

**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
610 15TH ST.  
AMES, IA 50010  
515-232-5838

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.SAINTPAULAMES.ORG](http://WWW.SAINTPAULAMES.ORG)

OR OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, AMES, IA

**REV. DR. TODD JENKS, PASTOR**  
**THOMAS WILSON, DIR. FAMILY LIFE**  
**LORI JENKS, PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR**  
**PRESCHOOL- 515-233-1914**

## Hope-Filled Letter from Pastor

What's your favorite Star Wars film? Mine always has been the original, which is now known as Episode IV, but is also titled *A New Hope*. In *A New Hope*, the galaxy receives new hope from the rebel alliance that rises up against the evil empire epitomized by Darth Vader. The galaxy greatly needed hope, as it was dealing with a time of great suffering.

Does this sound familiar? We too need hope in our world, don't we?! Right now, as we continue through this time of the pandemic, we could sure use a big dose of hope. So where do you find your hope? Is your hope in the vaccine that has started distribution, but will require patience and months of waiting for the general population? Is your hope in a new president to lead us through this? Is your hope in a person? Or is your hope in our loving Lord, the living God, who is three persons, but one Almighty God?

Do you remember these words from the Page 5 liturgy in The Lutheran Hymnal? "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Those words come from Psalms (124:8). Time and again, the Scriptures remind us that God is our one true help, our one true hope.

Maybe you recall in *A New Hope* how Princess Leia sent a special plea for assistance via a holographic message carried inside R2D2: "Help me, Obi Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope!" Friends, as we look for hope, we don't need to issue a plea to a Jedi who is hidden from us. We can lift our plea to the God who has revealed Himself to us in Jesus! The Father sent His Son to earth, to rescue us, to redeem us and to bring hope to us, through His promise always to be with us.

How can we wait patiently, and hopefully, as we await the end of the pandemic? Paul tells us: "We

remember before our God and Father... your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:3). We can have endurance and perseverance through the hope we have in Jesus. How can we have hope as we approach a full year of the pandemic being here among us? By turning to the Word of Jesus and the promises He makes us, just as we do each time we worship, and as the Bible encourages us: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

The original Star Wars movie ends with a celebration of the rebel alliance's victory. Although the throne room celebration scene at the end of *A New Hope* makes it seem like it was Han Solo, Luke and Chewbacca who led and won the victory, ultimately it wasn't the rebels who won, it was The Force that empowered them that accomplished it. So too for me and you. Our hope is in The Lord! He already has won the victory for us through Jesus, who was "born to raise the sons of earth." The Lord give us new hope each and every day. As we begin this new year, we can surely look ahead with hope because of Jesus Christ!

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31). "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). "I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in His Word, I put my hope" (Psalm 130:5). May the Lord bless us as we await an end to the pandemic by continuing to place our faith and trust in Jesus, and finding all our hope in Him. Don't look for anyone else to save you – because JESUS already did!

In Christ, our true Hope,

Pastor Jenks

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### Our Mission is:

- To Know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,
- To Grow in faith through His Sacraments and Word, and
- To Go share His Gospel with love in our community and world.

## *Worship Services at St. Paul Lutheran Church*

***Sunday, January 3***

*10:00 a.m. Live Stream*

***Sunday, January 10***

*10:00 a.m. Worship at church*

*And*

*10:00 a.m. Live Stream*

*11:10 a.m. Live Stream*

*Bible study*



***Sunday, January 24***

*10:00 a.m. Worship at church*

*And*

*10:00 a.m. Live Stream*

*11:10 a.m. Live Stream*

*Bible study*

***Sunday, January 17***

*10:00 a.m. Worship at church with Holy Communion*

*And*

*10:00 a.m. Live Stream*

*11:30-1:00 p.m. Walk up Communion*

With Covid cases increasing, the worship schedule is tentative.

Please watch your emails from the church closely for any changes.

***Sunday, January 31***

*10:00 a.m. Worship at church with Holy Communion*

*And*

*10:00 a.m. Live Stream*

*11:30-1:00 p.m. Walk up Communion*



Thank you to my St. Paul family for your prayers and cards and support on my recent move to be closer to my daughter. I needed your prayers so much as it was a difficult time for me. Thank you so much. God's blessings to each of you.

**THANKS**  
for your  
**PRAYERS**

**If you are leaving town for the winter, please let the office know your winter address so we can send the Epistle and other mailings to you.**



With grateful hearts, the Board of Human Care wishes to thank each one of you who so generously donated to this year's **HOPE Gift Market**. We are pleased to share that through your generosity, a total of **\$19,630** was given for the selected charities! This year has been a trying year for all but most especially for organizations striving to help people in need. Your generous support is a blessing to them; may you, in turn, be richly blessed! Thanks!



The next Blood Drive is scheduled for Thursday, January 21st, from 3:45 - 6:30 PM. The Blood Drive will be held again in the Blood Mobile, located in the church parking lot. Life Serve will be using social distancing measures as they carry out the Blood Drive. We are encouraging everyone to please consider donating blood at this time, as Life Serve indicates the need for blood is as great as ever! Those interested in donating blood can contact Brian Weber at 515-450-2358. Thank you all in advance!



## Board of Stewardship

Years ago, a popular Christian cantata shared the good news that “Love Came Down at Christmas”. The songs and music beautifully told the story of the birth of Christ, who came to Earth as God’s greatest gift to assure all believers of their salvation.

As we begin our journey through another year, we’re reminded that God’s love not only comes to us at Christmas, but through the blessings He showers on us throughout the year to meet our spiritual and physical needs.

What a remarkable year we have just witnessed. We’ve seen church members join together to support St. Paul Lutheran with time, talent and financial contributions for the good of fellow members, and for those in need in our community. But greater participation is always welcome...and necessary to help fulfill God’s mission.

Since for now we can’t all gather in person to celebrate and worship, we encourage you to continue your financial contributions through traditional giving, or through the electronic giving (eGiving) tools we’ve made available.

To learn more about eGiving, and for additional resources to help support your spiritual needs, visit our church Web site at [www.saintpaulames.org](http://www.saintpaulames.org).

Yes, “Love Came Down” to us at Christmas, but how fortunate that God’s love comes down to us each day in so many different ways. We thank each of you for returning God’s blessings through prayer, devotions and your financial support.

~~Stewardship Committee

## Wellness Team

### THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF HUMOR AND LAUGHTER DURING THESE TRYING TIMES OF THE ONGOING PANDEMIC

We've all heard the saying, "Laughter is the best medicine," but does that type of thinking apply to something as serious as a global pandemic? Psychologists would say yes. Humor helps people take back their sense of power in a powerless situation and it helps them connect with others-- two things we have lost during this pandemic. And although there is nothing funny about what we are going through, research and studies have proven the benefits of laughter for both physical and mental health. Those funny memes, crazy TikTok videos, and silly online quotes may be just what we need to ease the anxiety, fear, loneliness and grief that many are dealing with on a daily basis.

Obviously, the seriousness of COVID-19 is no laughing matter. People are dying every day and those in the medical field are being stretched beyond compare. But we all need to find ways to cope with the limitations we are facing, and for many that answer may be laughter. Laughter has both short term and long term health benefits. A good laugh enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air and stimulates circulation to your heart, lung and muscles which can reduce the physical symptoms of stress and help lower blood pressure. In fact, laughter activates important feel-good hormones in the brain like endorphins, while also reducing stress related hormones like cortisol. Laughter also increases the number of antibody producing cells working in our bodies and enhances our T-cells which equates to a stronger immune system.

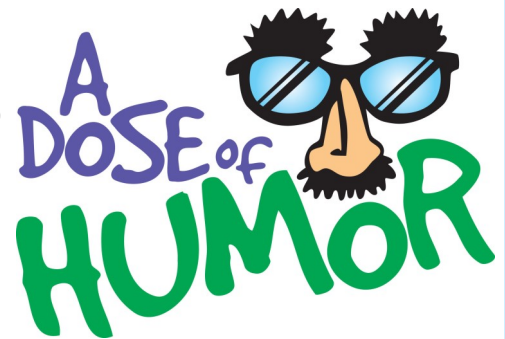
Laughter is a free and easy stress management tool that can be used by just about anyone. Interestingly, it has been found that even if there is nothing funny happening, there are still physical benefits from smiling and laughing. Your body does not know the difference if you are imitating laughter or truly laughing.

Here are some ways to add a little humor to your life during these challenging times:

- Subscribe to funny YouTube channels and search "popular comedy" or "funny videos."
- Watch comedians online or head to the comedy section on Hulu, HBO, & Netflix. Don't forget the old standbys like I Love Lucy, The Carol Burnett Show, The Bob Newhart Show, MASH, Seinfeld, etc.
- Read comic strips and check out humorous books and joke books from the public library.
- Tell jokes. Have a contest among your family members to see who can tell the best joke each night at dinner.
- FaceTime or Zoom with your grandchildren--they always make us smile and laugh.
- Create or watch TikTok videos.

Watch our pets for funny, playful behaviors.

Humor is God's gift to mankind as a built-in coping mechanism that distracts us from the difficulty of the situation we are living and allows us to release some built up tension. So go ahead and laugh at those funny pet videos or turn on a rerun of America's Funniest Home Videos. A good solid belly laugh may be just what the doctor ordered. The late comedian Milton Berle said that laughter is an instant vacation...and we could all certainly use one right now!





## Family Life

### Homegrown Fruits of the Spirit: Living with a Patient Attitude

Have a patient attitude? Really? We made it through 2020 and now we are talking about having a “patient attitude”? Now is the time! It’s a new beginning, a new year, a new start. Let’s start 2021 out with an attitude of Joy, Peace, Gratitude and Patience.

Too often, we act as if people cannot do things themselves. Perhaps it’s because we live busy lives that it seems easier just to do things ourselves instead of empowering others, giving them independence. Have you done this with your children? Kids need structure. Actually, everyone needs structure. We all need purpose. Quite often, those who we “help”, or do the task for them, are more capable of doing the hard things than we give them credit for. So, we must build patience.

Waiting can be a daunting task. Too often we get so self-focused on waiting for what we want that we miss what we really need. Imagine what the Israelites had to go through – being led out of Egypt in great anticipation for the promised land – only to be held in the desert for forty years.

Or worse yet, imagine the time God’s people waited for the coming Messiah – more than 400 years after Isaiah prophesied that God would send the Prince of Peace into the world as a sacrifice for our sins. Four hundred years of desperate silence. And we think waiting on slow internet is brutal!

We wait with the wrong attitude. It can leave us bitter and overly focused on what we want, perhaps not what’s best for us. The longer we wait with such an attitude, the more likely we are to lose hope that what we’re waiting on will ever happen. Cultivating patience takes time. Find things to pass the time, when we find things we love doing, time passes by.

Read the words of David, a man familiar with waiting, “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.” (Psalm 40:1) Sometimes we give up in our active waiting because we lose patience and don’t think God is going to come through. He always comes through! Remember, it’s on His time, not ours!

**APPLICATION:** What have you been impatient with lately?

Read Jonah 4:4 – What does this teach you about your response to God when things aren’t going the way you want?

**Morning Prayer:** Father, patience requires contentment. I pray I won’t become conceited, provoking others, or envious. Help me “live by and keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25-26)

Read the following verses and look for what each teaches about patience or waiting:

1 Samuel 1:1-20

Proverbs 16:32



## Family Life



### OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We had another wonderful and blessed Operation Christmas Child event this year! St. Paul collected 112 boxes! The most we have ever collected! At the time of printing, we still have not seen where our boxes are being shipped to. But we will keep you posted! Thank you for a great event!

### Chili and Soup Feed – SUCCESS!

A HUGE Thank You to everyone who ordered or donated to our NYG Fundraiser: Chili and Soup Feed! It was a HUGE success! We prepared 22 orders – 31 quarts of Chili, 24 quarts of Chicken Noodle soup. We donated 11 quarts of Chili and 11 quarts of soup to First Responders thanks to your generosity! All of this helped the NYG participants (youth and adult leaders) raise over \$900 towards their event in Houston in 2022! Thank you SO MUCH for your continued support!

**Thank You**

for Supporting the  
St. Paul 2022 National Youth  
Gathering Participants!



## Education and Youth

### Super Sub and Bake Sale – an NYG Fundraiser



Each year the participants of the NYG and their families take orders for sub sandwiches to be picked up on Super Bowl Sunday. And, on that Sunday we have a bake sale. With our COVID style life we have right now we still want to offer that same opportunity for those looking for some food for Super Bowl Sunday- February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

As with our Chili and Soup Feed in December, we are taking pre-orders for foot long Sub Sandwiches, Meat and Cheese Trays, and Baked Goods! Pick up will be Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, after worship service for those that attend in-person service, in the fellowship hall pick up for those that will come in for communion and then from 1:00 – 2:30 PM for drive through pick up.

The order form is included in the Epistle. If you have questions please feel free to contact Greg Gebhart or Thomas Wilson.



## 2022 NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING SUPER SUB FUNDRAISER

Help the youth of St. Paul raise money for the trip to the National Youth Gathering in Houston in 2022!  
For only \$10 you can get a foot long sub!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity (circle one):	1	2	3	4
Please mark what you would like on each sub:				
	#1	#2	#3	#4
White Bread	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wheat Bread	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ham	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
American Cheese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lettuce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tomato	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pickle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Meat and Cheese Tray:    \_\_\_ Large (\$10)                      \_\_\_ Small (\$5)

Bake Sale: All bake sale items are ½ dozen or quart baggies for \$5.00

<input type="checkbox"/> Assorted Cookies Qty: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Assorted Cupcakes Qty: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Assorted Brownies Qty: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Scotcheroos Qty: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Trail/Chex Mix Qty: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> "Seasoned" (Oyster) Crackers Qty: _____

Subs Total Due:                      \$10 X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meat Cheese Trays Total Due: L \$10X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
    S \$5 X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bake Sale Total Due:                      \$5 X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL DUE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

_____ PAID
_____ Will pay at time of pick up

**ORDERS DUE: Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021**  
**Mail, or drop orders off, to the church ATTN: Thomas Wilson**



## Education and Youth

### The Un-Gathering

On November 20, IDW held a live stream Sr High Youth Gathering. The youth at St Paul gathered for games, devotions and a watch party here at church while following safety protocols. While they had fun, all agreed we tend to take things for granted (like seeing friends at youth gatherings) and need to look through new lenses that God has a plan for everything -we just have to be trusting and have faith!





## Women's Ministry

### Stamps for Missions – We Need Your Cancelled Stamps

St. Paul Women's Ministry Group is a member of LWML Iowa West District. A big part of the LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League) is raising money to fund missions around Iowa and across the world. One of the ways that we raise money is by collecting cancelled postage stamps. We want and need your help with this. Please look for and save stamps that you receive on envelopes and postcards. The stamps that we receive are then collected and sold to stamp collectors.

Here are the rules that **MUST** be followed when collecting stamps. Following these rules will help the LWML get the most money from your stamps.

- Trim 1/4 inch around ALL FOUR sides. Stamps missing edges and corners **CANNOT** be sold and will be discarded.
- Discard any stamp that is damaged, including those with heavy inked cancellations.
- Do not waste time trimming "common" stamps that do not have plate numbers. Your local post office can inform you concerning common stamps. Most are stamps bought in coils are common stamps.

**Remember Duck Stamps bring about \$5.00 each. They are sold at the Recorder's Office in the County Courthouse, as well as the Post Office. Most are purchased by hunters.** While you are at the post office, notice the poster which illustrates all the new stamps for the year. Most of these are the commemorative stamps that sell. It is unusual stamps that sell.

There is a small mailbox in the narthex (next to the elevator) that you may place your collected stamps in. If you have a larger amount of stamps, they can be dropped off in the church office.

Thank you for your help in funding missions through the LWML.

If you have any questions, you may contact Lisa Wilson at [lisawilsonlwml@gmail.com](mailto:lisawilsonlwml@gmail.com) or 515-570-4201.



### LWML National Convention, June 24-27, 2021

Although June may seem like a long way away, it's time to start thinking and planning for the 39th Biennial LWML National Convention. All women of St. Paul are invited to attend the LWML National Convention in Lexington, Kentucky on June 24-27, 2021. Join your LWML sisters who are "Running the

Race ... Looking to Jesus," the convention theme based on Hebrews 12:1–2. Attendees will be inspired by the convention goal, "Looking to Jesus, we run the race set before us and proclaim the joy of the Lord." Registration for the convention begins on February 1, 2021. If you are interested in attending the convention, please let Lisa Wilson or Breanna Wetzler know, so that we can have an accurate count.

Additional information and the registration form can be found at <https://www.lwml.org/2021-convention>. If you have specific questions or would like additional information, please contact Lisa Wilson at [lisawilsonlwml@gmail.com](mailto:lisawilsonlwml@gmail.com) or 515-570-4201

## Women's Ministry

### LWML National 2019–2021 Mission Grant #17 — \$60,000 Christ for You, Anytime, Anywhere

Since 1924, KFUE has been reaching people far and wide with the message of Jesus Christ by using the latest technology. In the last century, technology has advanced at an unprecedented rate and continues to develop with each new year. Incorporating the newest forms of communication methods into KFUE's ministry, they can more effectively reach the younger generation and the generations to come with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Even our Nation's military can listen wherever they are stationed. Aging family and friends who are confined to their homes can still be gathered to the Word through an iPad or similar device. Prison Ministry also utilizes KFUE as an effective way of sharing the Gospel. This grant will assist the station in sharing the gospel and staying current in the digital age.



Using the latest technology, KFUE can video stream LIVE on Facebook reaching multiple generations, especially the Digital Generation, with bible studies, chapel services, and informative interviews about organizations that are striving to spread the Gospel. Viewers can make comments, ask questions, and engage in conversations with hosts/guests as they learn about God's Word and what they can do to help share the His Word with others. (KFUE interviews Kelly Schumacher as she talks about her liturgical art and how she uses her skills and talent to spread the message of Jesus Christ, and encouraging listeners to use their own God-given talents to help share the Gospel.)



See those **HAPPY FACES!**



*This is a dress made by one of our members.*

Our Thrivent event of putting smiles on girls faces is coming to a close. We are going to take a rest for awhile and then perhaps start up again in early February. You can still finish the packets that you have in your home and turn them into the office OR pick up more from the St. Paul Lutheran Church office. (There are still a few packets to be sewn.) Please contact Linda Peterson at 515-231-4730 if you have any questions.

Thank you so much for participating in this very worthy project! I'm very sure the girls that these dresses were made for will be very excited to receive them and will feel the love of Jesus through all your efforts! Thank you so much for spreading the love of Jesus through your very capable hands! We, along with friends from Red Oak and Omaha, have put together about **125** dresses. Isn't that a wonderful gift of giving!

Be watching the newsletters in February for another event of sewing for "Dress a Girl". We can make more girls very happy and put lots of smiles on the girls' faces!

Donations for the transportation of the dresses to the relative countries is also being accepted. **Please make your checks payable to "St Paul Lutheran Church" with a notation on the memo line "Dress a Girl."**

*The Women's Ministries AND the "Dress a Girl" foundation thanks you!*

# Women's Ministry

**LWML Mite Update:** as of 11/30/20

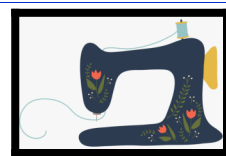
**2019-2021 National Mission goal: \$2,100,000.00**

**Amount Received: \$1,754,544.77**

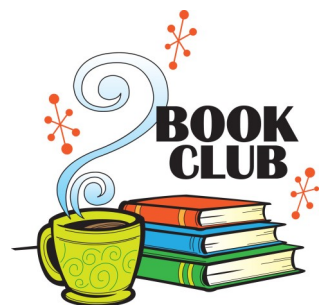
**Amount Needed: \$345,455.23**

We normally collect mites for missions on the 1st Sunday of each month. For more information about LWML go to [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org).

**FAMILY SERVICE** ~ Our quilters Have not decided yet if they will meet in January. Something will be in the mid-week news if they plan to meet. You may continue to bring fabric and place it in the tub near the east doors. Thank you.



## "Book to Know to Help You Grow"



January 14 at 3:00 pm we will discuss "Becoming Mrs. Lewis" by Patti Callahan. Please note that we decided to meet in the afternoon during January and March. The exact format for our discussion has not been decided yet, but we will keep you posted by email. **If you do not get the Book Club emails, but would like to receive them, just let the church office know.**

"Becoming Mrs. Lewis", a Christy Award Winner: When poet and writer Joy Davidman began writing letters to C. S. Lewis—known as Jack—she was looking for spiritual answers, not love. Love, after all, wasn't holding together her crumbling marriage. Everything about New Yorker Joy seemed ill-matched for an Oxford don and the beloved writer of Narnia, yet their minds bonded over their letters. Embarking on the adventure of her life, Joy traveled from America to England and back again, facing heartbreak and poverty, discovering friendship and faith, and against all odds, finding a love that even the threat of death couldn't destroy.

In this masterful exploration of one of the greatest love stories of modern times, we meet a brilliant writer, a fiercely independent mother, and a passionate woman who changed the life of this respected author and inspired books that still enchant us and change us. Joy lived at a time when women weren't meant to have a voice—and yet her love for Jack gave them both voices they didn't know they had.

Date	Location	Book
Jan 14, 2021, 3 pm	Zoom	"Becoming Mrs. Lewis" by Patti Callahan
March 11, 2021, 3 pm	TBA	"Saving Amelie" by Cathy Gohlke
May 13, 2021, 7 pm	TBA	"Bread of Angels" by Tessa Afshar



## MISSIONARIES TO PRAY FOR IN JANUARY 2021

**KRISTA AND JOEL YOUNG** serve the Lord through The Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya. As the LCMS area volunteer coordinator for Eastern and Southern Africa, Krista works closely with other LCMS missionaries and ministry teams to develop and strengthen relationships with local church partners. She connects the LCMS and its partner churches to provide short-term volunteer missionaries, short-term mission teams and medical mission teams in the countries of these two African regions. **Pray** God grants Krista continued wisdom as she learns the language and develops strong relationships with the local people and church leaders. **Pray** for their family when they are away from each other due to Krista's travels with mission teams. **Ask** God to keep them all in good health and help them be strong Christian witnesses to many people. **Pray** for all who prepare for and attend mission trips that they may have opportunities to boldly share Jesus' love with the people they meet and with whom they serve.

**Rev. James and Peggy Krikava** serve the Lord as career missionaries in the Eurasia region, based out of the Czech Republic. James serves as the associate regional director for the Eurasia region. He partners with local church leaders and current LCMS international mission leadership to strengthen and sustain existing congregations in this part of the world. He is involved with theological teaching and with building relationships with other church bodies that are currently not in fellowship with the International Lutheran Council (ILC). **Pray** for James and Peggy as they serve in the Eurasia region. Pray God gives them strength and peace as they again transition to life overseas, working in the culture and language of the people so they may effectively communicate the Gospel. **Pray** that the hearts of people here in the United States are moved to **pray** for and to financially support the Krikavas so they can "go with" this family on this journey of faith.

**Rev. Jacob William Gaugert** serves the Lord as a missionary in Togo. Jacob teaches courses in Lutheran theology at The Centre Luthérien d'Etudes Théologiques (CLET), or Lutheran Center for Theological Studies, in Dapaong, Togo, in West Africa. He also teaches distance learning and continuing education courses in Central Africa as needed. He also assists with coordinating visiting professors and supervising LCMS projects in the region. **Pray** for Jacob as he serves in Togo and Central Africa. Pray that God provides him with continued prayer and financial supporters in the United States. **Pray** that the Lord blesses CLET, its supporting congregations and other African partner churches. **Pray** that the burgeoning Lutheran churches in francophone Africa practice good stewardship in supporting the pastors and leaders of their church bodies with prayer and adequate salaries. **Ask** the Lord to raise up African theological leaders to serve as teachers of the Good News of Jesus Christ in the community.

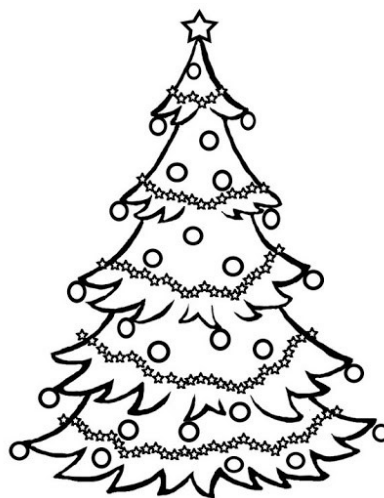
**Jamielynn (Tinkey) Flores, B.S.N., R.N.**, has served the Lord as a missionary in the Latin America and Caribbean region since July 2016. In August 2020, Jamielynn married Rafael Flores, who is a seminary student at Concordia the Reformer Seminary, and they now serve together in the Dominican Republic. In her role as regional life coordinator, Jamielynn uses her nursing background and skills to promote health initiatives alongside church plants in the Dominican Republic and throughout the region. She provides resources that meet the needs of both partner churches and mission plants as they approach topics of life and death, family and relationships. She also cares for the missionaries and their families serving in the region and advocates for their physical, spiritual and emotional health. **Pray** for Rafael and Jamielynn as they serve the churches and people around the Latin America and Caribbean region, especially in the Dominican Republic. **Pray** for their daily witness to Jesus Christ in both word and deed. **Pray** for their safety in their travels and daily activities. **Pray** for Rafael in his studies so that he may have the strength and endurance to finish in order to continue serving the church someday as pastor, according to God's will. **Give thanks** for the clear Gospel that is being preached across the region and the opportunities Rafael and Jamielynn have to continue serving God's church in this way

# Preschool News

The preschoolers were busy in December preparing and celebrating the birth of our Savior!

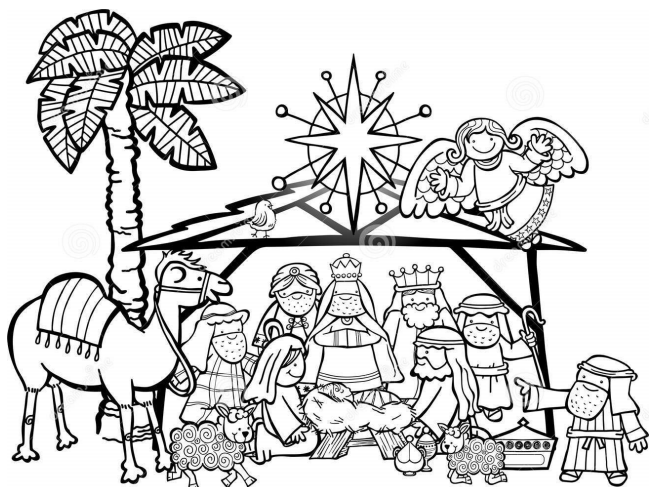
Each preschooler made a gift for their parents, and also received a gift from their teachers.

Each classroom had a Christmas Tree for the children to decorate and “undecorate” during play time, a Nativity set to tell the Christmas story with, and plenty of Christmas decorations and craft projects to get everybody in the spirit of the season!



The Lion Class (4-year-olds) were able to put on a COVID-safe version of our traditional Christmas program.

The children were assigned parts in the live Nativity story, practiced, and then performed the Nativity story and their songs during a live stream during preschool hours. The program was also recorded and posted for families to enjoy later if they were not able to see the live-stream. We are so thankful for the technology available through the church that allowed the program to go on safely!



Some of the preschool classrooms had cookie baking in their pretend play areas, while one had a cookie shop, and another had babies to care for, like Mary and Joseph cared for baby Jesus.

Some of the children learned about gingerbread, some learned about Christmas trees, and some learned about candy canes.

ALL of the children learned about the birth of our Savior, Jesus!

