

St. John Lutheran Church

425 N. Main, Russell KS 67665 ♦ 785-483-5358
Website: stjohnrussell.com ♦ Email: stjohn@ruraltel.net

Pastor: Teri Sutherlin ♦ PMA: John Dumler

December 2023



Teri Talk - December 2023

There is a story that was written to help understand why we “wait with anticipation” during the Advent season to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Advent and Christmas are the time for mystery, the time for those delightful things we do not fully understand. We use music and poetry and stories to get at those deeper truths to let their light shine on us. It is a story you may have heard before as it was one that Paul Harvey, an ABC Radio news commentator who frequently told this story around Christmas time in his *and now for “The Rest of the Story”* broadcast segments. The original author is unknown. It's a story which might help us get at the deeper meaning of this time of year and the thing we call the incarnation.

Once Upon a time, there was a man to whom Christmas did not make much sense. He had a rather “humbug” attitude towards it all. He might even have been heard to say, “Christmas is for the birds.” Now, he wasn't a bad man. He was a good man. He provided well for his family, even beyond the necessities. He dealt honestly and fairly with everyone with whom he did business. He was kind and compassionate towards everyone he came into contact with on a day-to-day basis. It was just that he could not accept what he could not understand. And that meant he could not accept these things the church said about the incarnation, about how it was when God became a man.

He was honest about it. He could be heard saying to his wife, “*I really hope I don't offend you. I certainly don't mean to hurt your feelings.*” You see, she was a person of faith and attended church regularly. But he said, “*I can't go to church with you. It would be hypocritical. I would be pretending to believe something and accept something I simply cannot pretend to believe.*” And so the family went to church and he stayed home. That's how it was one Christmas Eve. The family was getting ready to go to the late evening service at the church and he said, “*I hope you'll understand. I feel like a hypocrite going with you so I'm going to stay at home. But I will wait up until you are back.*” No sooner had the family car pulled out of the driveway and disappeared down the street than he noticed the wind coming up. Glancing outside he saw that a winter storm was setting in and the snow flurries were already beginning to blow, and the snow was beginning to drift across the lawn. Taking his pipe in hand and settling into his easy chair, he sat by the fireside to read the evening paper.

(Continued on page 2)

St. John Lutheran Church Mission Statement:

*As a community of believers in Jesus Christ, inspired by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, the mission of St. John Lutheran Church is to: **WORSHIP, WITNESS, LEARN, SERVE and SUPPORT***

Suddenly there was a noise that startled him. It was a “thump” against the front window of the house. He rushed to the door but, looking out, saw no one. Instead, he noticed a flock of tiny birds flopping about in the snow. They were cold and freezing, caught by the storm, and they had simply tried to fly through his window to find warmth and safety. He said to himself, *“I can't let these creatures freeze to death, but what am I to do?”* He thought about it for a moment, and then remembered that outback there was a small barn in which they stabled the children's pony. He knew it would be warm and comfortable there, and it would certainly be a place of refuge for the birds. He went immediately to put on his coat and boots, his gloves, hat, and muffler, and went out and opened the doors to the barn. He turned on the lights and turned up the heat and stood back to watch, hoping the birds would see what he meant for them to do. But they didn't. Instead, they just continued to fly around aimlessly in the storm, and flop about on the ground.

“Ah,” He thought, *“I can attract them with food!”* So, he rushed back into the house, got some breadcrumbs from the kitchen and went back out to sprinkle them across the yard from the place where the birds were to the entrance of the barn, hoping they would follow the trail of food until they found the safety, he'd provided for them. But no, they didn't understand. They didn't follow the food crumbs either. Finally, in other desperation he thought perhaps he could “shoo” them in and so he began to wave his arms and to run around in the yard. It just seemed as if the birds thought that he was some kind of strange creature, making all that commotion. They were more frightened by him than anything else. Suddenly he came to the end of his rope and realized there wasn't anything he could do to save the birds, unless it was possible for him to become a bird himself.... And in that moment, he heard the church bells ringing. He fell to his knees in the snow and, looking up, he prayed, *“Now I understand. Now I know why you did what you did!”* Amen.

May the mystery of God's love be a blessing in your life.

Pastor Teri

Odds & ENDS

- The 2023 Annual Report (for the 2024 Annual Meeting) will be provided in place of a newsletter in January.
- St. John Women of the ELCA will meet Thursday, December 14 at 10:00 am in the Parish Hall. Large print lessons are available upon request. Dutch treat lunch will follow at Meridy's.
- Written reports for the 2023 Annual Report of the Congregation are to be submitted to the church office no later than 1:00 pm, Monday, December 18.
- The 2024 Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 21, 2024 following the 10:30 am Worship Service. Inclement weather date will be January 28, 2024
- St. John offices will be closed Monday, December 25 and Monday, January 1, 2024
- Nominations are being accepted for any non-profit ministry for consideration as a Philanthropic Fund recipient. Recipients will be chosen by congregational vote at the January 21, 2024 Annual Meeting. To nominate a non-profit ministry, contact the church office.

Pastor Teri's Calendar - December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	01	02
Advent One Worship Service - Communion 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM; Vespers Worship Service at Second Baptist Church (time TBD)	Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM	First Call Zoom Meeting 10:00-11:30 AM, 425 Youth 6:30 PM, Agape Choir 7:30 PM	Bible Study 1:30 PM	Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	Decorate for Advent 9:00 AM, Advent One Worship Service 6:00 PM
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Advent Two Worship Service 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM - Agape Choir (10:30 Service)	Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM	Pastoral Care/Home Visitation Day. 425 Youth 6:30 PM, Agape Choir 7:30 PM	Bible Study 1:30 PM	Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	Funeral Service for Terri Sue Walker 10:00 AM; Advent Two Worship Service - Communion 6:00 PM - Advent 2 - Communion
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Advent Three Worship Service - Communion 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM - Children's Program, Milk and Cookie Reception (10:30 Service)	Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM	Pastoral Care/Home Visitation Day. 425 Youth 6:30 PM, Agape Choir 7:30 PM	Women's Group Bible Study 10:00 AM, Bible Study 1:30 PM, Exec Comm 5:30, XMAS Sacks 6:30	Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	Advent Three Worship Service 6:00 PM
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Advent Four Worship Service 10:30 AM only; Christmas Eve Service - Communion 4:00 PM & 7 PM - Bells/Choir	Pastor's Day Off- day of rest & renewal	Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM,	Pastoral Care/Home Visitation Day. 425 Youth 6:30 PM, Agape Choir 7:30	Church Council 6:30 PM	Blue Christmas Worship Service 7:00 PM	Advent Four Worship Service 6:00 PM - Communion
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Advent Four Worship Service 10:30 AM only; Christmas Eve Service - Communion 4:00 PM & 7 PM - Bells/Choir	Christmas Day	Sewing Group 1:30-4:00 PM, Clergy Comments	Pastoral Care/Home Visitation Day.	Bible Study 1:30 PM	Pastor's Sermon Writing Day	NO WORSHIP 5TH WEEKEND
31						
We Gather as One Service - 8:15 Only - Hymn Sing Worship						

Advent and Christmas Schedule (subject to change)

Saturday, December 2

- Decorate Chapel and Sanctuary - 9:00 am
- Week One Advent Worship - 6:00 pm

Sunday, December 3

- Week One Advent Worship with Communion - 8:15 am
- Sunday School and Confirmation - 9:15 am
- Week One Advent Worship with Communion - 10:30 am
- Community Vesper Worship Service at Second Baptist Church (time TBD)

Saturday, December 9

- Service of Remembrance for Terri Sue Walker (daughter of Sherwin and Dorothy Stielow) - 10:00 am
- Week Two Advent Worship with Communion - 6:00 pm

Thursday, December 14

- St. John Women of the ELCA - 10:00 am (Dutch treat lunch to follow)

Sunday, December 10

- Week Two Advent Worship - 8:15 am
- Sunday School and Confirmation - 9:15 am
- Week Two Advent Worship; Agape Choir - 10:30 am - Agape Choir

Saturday, December 16

- Week Three Advent Worship - 6:00 pm

Sunday, December 17

- Week Three Advent Worship with Communion - 8:15 am
- Sunday School and Confirmation - 9:15 am
- Week Three Advent Worship with Communion; Children's Christmas Program - 10:30 am
- Milk and Cookie Reception following 10:30 service

Wednesday, December 20

- Deadline to submit poinsettia/candle forms

Thursday, December 21

- NO BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR

Friday, December 22

- Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service in Chapel - 7:00 pm

Saturday, December 23

- Week Four Advent Worship with Communion - 6:00 pm

Sunday, December 24

- NO 8:15 Service
- Week Four Advent Worship with Communion - 10:30 am
- Christmas Eve service with Communion; St. John Ringers Bell Choir, Agape Choir - 4:00 pm
- Christmas Eve service with Communion - 7:00 pm

Monday, December 25

- NO Christmas Day Service
- Offices closed

Saturday, December 30

- NO Service (Hymn Sing Worship 8:15 am Sunday, December 31)

Sunday, December 31

- We Gather As One Hymn Sing Worship - 8:15 am
- NO 10:30 Service

Monday, January 1, 2024

- Offices closed

December 2023 Worship Assistants


6:00 PM SAT	8:15 AM SUN	10:30 AM SUN
<p>GREETER/USHER: 2 John & Mary Boxberger 9 Sheryl Krug 16 Bob & Elaine Voos 23 Brenda Yoder 30 NO SERVICE</p> <p>READER: 2 Jeannine Byers-Long 9 Sheryl Krug 16 Elaine Voos 23 Nancy Aspegren 30 NO SERVICE</p>	<p>GREETER/USHER: 3 Connie Schinkus 10 D & G McCrary 17 Gordon & Cheryl Kraich 24 NO SERVICE 31 Hymn Sing Worship</p> <p>LECTOR: 3 Connie Schinkus 10 Georganna McCrary 17 Cheryl Kraich 24 NO SERVICE 31 Hymn Sing Worship</p>	<p>GREETERS: 3 Mike & Diane Waymaster (N) Don Krug (S) 10 Morris & Barbara Krug (N) D & G McCrary (S) 17 Gerald & Mary Mai (N) Eck Family (S) 24 TBD 31 NO SERVICE</p> <p>USHER: 3 M & D Waymaster 10 Morris Krug 17 Gerald & Mary Mai 24 TBD 31 NO SERVICE</p> <p>ACOLYTES: 3 Hadlee Brown / Harper Ryan 10 Rogan Dumler / Alex Krug 17 Ellise & Jasmine Jefferson 24 TBD 31 NO SERVICE</p> <p>LECTOR: 3 Cindy Ross 10 Deb Kreutzer 17 Eck Family 24 TBD 31 NO SERVICE</p>
<p>ALTAR GUILD</p> <p>Barb Krug, Danielle Ewers, Carol Fritz, Deb Karst, Rhonda Kuhlmann, Gina Langhofer, Tammy Nuss</p>	<p>BULLETIN DELIVERY</p> <p>1 Ramona Luebbers 8 Confirmation I 15 Confirmation II 22 Georganna McCrary 29 Frank Peirano</p>	



If you would like to share your time and talents with a presentation of special music or as a worship assistant at the 4:00 pm or 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service, please let the office know as soon as possible.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN
425 N. MAIN ST.
RUSSELL KS 67665

St. John Lutheran Church
Pastor Teri Sutherland
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Monday through Friday
8:30 am to 1:30 pm
785-483-5358
stjohn@ruraltel.net
stjohnrussell.com

<p>St. John Lutheran Church Clergy and Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pastor Teri Sutherland (pastor@ruraltel.net)• John Dumlér, PMA (pma@ruraltel.net)• Shayla Peck, Bookkeeper• Sheryl Krug, Administrative Assistant• Debora Kreutzer, Custodian• John Kreutzer, Custodian <p>Church Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• President, Blaine Maier• Vice President, Kristine Mader• Secretary, Carol Fritz• Treasurer - Kylie Stoppel• Judy Holmes• Lee Keffler• D.J. Kiema• Kelvie Reeves• Pastor Teri Sutherland• Gaylon Walter• Margaret Walter	 <p>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</p>
	<p><i>The 10:30 Worship Services on December 10 and 24 will be broadcast on KRSL (990 AM and 98.1 FM) and Nex-Tech Cable Channel 130. Sunday Services are streamed live at www.stjohnrussell.com. Outreach is made possible as a ministry of St. John Lutheran Church.</i></p>