

# Shining Mountains *news*

"IT IS OUR MISSION, AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD AND COMMAND TO GROW IN HIS WORD, TO GATHER AROUND HIS WORD, AND TO GO WITH HIS WORD."

*A loving Savior calls us to*

## Home for the Holidays

More than any other time, perhaps, Christmas makes us think about what it means to be *home*. Sons and daughters come back from college. Grown-up children make it back to Mom and Dad's place.

Of course, those aren't the things that make it *home*. *Home* is what happens when we're reunited with family. *Home* is caught up in the smells of Mom's traditional turkey or Dad's pie. *Home* is the knowledge that you're in a place where you're loved and wanted, where you don't need to be afraid.

Almost a thousand years before the first Christmas, an Israelite king named David decided that he would build a house for God. He wanted to build the Lord a temple because all of God's goodness to him. The Lord had something else in mind, though: "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you" (2 Samuel 7:11).

David already had a palace; God was talking about something completely different than a physical house. He continued to explain that this "house" would come through an offspring that would be born, long after David was buried. This descendant would establish a kingdom that would never end.

The gracious rule of this king was the true house the Lord would provide.

That prophecy was speaking about Jesus. When we celebrate Christmas, we're remembering that God kept his promise to David and provided that promised descendant. When he paid the price for our sins and established his reign over all things, Jesus fulfilled God's promise of a kingdom that would last forever.

What's that kingdom like? It's a kingdom where you have a heavenly Father, who promises to hear your prayers and give you "every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17). It's a kingdom in which you have a brother Jesus who is proud to be connected to you (Hebrews 2:11). It's a kingdom in which you have a dear friend in the Holy Spirit, always there to encourage, comfort and counsel you (John 15:26). This kingdom—it's not a place that's defined by towers or armies. It's a place where you're loved and wanted, where you don't need to be afraid. It's a home.

If you're traveling this Christmas, may God send his angels to watch over you. If you're surrounded by loved ones, may the Lord give you joy and renewal through them. But above all—even if



you're spending the holidays by yourself—may the Lord remind you that God's promise to David means that you have a loving family in God. When you remember that, you're always "home" for the holidays.

Merry Christmas!



# Updates from our Church Body

## **Bible Translation Evaluation**

Here are a few brief updates about our church body's steps as we consider the revised translation of the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible:

- In the District Conventions held in the summer of 2012, delegates from each of the twelve Districts of our Synod will vote for the English translation they prefer to be used in WELS publications. If one translation receives more than 2/3 of all votes cast, that translation will be used in our publications. (Shining Mountains is part of the Dakota-Montana District.)
- If no translation receives 2/3 of the vote, the decision will be postponed until the 2013 Synod Convention.
- In January of 2012, the Translation Evaluation Committee (TEC) will sponsor a workshop at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary discussing the most important issues of translation evaluation.
- Materials about translation evaluation and other related issues can be found at [www.wels.net/translation](http://www.wels.net/translation).

May the Lord bless us as seek to proclaim His Word as clearly and accurately as possible!

## **Child pornography charges against Synod employee—UPDATE**

On Thurs., Nov. 17, we informed you that WELS Director of Communications Mr. Joel Hochmuth had been arrested for possession of child pornography. He was immediately suspended until the facts of the situation could be determined. On Nov. 18, after more information became available and some of the facts were established, his employment with the synod was terminated.

We continue to cooperate fully with the authorities as this matter moves through the legal process. Initial information from authorities indicates these allegations focus solely on Mr. Hochmuth and no one else connected with our synod. Since Mr. Hochmuth was not a pastor or teacher and served in an administrative position at the synod's headquarters, his work did not bring him into contact with children in anything other than public settings.

We have reassigned the communication duties to other members of our staff. We will be evaluating how these duties can best be carried out in the future. We are thankful for the support, understanding, and prayers of our synod's members as we move beyond this difficult time.

We continue to be saddened by these events. We urge all to pray for the innocent children who are victimized by those who produce, distribute, and use these kinds of materials. We also ask that you would continue to keep the Hochmuth family in your prayers as well. It is an understatement to say that they are going through a difficult time. Ask God to give them strength, comfort, and guidance through his powerful Word.

Christians are not immune to Satan's temptations. David, Paul, and Peter all knew from personal experience that believers can and do commit terrible and unspeakable sin. But they also knew and experienced the restoring power of God's grace. Joel Hochmuth knows this as well. Joel is receiving pastoral care from his pastors and others. We are confident that the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in God's Word has brought him to recognize and repent of his sin, and we also know that he has sought and received the comfort of forgiveness in the redeeming sacrifice of our Savior. Please pray that Joel will continue to be assured of forgiveness at the foot of the cross and that God's grace will restore him, renew him, and strengthen his faith.

Serving in Christ,  
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS President



# LET THERE BE LIGHT!

## *A monthly Bible Study at Shining Mountains*

In October we began a new monthly Bible study that walks through the first five books of the Bible in just eight sessions. By the end of study, participants will have a better knowledge of some of the key figures in Bible history, see God's grace in promising a Savior from the beginning of the world, and understand key Biblical concepts from a new perspective.

Our November study was cancelled due to weather. We'll meet again at 6:45 pm on December 15th. We'll review some basic information from the flood and the life of Abraham and look a bit deeper at two questions:

- Did people really live for hundreds of years in those days? Why?
- Why was polygamy so common in the Old Testament? Was this allowed by God?

To get the most out of our study, consider reading Genesis 5-25 before we meet. Childcare will be provided on request.

## Advent Party

For most of us, December is a time to get ready for the busyness of Christmas—the shopping, cooking, cleaning and wrapping that all need to be done in advance of the *big day*.

*Advent* is a reminder that there's something more important to be concerned about. During the four weeks of Advent, we focus on what it truly means to be prepared for Christ's coming, so we focus on his coming to us through his Word, his coming in the flesh at Bethlehem, and his coming again in glory at the end of all time.

To help celebrate that time together, the members and friends of *Shining Mountains* are invited to an Advent Party after church on Sunday, December 4th. We'll share a meal, work together to decorate our church home for our Christmas worship, and take part in a gift exchange. Bring along your children—there will be activities for them to take part in, too.

May the Lord grant us hearts ready for him and united in love and fellowship for one another!

## Building project update

SHINING  
MOUNTAINS  
STUDIOS

**"It is our mission, as brothers and sisters in Christ, according to God's Word and command to grow in his Word, to gather around his Word, and to go with his Word."**

As we continue to pursue a new ministry home, a number of key steps have been taken, or are just around the corner:

### *Real Estate Activity*

The Voters approved in a meeting on October 30th to list the parsonage for sale and move to a housing allowance system for Shining Mountains' pastors. An offer has been made on the Valley Center property that the voters will be asked to consider in a meeting on Dec. 4th. Cascade Development has countered the offer we made for the 5.7 acres on the corner of Baxter and Davis; some questions about necessary improvements are being investigated before voters are asked to respond to the counter offer.

### *Grants pursued*

There are some Synod and para-synodical agencies that look for ways to help congregations take steps forward to share the gospel. Shining Mountains is currently in the process of firming up an arrangement for both a generous grant and a low-interest loan from the Church Extension Fund (CEF). An application has also been submitted for a grant from The Antioch Foundation.



# Growing in Christ

Shining Mountains provides a Sunday School program to partner with parents in raising our children in the truth of God's Word. Each month, parents can look to this page of the newsletter and see their student's upcoming lessons, memory work, and updates about when the children will next sing in our worship services.

Memory work that fits with each lesson is provided for parents to work on with their children at home.

Date	Lower grades (Miss Newton)	Middle grades (Mrs. Giese)	Upper grades (Mrs. Baker)
12/4	<b>God has a special message for Mary</b> <i>Give him the name Jesus. (Lk 1:31)</i>	<b>Ruth's Faith</b> <i>Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37)</i>	<b>Ruth's Faith</b> <i>Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37)</i>
12/11	<b>Jesus the Savior is Born</b> <i>Jesus came to save sinners. (1 Ti 1:15)</i>	<b>God Answers Hannah's Prayer</b> <i>Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (Mt 7:7)</i>	<b>God Answers Hannah's Prayer</b> <i>Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it (Proverbs 22:6)</i>
12/18	<b>God Leads the Wisemen to Jesus</b> <i>Hear the Word of God. (Lk 11:28)</i>	<b>Saul Becomes King</b> <i>We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19)</i>	<b>Saul Becomes King</b> <i>Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it (Proverbs 22:6)</i>

## Christmas Eve worship!

Parents, Sunday School teachers are beginning work with their students for our Christmas Eve worship. All students will take part in the songs together. Recitations will be done by the two older classrooms. Please begin working with your child at home on their parts! (Mrs. Giese's class will recite **Isaiah 9:2&6**. Mrs. Baker's class will recite **Luke 2:1-7**.) See the calendar on the back page of the newsletter for rehearsal information.

## Serving Us in December *Thank you to those who served in November!*

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Refreshments</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
12/4	J Lauersdorf / T Zulauf	<i>open</i>	<i>open</i>	Lauersdorf (12/5-12/10)
12/7	J Becker / S McGough ( <i>Midweek Advent Service—7:00 pm</i> )			
12/11	L Baker / B Ballard	Spalding	<i>open</i>	Linn (12/12-12/17)
12/14	A Pruitt / T Franck ( <i>Midweek Advent Service—7:00 pm</i> )			
12/18	R Buchholz / P Agenten	<i>open</i>	<i>open</i>	Marozick (12/19-12/23)
12/24	D Gustafson / D Gentry (Christmas Eve candlelight)			
12/25	J Hammer / B Thiede (Christmas Day)			

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

**Psalms 84:10**



# December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
				6:00 Church Council meeting		
<b>4</b> 9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible class 10:30 Worship w/ H.C. (Advent 2) <b>Advent party after church!</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>  6:30 Confirmation Class	<b>7</b>  6:00 Soup Supper 7:00 Midweek Advent Worship 8:00 Choir practice	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible class 10:30 Worship (Advent 3)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>  6:30 Confirmation Class	<b>14</b>  6:00 Soup Supper 7:00 Midweek Advent Worship 8:00 Choir practice	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>  10:00 Christmas for Kids! 12:00 Christmas Eve rehearsal
<b>18</b> 9:15 Sunday School 9:20 Bible class 10:30 Worship w/ H.C. (Advent 4)	<b>19</b>  10:30 The Festival of the Nativity of our Lord	<b>20</b>  6:30 Confirmation Class	<b>21</b>  7:00 Christmas Eve rehearsal (youth and choir)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  7:00 pm Christmas Eve Carols and Candlelight service
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

# Upcoming Messages

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In December we prepare our hearts to celebrate the way God comes to us. In Advent, we focus on the way he comes to his people in Word and Sacrament, and will come to us at the end of time. On Christmas, we rejoice as we remember the way he came in flesh and blood as the babe of Bethlehem.

May the following schedule help you as you prepare for worship or look for opportunities to invite a friend!

## *Worship in December*

Dec 4: The 2nd Sunday in Advent—Pay attention to the heralds of the coming Lord.

Dec 7: Midweek Advent 2

Dec 11: The 3rd Sunday in Advent—Many people don't want the Savior who came. Do you?

Dec 14: Midweek Advent 3

Dec 18: The 4th Sunday in Advent—The best preparation for Christmas is a readiness to receive

Dec 24: Christmas Eve service of Carols and Candles

Dec 25: Christmas Day—The Festival of the Nativity of our Lord

