



DON'T PUT AWAY THE ORNAMENTS!

by Pastor Ted Laesch

As I write this I am sitting not far from a beautiful Christmas tree, all lit with twinkling lights and beautifully decorated in celebration of the Christ-child, born in Bethlehem.

I love the Christmas tree. And I especially love the conglomeration of ornaments that hang on it from top to bottom. The ornaments make the tree. Pretty much each one has a story. Each one is connected to some person or some event.

We have several homemade ornaments from a dear woman from our church when I was growing up. I see those ornaments (some over 50 years old!) and I have such fond memories of Mrs. Mitchell who gave them to me. There are ornaments that celebrate a church anniversary, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Mary and my first Christmas as a married couple, the Chicago Cubs' 2016 World Series win. And we have a long spike that we put on the tree near the trunk that as we get a glimpse of it every now and then, we remember the reason that baby Jesus came into this world – to go to the cross and to die for our sins and to win forgiveness for us.



Ornaments make the tree. They “speak” to us. They tell a story. And even if we don’t have a personal attachment to a particular ornament that we see on a tree, still those ornaments speak to us. All those ornaments reflect the light of the tree, giving a wonderful glistening glow.

I guess that makes me think that that is what our lives are supposed to do. As Christians, our lives are to reflect the light of Christ. We are His “ornaments,” so to speak. And we’ve got a story to tell! In fact, Jesus says in His Sermon on the Mount: “Let your light shine before others that they may see the good you do and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) That’s a call by our God to be good ornaments for the Lord. As an ornament for the Lord, let His light shine! Let His light reflect off of you.

Perhaps as you read this, your Christmas tree is already taken down, lights and decorations packed away in boxes until next year. But I hope not! Don’t put away those ornaments just yet. And if you’ve already put away the ornaments, maybe consider unpacking a few to put up around the house as a reminder: You are an ornament for the Lord! Christ shines His light on us and we reflect that light to the world.

Happy New Year, Chapel of the Cross. God bless you as we reflect His light and love. ✠✠✠

LET YOUR LIGHT
Shine
Matthew 5:16

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BENEFIT CONCERT

By Ryan Meyer

On Sunday, November 17, Chapel hosted a special benefit concert for the McEuen family to help with the high cost of their recent adoption. The program featured Matt McEuen (vocals/dulcimer), Gary Lee (cello), and Ryan Meyer (piano). Thanks to the Zvirgzdins family for providing the reception. †††



BLACK HISTORY MONTH SERVICE

On Sunday, February 23, at 11:00 a.m., Chapel will hold a special worship service of music and readings to end Black History Month, which celebrates the musical contributions of African American composers and writers to the Church. For the past several years, this service has taken place during the season of Lent. This year, however, will focus on Jesus as the Light of world as it occurs during the season of Epiphany. Mark your calendars to attend this special and meaningful worship service! †††



CHRISTMAS
CONCERT
2024

Lenten Schedule 2025

Lenten Midweek Worship

Wednesdays
March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9
11:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 13
5:00 p.m. (Saturday)
8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 17
11:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday

Friday, April 18
12:00 noon & 6:30 p.m.

Easter Vigil

Saturday, April 19
5:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 20
8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Here are some pictures from the Children's Christmas Program on December 22nd--a very special thank you to all the children and families who participated and volunteered their time with rehearsals, setting up, and the reception afterward, too! Thank you to Rachel Hill for taking pictures. †††



THANKSGIVING BOXES FOR FOOD PANTRY

Thanksgiving boxes were distributed at our Helping Hands Food Pantry this past November. A special thank you to the children who helped pack the boxes. The Food Pantry would also like to thank the congregation for its continued support in filling the grocery cart with canned and dry goods to help support our clients. †††



CAROLING AT DELMAR GARDENS



DEALING WITH GRIEF

by Bill Rusnak

Someone recently asked, “How can I move on with my life when I can barely get out of bed in the morning?” How would you respond to this question?

In Session 4 we acknowledge how demotivating the death of a loved one can be. We consider these points: Everyone has to adjust following a devastating loss. We ask what kinds of new challenges has that event brought into your life? We ponder how adjustments can certainly take a long time before they feel natural. Participants discuss how new routines will need to be realistic, and expectations are crucial in our journey from mourning to joy. We acknowledge the wisdom in finding balance. Rather than thinking too much about everything that needs to be done in a day (which can feel overwhelming), we want to focus on one activity at a time—just do the next right thing.

While it may be challenging, we know that it is important to thank God for His help and presence when each task is completed. Even small steps are progressions. As we build a new schedule for when regular tasks need to be completed—like when to “clean the house”—consider breaking them up into smaller tasks that might be spread out on that schedule. Try to discuss this process of identifying a new regular routine activity that might be divided into manageable smaller tasks with people who know you well. Be aware of sleep disruptions, since lack of rest will undermine any good intentions for a daily routine. A physician might need to be consulted if a pattern of disrupted sleep persists. The physician should be told about your loss and how life has had to change as a result of the loss.

Another topic from our video strongly urges the acronym D.E.E.R.: D- drink, E-eat, E-exercise, R-rest. Every session has so many great truths which bring so much healing to many that grieve.

Chapel of the Cross continues to offer GriefShare on Tuesdays from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Our next 14 week cycle starts January 7, 2025. If you have lost a loved one, we hope you will consider exploring the hope and healing that GriefShare has offered to so many others. If you know of someone in a grief situation, tell them about this. It doesn’t matter how long ago the loss was. While sessions build upon each other, you can begin at any time during the 14 weeks. Contact Bill Rusnak at Chapel of the Cross (741-3737) for more information. †††

SMALL GROUPS

by Bill Rusnak

Why Do Small Groups Exist?

As an outgrowth of our 2024 strategic planning, members have told us that communication and relationship are top priorities. Small groups exist for these purposes—to bring people together around the Word of God, to live in community with others, and to enjoy meaningful relationships.



What is a Small Group?

A small group is often made up of around 8-12 people who share similar interests, are frequently in the same stage of life, and want to grow. These folks gather in homes, enjoy fellowship and study portions of the Bible together. The point is to meet regularly with people in short term commitment blocks of 8 weeks, three times a year. Perhaps some groups might like to form from different life stages!

Why You might Join a Small Group!

Doing life together and sharing God’s truths brings support and encouragement. Your small group can quickly become a special place where others know your name, where we share more of what is happening in our lives, and where we care for and support one another.

When & Where & What & How Long?

Groups meet in the home of the host family, mingle over a snack or perhaps a meal, read and discuss a portion of Scripture, and pray and enjoy time together. Small groups are composed of old and new friends by invitation of the Host home. The groups will meet for three 8-week blocks: after Christmas and before Easter, after Easter and before Summer, and in the Fall.

Are you interested in Hosting or Attending?

Fill out and return the short Participation / Interest Form at the Welcome Center by January 12, and plan to attend an information meeting during the 9:45 a.m. education hour on January 19 in Room 9. We are looking to make this fun, accessible and a blessing for everyone. †††

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

by Mike and Ellen Kehe

Our year of Operation Christmas Child Shoebox ministry was completed on November 3, with the packing of over 130 shoeboxes to be sent to children all over the world. Throughout 2024, we collected items to be placed in these boxes; from school supplies to hats and mittens, from “wow” toys to simple things like toy cars and figures. It seemed that every week the box where the items were placed in the Commons Area was filled to overflowing. It would be emptied and the next week more items would appear!

On November 3, all those items collected were separated and organized on tables that just about filled the gym. More than 35 people came that afternoon to share a light lunch, followed by “shopping” the tables with an empty shoebox, choosing items specifically for a certain age boy or girl. Most people packed multiple boxes that day, resulting in the “shoebox cart” that was displayed outside of the Sanctuary in November. The boxes then began their journey to a child known by God, as they were delivered to a collection site, then on to a warehouse distribution site, then to wherever God has intended that box to go.

In January that Collection Box will reappear in the Commons Area! Another year of collecting, sorting, organizing and packing will begin. Each month has an emphasis of what we are collecting, often coinciding with sales at stores or a theme of the month, but if you have other items for the shoeboxes they are always appreciated. The emphases for January and February are Hats, Scarves and Mittens, and Accessories, such as socks, sunglasses, hair ties, costume jewelry, watches, etc.



There is an emphasis that isn't reserved for any particular month. It is not an item. It is simply to pray. Pray for the children who will be receiving these shoeboxes, along with a Gospel Presentation book included with each box. Pray for the families of these children, that they would know God's love. Pray for the ministry of Operation Christmas Child as they take these boxes to places far and wide. To see more of this ministry, go to Samaritanspurse.org. †††

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A publication of Chapel of the Cross
11645 Benham Road • St. Louis, MO 63136

WINTER 2025 VOLUME 17, NO. 1

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GOD HAS TRULY BLESSED US

by John Schmidt

From Genesis 41: "Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh. This food should be held in reserve, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt."

In the next few years, Chapel will probably need to replace the roof over the upper level of the church. And I'm sure you've noticed that we recently re-carpeted the lower level and are probably wondering when we're going to do the upper level. But before any of that, we need to make some significant repairs to the parking lots. Would it surprise you to learn that the cost of each of these projects is over \$100,000 individually?

And I haven't even discussed replacing any of the HVAC units.

Our wonderful facility requires these and many other periodic updates. The property committee and the Board of Directors spend a good deal of time discussing how best to maintain our building and grounds...and how to pay for those items. For a number of years now, we have been successfully covering our maintenance and upgrade items without incurring additional debt.

Chapel has been blessed with your regular weekly giving and with the generosity of members who have remembered us in their estates. This has brought us into a fairly strong financial position.

But there are concerns about how we will pay for some of these more expensive items.

As in all things, God has a plan. In this case, he spelled it out for us in Genesis.

I'm thrilled to announce that we will pay off our mortgage in the next few weeks! This is a major milestone in the history of the congregation. We have had a significant mortgage for as long as I have been a member here and it was not that long ago that this debt was over \$1M. The Lord has blessed Chapel with good stewards, both past and present, who have whittled this debt down to near zero. The elimination of the mortgage gives us an opportunity to position Chapel for those large and inevitable projects to come.

I'm not asking you to dig deeper into your pockets. As Pastor reminds us each year, Stewardship is not about need. It is about joyfully returning to God a portion of what He has given us. I trust that you already prayerfully consider what God has done for you and give accordingly.



**New flooring installed
in April of 2023.**

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Board of Elders, I am asking that, if you have been giving to the Capital Fund to help pay off our mortgage, you continue those contributions. The fiscal committee will save and invest those funds, just as they do with special gifts and bequests, holding them in reserve for times of financial need. And the property committee and Board of Directors will wisely utilize these funds to help offset the future cost of major repairs.

With God's help, we believe that this approach will allow us to avoid future debt while maintaining our facility, so that we can continue to serve our Lord in this place for decades to come. And if you are moved to start contributing to the capital fund or to increase your current contribution, please know that your gifts will be used responsibly to help us avoid future debt.

God has shown us the way and has blessed us through the elimination of the mortgage. Will you help ensure that this blessing continues?

Thank you for considering this important question! +++

CROSSROADS SUBMISSIONS:

Contributions for the Spring issue of the CrossRoads are due by Sunday, March 2. Please submit both a paper copy to the CrossRoads box as well as a digital copy if possible (e.g. PDF, pictures, etc.) emailed to Anne Meyer at news@chapelofthecross.org.

ROCKS AND STONES

by Jim Crosier

Do you have a King James Version of the Bible? In the King James Bible, rocks are mentioned approximately 128 times and stones approximately 367 times. Let's look at a few examples of rocks and stones in the Bible...

Moses received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai written on two stone tablets.

Moses struck a rock in the desert and out poured a river of water which gave life-saving water to thousands and thousands of Israelites and a large number of livestock. I would suggest that the Israelites would have camped for a period and washed their clothes and bathed in the water. I would call this a Mega Miracle!

The Israelites crossed over the Jordan River into the Promised Land and the twelve tribes were commanded to take stones and build an altar to God.

King David chose five smooth stones and with one stone brought down Goliath and saved a nation.

In the Bible God is referred to as a rock because of his reliability and strength. Christ is portrayed as a stone because of his strength and stability.



Do you know that Chapel of the Cross has several cornerstones? If you want to find more information about rocks and stones, page through your Bible, or even check out our hymnal.

A good family or Sunday school project would be to take a stone and paint part of it gray or black (sin) and then paint a red cross on it (blood of Jesus, the Lamb). When the stone is dry put it on your dresser or kitchen table to remind you that Jesus the Christ is our cornerstone and He can bring peace, joy, and comfort. †††



Kirk Mueller

YOUR LIFETIME PLAN FOR GIVING

Have you left a lasting legacy of your faith?

Have you blessed your family in the best way?

Have you remembered your favorite ministries?

As you can answer "yes" to each of these questions, I know you will experience the peace and joy of knowing God has blessed you to be a blessing.

To find out more, contact:

Kirk Mueller—LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor

11645 Benham Road, St. Louis, MO 63136

314.704.4389

Kirk.mueller@lcms.org

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FRIEND OF MOMS

by Clara Mueller

Friend of Moms has been busy these weeks. Most Wednesdays we have 10 appointments, with 8 usually coming in.

We put out the Christmas outfits and we do have some stuffed toys available.

I'm very thankful for the help of the church family with diapers (esp. needed are sizes 5 and 6). We are about caught up with the clothes washing for our new system of having all winter clothes washed to bring into FOM when there is space. Several others have offered to wash clothes, which is appreciated!! Thanks also for the donations of clothing.

If anyone can give an hour or two on Wednesday mornings (from 9:30 to noon to help with sorting or packaging diapers) please give Clara a call at 314-914-6030. Thank you. †††



Friend of Moms Boutique Closet

MARY-MARTHA GUILD

The Mary-Martha Guild would like to thank everyone who supported our annual Christmas Cookie Sale. On January 13, we will have a Social Night with no business meeting. Members are asked to bring games to play and snacks to share. This promises to be fun for everyone.

February 10 is the date of our Soup Supper. Along with the delicious dinner we will have Vicker Samuel Wondemu as our guest speaker.

Monday, March 10, Mary-Martha Guild will hold its regular meeting. †††

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT SUNDAY

by Anne Meyer

As part of our desire to make the congregation more aware of some of our ministries and service opportunities, we held our first Ministry Highlight Sunday during the Education Hour on November 10. The leaders of three ministries of our church—the Helping Hands Food Pantry, Friend of Moms, and Children & Family Ministries (see pictures)—shared what these ministries do, who they serve, and what volunteer opportunities are available, so that we can know how to best support them. Thank you to Clara Mueller, Diane Timm, and Mary Laesch for your time in preparing these presentations. We look forward to the next Ministry Highlight Sunday! †††



Children & Family Ministries



Ministry Highlight Sunday

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Deaths:

Doris Boyd (Nov. 7, 2024)
William T. Green (Oct. 16, 2024)
Kelly Lama (Jan. 3, 2024)
Richard D. Lind (Apr. 24, 2019)
Robert H. Snyder (May 8, 2003)
Lethaniel Strauther (Jan. 31, 2022)
Shirley Vanesler (Nov. 10, 2022)

Transfer In:

Matthew McEuen
Ellis and Judith Perry

Affirmation of Faith:

Luckie Cooks

Former number of members:	867
Gains:	+4
Losses:	-7
New number of members:	864



Helping Hands Food Pantry

January 2025

December '24							February '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31											

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
29	30	31	Office Closed	1	Office Closed	2	Life Team 6:00 p.m.	3	4	Worship Service 5:00 p.m.			
5	6	7	Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	8	Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	9	Choral Singers 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.	10	11	Worship Service 5:00 p.m.			
12	13	14	GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	15	Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	16	Choral Singers 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.	17	18	Worship Service 5:00 p.m.			
19	20	21	Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	22	Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	23	Choral Singers 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.	24	25	Worship Service 5:00 p.m.			
26	27	28	GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	29	Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	30		31	1				
2	3	Notes											

February 2025

January '25							March '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30	31					

Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26		27	28	29	30	31	1
					Life Team 6:00 p.m. Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.		Worship Service 5:00 p.m.
2	Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m.	3	4 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	5 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	6 Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	7	8 Worship Service 5:00 p.m. Women's Fellowship 9:00 a.m.
9	Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m. Mar. Anniv. 12:15 p.m.	10 Mary-Martha Guild 6:30 p.m. Elders 7:00 p.m.	11 GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	12 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	13 Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	14	15 Worship Service 5:00 p.m.
16	Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m.	17	18 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	19 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	20 Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	21	22 Worship Service 5:00 p.m.
23	Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m. Black History Month Service 11:00 a.m.	24 Board of Directors 7:00 p.m.	25 GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	26 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Children's Handbells 6:30 p.m. Chapel Bells 7:30 p.m.	27 Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	28	1

March 2025

February '25							April '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	6	7	8	9	10	11
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	13	14	15	16	17	18
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	20	21	22	23	24	25
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	27	28	29	30		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
2 Transfiguration Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m.	3	4 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	5 Ash Wednesday 11:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Dinner 5:00 p.m. Children's Bells 5:30/ Bells 7:30	6 Joyful Noise 6:15 p.m. Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	7	8 Worship Service 5:00 p.m. Trivia Night & Silent Auction 6:30 p.m.
9 Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m.	10 Mary-Martha Guild 6:30 p.m. Elders 7:00 p.m.	11 GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	12 Lenten Services 11:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Dinner 5:00 p.m. Early Communion Class 7:30 p.m. Children's Bells 5:30/ Bells 7:30	13 Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	14	15 Worship Service 5:00 p.m.
16 Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m.	17	18 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	19 Lenten Services 11:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Dinner 5:00 p.m. Early Communion Class 7:30 p.m. Children's Bells 5:30/ Bells 7:30	20 Joyful Noise 6:15 p.m. Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	21	22 Worship Service 5:00 p.m.
23 Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m.	24 Board of Directors 7:00 p.m.	25 GriefShare 2-4 p.m.	26 Lenten Services 11:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Dinner 5:00 p.m. Early Communion Class 7:30 p.m. Children's Bells 5:30/ Bells 7:30	27 Choral Singers 7-8:30 p.m.	28 Art Fair (set up) 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. in Gym	29 Art Fair Festival 8:a.m. - 5 p.m. Worship Service 5:00 p.m.
30 Worship Services 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Youth & Adult Bible Study 9:45 a.m.	31	Notes				



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Weekend Worship Services

Saturday: 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Education Hour

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Sunday: 9:45 a.m.

Holy Communion

1st, 3rd, & 5th Sunday of the month: 8:30 a.m.

2nd, 4th, & 5th Sunday of the month: 11:00 a.m.

1st, 3rd, & 5th Saturday of the month: 5:00 p.m.

*Chapel of the Cross - Lutheran
exists to show the love of Jesus to
the people of North County and
beyond so that all may have a
living relationship with Christ.*

