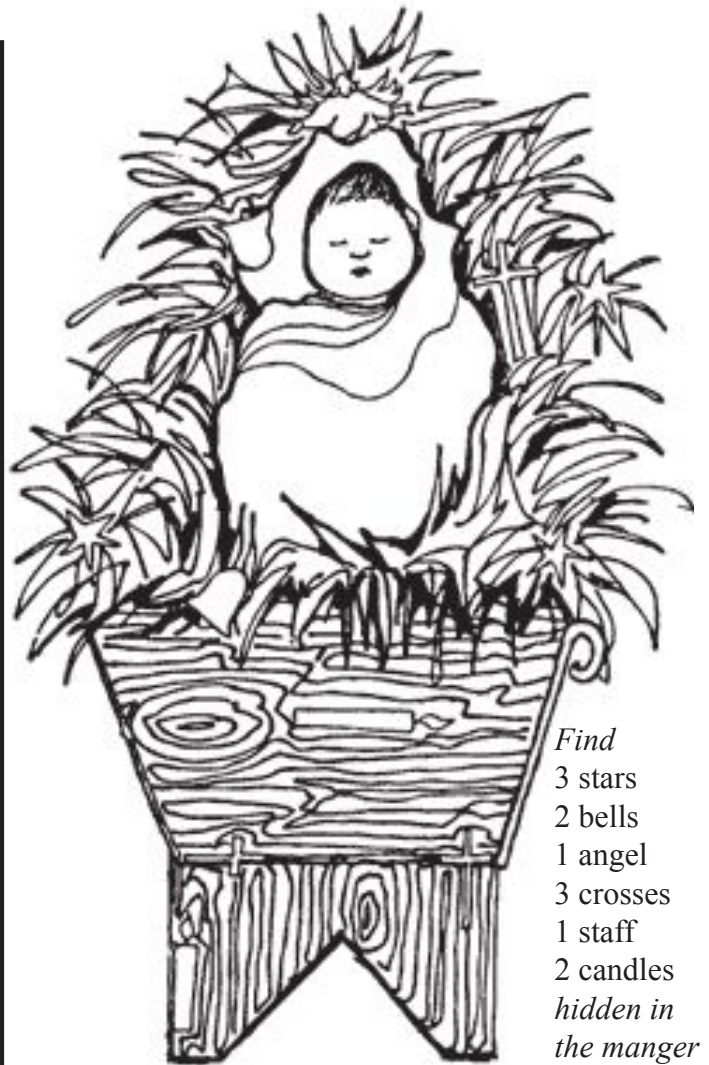
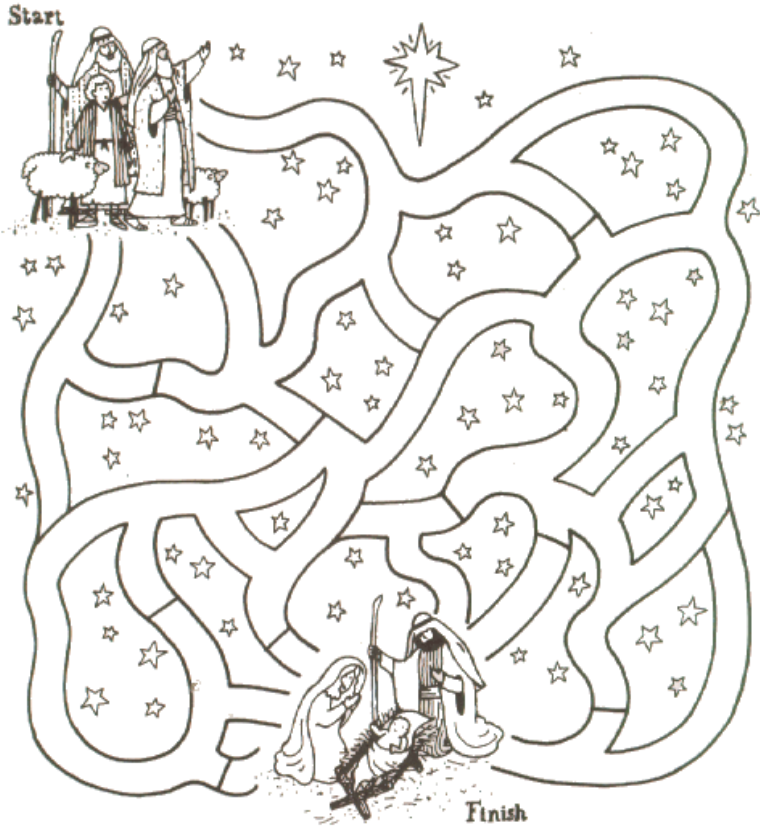
- Ashley Aho
- Pat Aho
- Patricia Aho
- Jamie Aho
- Jared & Melinda Niemala & family
- Aria Aho
- Family of Norman Kangas
- John Snelling
- Ralph Kandoll
- Irene Koskela
- Linda Aho
- Richard Yliniemi
- Clifford Koskela
- Joan Koskela
- Marvin & June Nelmark
- Lila Yliniemi
- Art Latto
- Marge Kumma
- Martha Aho
- Billy Nelmark
- Our Church, our Pastor and Church leaders.
- National Leaders
- Our Widows
- Our Missionaries
- Our Children & Youth
- Our Military
- Our Elderly
- Sunday School Teachers & Students

Benefit

There will be a benefit lunch following the Worship Service at Spruce Grove Church on Sunday, December 3, 2017 for Melinda Niemela & her 6 children from Jaffrey, NH. Melinda is the daughter of Armas & Pat Aho.

Everyone is welcome to join us. A free-will offering will be received. Checks can be written to Spruce Grove Church with "Niemela" in the memo line.

Help the shepherds find the path to Jesus.



Find
 3 stars
 2 bells
 1 angel
 3 crosses
 1 staff
 2 candles
 hidden in
 the manger

G C P M E H E F F N Y Y A S E
 V F I O G K N O C Y R R I L B
 Z H S J Z X U H E G A B Z N B
 H A T I D U R X S Z M E I P E
 R P L R S I L E N T N I G H T
 R K O Q S N E M E S I W A J H
 Y L X T Y Z S W C Z S P E P L
 M I M F H F N P N S J V E K E
 J A B T T B A R I O R S X Z H
 S A I Y L Y T E K V O F L W E
 H A Y E Y T I G N J I O E E M
 F A M K R H V N A E V U G P E
 M A A N W A I A R S A S N O E
 C I H O T C T M F U S O A H F
 D J E D K Q Y S V S W T E K Q

JESUS
 MARY
 JOSEPH
 WISEMEN
 MANGER
 NATIVITY
 BETHLEHEM
 CAMEL
 DONKEY
 STAR
 HAY
 ANGEL
 FAITH
 HOPE
 FRANKINCENSE
 MYRRH
 SILENT NIGHT
 LORD
 SAVIOR
 CHRISTMAS



NOVEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Family Bible Study 8:00 PM	2	3	4 Youth Group 7:30 P.M.
5 Sunday School 10:00 AM Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM Worship Service & Communion 11:00 AM Organists: Sarah & Deborah Sound: Alvin	6	7	8 Family Bible Study 8:00 PM	9	10 Worship Service 8:00 PM Organist: Sound: Nate Coffee Group #10	11
12 Sunday School 10:00 A.M. Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Betsy Sound: Neil	13 7:30 Board Meeting	14	15 Family Bible Study 8:00 PM	16 Sunday School Teachers Meeting 7:30 P.M.	17	18 Youth Group 7:30 P.M.
19 Sunday School 10:00 A.M. Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Ramona Sound: Chet	20	21	22 Family Bible Study 8:00 PM	23 Thanksgiving Day	24 Worship Service 8:00 PM Organist: Carrie Sound: Tyrone Coffee Group #1	25
26 Sunday School 10:00 A.M. Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Sarah Sound: Jamin	27	28 Green Pine Acres Nursing Home Service-2:00 P.M.	29 Family Bible Study 8:00 PM	30		

The numbers to dial to listen to the services over the telephone are:

Wolf Lake: 538-1030 Menahga: 564-1030
Aldrich: 445-1030 Nimrod: 472-1030
Sebeka: 837-1030

The pin number will be 787565# for all services. When you call in, you will be asked for the participant code and that is when you will dial the pin number followed by the #. Then it will ask for your name, this is optional, you can either say your name and press # or just stay on the line and it will connect you after about 5 seconds.

November Cleaning Group

Paul & Esther Impola
Max & Ashley Aho
Pete & Linda Levijoki
Joe & Stacie Olson
Nola Aho

* Just a reminder, the coffee group #'s are on the calendar to remind you are serving. There is a possibility of those numbers changing because of church cancellations, so please double check with the head of the kitchen to make sure it is your turn to serve.

DECEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Youth Group 7:30 P.M.
3 Sunday School 9:30 A.M. Adult Bible Class 10:00 A.M. Worship Service & Communion 11:00 AM Organists: Deborah & Ramona Sound: Nate Niemela Benefit following worship.	4	5	6 Advent Service 7:30 P.M. Organist: Carrie Sound: Chet Coffee Group # 2	7	8	9
10 Sunday School 9:30 A.M. Adult Bible Class 10:00 A.M. Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Betsy Sound: Jamin	11 7:30 Board Meeting	12	13 Advent Service 7:30 P.M. Organist: Sarah Sound: Alvin Coffee Group # 3	14	15	16 Youth Group 7:30 P.M.
17 Sunday School Program Sunday School 9:00 A.M. Adult Bible Class 10:00 A.M. Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Deborah Sound: Chet	18	19	20 Advent Service 7:30 P.M. Organist: Betsy Sound: Neil Coffee Group # 4	21	22	23
24 Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Ramona Sound: Tyrone	25 Worship Service 10:30 A.M. Organist: Carrie Sound: Alvin	26 Green Pine Acres Nursing Home Service 2:00 PM	27	28	29	30
				Youth Weekend 12-28 to 12-31		
31 Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Deborah Sound: Neil Guest Speaker: Alan Estola	1/1	1/2	1/3 Family Bible Study 8:00 PM	1/4	1/5	1/6 Youth Group 7:30 P.M.
1/7 Sunday School 10:00 AM Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM Worship Service 11:00 AM Organist: Sarah Sound: Alvin	1/8	1/9	1/10 Family Bible Study 8:00 PM	1/11	1/12 Worship Service 8:00 PM Organist: Carrie Sound: Silas Coffee Group # 5	1/13

1/14
Sunday School 10:00 AM
Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Organist: Ramona
Sound: Chet

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The pin number will be 787565# for all services. When you call in, you will be asked for the participant code and that is when you will dial the pin number followed by the #. Then it will ask for your name, this is optional, you can either say your name and press # or just stay on the line and it will connect you after about 5 seconds.

December Cleaning Group

Youth Group

Jared & Kendra Sikkila

Sunday Meals at Church Notice

If you are on a dinner group, but not serving on a Sunday when there is a meal, please bring a dessert and a salad. If you are not on a group and would like to bring either a salad or dessert, please feel free to do so. All meals will be potluck unless announced in church.

Reminder: When there is a funeral at the church, there is usually a need for desserts and bars for after the meal.

Cookbooks For Sale

Spruce Grove Church has 2 cookbooks for sale.

Tastes for All Seasons (#1) and Feed on His Word (#2)

If you would like to purchase a cookbook, please contact Amanda Aho. The cost is \$12.50 per book; shipping is \$2.50 per book. Make checks payable to Spruce Grove Church Ladies and send to: Amanda Aho, 15610 490th Ave., Menahga, MN 56464. Please specify how many and which cookbook(s) you would like to purchase: cookbook #1 or cookbook #2.

Radio Broadcast

Echoes of Mercy broadcast KWAD Wadena
920 & 1430 AM Sundays: 8:05 A.M. Sponsored by
Spruce Grove, Menahga and New York Mills Apostolic
Lutheran Churches

Church Website

You are invited to check out the church website at:

www.sprucegrovealc.org. Services are live online and are also recorded and may be accessed any time. Please call the church at (218) 538-6540 if you have any problems.

Newsletter

The newsletter is also available online, if you prefer not to receive the newsletter by mail, please e-mail sgalcnewsletter@gmail.com and ask to be removed from our mailing list. Also if you know of anyone who would like to receive our newsletter, please call the church at 218-538-6540 and leave the name & address of the person who would like to receive it.

Telephone Services

Services can be listened to over the telephone, please check the calendar for details.

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