

DECEMBER 2023
& JANUARY 2024

FAITH FOUNDATION

Holmes Lutheran Church

Pastor's Thoughts

Saints of God in Christ, greetings and peace be with you as Jesus' presence in your life prepares you for His second advent.

The year continues to pass by way to quickly, yet it never seems quick enough for us who anticipate the promised return of our Lord. Jesus' return cannot in our estimation come fast enough. We cry out Lord, while we are waiting, come. Come Lord Jesus and deliver us from the evil that has come among us and now rules the world. Our desire is for Jesus' return!

Why do we desire Jesus' presence, why do we look forward to His second advent? I believe J. I. Packer summed it up best when he described the doctrines of grace with the words, "God Saves Sinners." Scripture teaches us that salvation is God's work from the first things until the last things. God's promise to save us comes to us through His Son Jesus. The promise of God's salvation is the source of our excitement. The fulfilled promise of God that comes through Jesus is God's glory, the result of God's work provides believers with comfort and joy. In Christ the peace of God that surpasses understanding dwells in us and we cannot wait for the day when perfected peace is ours eternally in heaven.

For now, we see through glass dimly. But we look forward to the day when God's promise is completely fulfilled.

God alone saves sinners. All whom He saves may properly ascribe to God the praise He deserves for our salvation. At the same time, we have the confident belief that Christ's salvation is utterly sufficient for us to face judgement day with the full assurance of righteousness that is ours when we live with faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

With the full assurance of faith, we confidently pour our hearts out to God, and we sing Maranatha! "Come Lord Jesus, Come!"

This advent season, my plan for us is to take a deeper look at God's plan for our salvation that is finally and fully revealed to us through Jesus Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection. The opportunity we have will feed us God's truth that prepares us to joyfully anticipate Jesus return to gather His church which in turn anticipates the final judgement that precedes His second coming to rule and reign on the earth for a period described in scripture as one thousand years.

The writer of Hebrews writes this truth for us to grasp and hold onto, *"Therefore He (Jesus Christ) is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for*

Pastor's Thoughts Continued...

them.” Hebrew 7:25 Because God’s Words never change that means we can live confidently in our time of waiting for our Lord to return. Confidence in Christ is not misplaced confidence. Confidence in Christ is objective truth that sustains every life lived with faith. Confidence in Christ provides us who live in the world for the time being, the ability to see the world and the events happening in the world with certain hope.

In that hope we sing Lord Jesus come now and deliver us from evil for Yours is the kingdom and the glory forever and ever. Amen

This is my prayer for us every day. I pray that we never neglect the work of Jesus Christ in us and for us. That His work in us and for us would compel us to love each other as we watch over each other with the love of Christ.

God saves sinners, salvation of sinners is God’s glory, salvation of sinners is our comfort.

The prophet Isaiah writes, *“Who has believed our message? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He had no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” Isaiah 53:1-3*

Who in the world today has believed the message of good news authored for us by Jesus? His acquaintance with grief, His death on His cross makes Him unattractive to a world that despises anyone except conquering heroes.

But the promises for me and for all believers are these, *“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried, yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was pierced through for OUR transgressions, He was crushed for OUR iniquities; the chastening for OUR well being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way. But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” Isaiah 53:4-6*

Are you still wondering why I cannot wait for His return? We have the Savior of the World who gave up His life for us so that we might live fully alive in Him. My soul knows this very well, and my soul yearns for His return. When He returns God’s glory will be fully revealed and we will live forever in the promise of His comfort.

This is my advent and Christmas prayer for you. That you would realize the width, the breadth, and depth of God’s love for you. By His work in suffering and death we are healed. Though His resurrection we are given new life to live for the glory of God.

Be blessed to be a blessing, MARANATHA!

Pastor George

Home Circle

Wednesday, DECEMBER 6

9:30am at Family Table

*With Samuel—Women and Men
of both churches are invited*

JANUARY:

Altar Flowers:

DEC— Mary Jane Derscheid

JANUARY:

NEWSLETTER

February newsletter and
calendar items are due by
Thursday, January 18th.

Items can be emailed to:
holmeslutheran@gmail.com

Thanks!

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Holmes Lutheran Church

2139 Hancock Avenue
Clarion, IA 50525

www.HolmesLutheran.net
www.facebook.com/holmeslutheranchurch

Pastor George Lautner

Cell: 412-874-9878

Email: aflcgeo@gmail.com

Church Secretary - Jill Gangestad

Cell: 515-689-0282

Email: HolmesLutheran@gmail.com

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4– Ted Steffenson
Pastor Taylor

5– Madison Pate

6– Annette Taylor

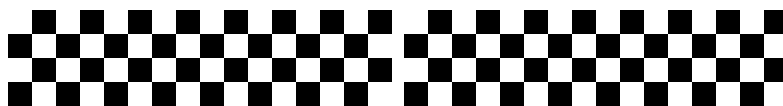
14– Justin Reed
Erin Johnson

19– Deb Prehm

20– Harvey Derscheid
Jessica Steffenson

24– Matthew Odland

30– Reed Lette



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

3– Lauren Odland

7– Christine Lautner

8– Corbin Reed
Jared Burres

10– Darla Thompson

11– Michael Steffenson

15– Naomi Lette

24– Melanie Carrigan

25– Anna Odland

26– Lori Lutsch