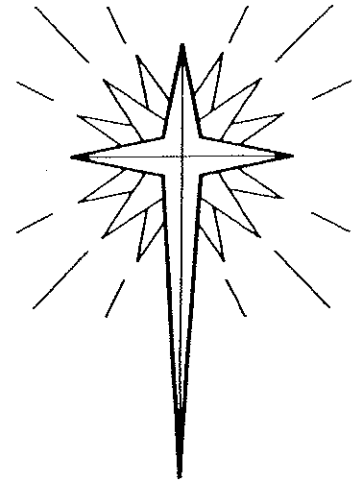


⊕ St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Kenesaw, NE

Pastor Paul S. Duffy  
402-752-3421, 3536  
(Cell) 308-216-1254  
<http://stpaulskenesaw.org>

Pastor's Ponderings  
December, 2015



Dear Fellow Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Once again, the holidays have crept up on us! A dear parishioner spoke to me just this day and said, "It's going to be a busy time, but it's a good time." Indeed, it is! I imagine for most of us, Christmas has always been the most exciting time of the year. All the beautiful colored lights, the Christmas scents, the trees, wreaths, and packages, Christmas carols, cookies and goodies, and most important, the Nativity scenes, all announce the joy of the season and the great celebration that awaits! Christ, the Savior is born!

Lest we forget, leading up to Christmas day is the season of Advent, the time of preparation for the coming of the Savior, the Messiah.

Prior to His coming, it was a dark period in many places. In the Gentile world life appeared hopeless until the Light came. We read in Matthew, chapter 4: *"The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned."*

Dwelling in the shadow of death and darkness is not a place where God wants anyone to be. So He did something about it. He broke the gloom of sin, death and superstition and brought His beautiful Son Jesus Christ onto the scene. He is the great Light. God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God!

Many were prepared for His entrance into the world, many were not. Many came to faith in Him, many did not. But for those who did come to faith, *"He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe on His name"* (John 1)! Nothing brings more light into the heart than knowing that you are a child of God! And so it was in the world of long ago.

Prior to our welcoming again the infant Jesus into our world today, we can say with assuredness that it

is a very dark time in many places. Though we are much more advanced than 2000 years ago, many are still in great darkness, dwelling in the shadow of death. Many people have no idea what to do to break the gloom. The clear answer, though, is still the same as when the Messiah came upon the scene the first time.

We are about to celebrate the coming of "the great Light" into the world once again. Jesus said of Himself, *"I am the Light of the world. He who walks with me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (John 8:12).

There are countless people who need to know the light of the infant Christ, whose birth we await. They need to know there is One who will walk with them through the darkness and take them into His marvelous light. Think of all the sadness in the hearts of those who are suffering at the hands of evil people in this world. Think of the evil perpetrators themselves, in whose hearts the very essence of evil dwells. Only the light of Christ's love can begin to penetrate the darkness and do away completely with the gloom and the shadow of death.

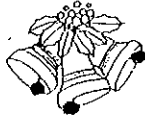
It is time for you and me and God's Church throughout the world to announce the coming of the newborn King, that Babe in the manger at Bethlehem. It is time for us to issue the call to acknowledge that He is Lord over all, and He longs to welcome anyone into His Kingdom of love, grace and glory!

When the time comes, let us rejoice, feast, and fellowship, enjoying the blessed spirit of the season with all its sights, sounds and scents. Let us forever remind the world around us that the Newborn Christ-Child is the great Light that dispels darkness and brings the hope and joy of everlasting life through His blessed name!

See You in Church!  
Pastor Duffy

## Workers for the Lord in December 2015

**Sunday Acolytes:** Rhett Augustin  
Hope Nienhueser  
Paige Morrow



**Ushers:** (1<sup>st</sup> half) Kevin Jameson  
Dave Kimle  
Dan Kimle  
(2<sup>nd</sup> half) Brent Woodman  
Ted Stade  
Tim Schirmer

**Wed./Holiday Acolytes:** Savannah Williams  
Jenna Jaeschke  
Kaylee Steer  
Payton Morrow  
Rhett Augustin

**Crucifers:** Savannah Williams  
Jenna Jaeschke

**Elder:** Lee Rockefeller (1<sup>st</sup> half)  
Mike Engelhard (2<sup>nd</sup> half)

**Altar Guild:** Valerie Schirmer  
Joyce Woodman

**Sunday Counters:**

Dave & Kathy Kimle  
Taylor & Brianna Jacobitz

**Evening Counters:**

Tim & Samantha Schirmer  
Christian & Sarah Kroos



## December Birthdays

- |    |                  |    |                       |
|----|------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1  | Joyce Hadenfeldt | 17 | LaVergne Oelschlager  |
| 3  | Cody Klusman     | 18 | Harriette Finnigsmier |
| 8  | Marc Kroll       |    | Miranda Stade         |
|    | Ted Stade        | 20 | Kirk Marble           |
| 9  | Lane Kelley      | 22 | Chase Rockefeller     |
|    | Josh Powell      | 26 | Joe Heckenlively      |
| 12 | Pastor Duffy     |    | Harper Krous          |
| 13 | Shonda Klusman   | 27 | Landon Krous          |
| 15 | Peg Horn         | 28 | Archie Augustin       |
|    | Roy Panwitz      | 29 | Lottie Schirmer       |
| 16 | Ben Bittfield    | 30 | Riley Beal            |
|    | Kevin Jameson    |    | Logan Pritchard       |
|    | Leisa Rowe       |    | Debra Streff          |
|    | Sheila Winslow   |    |                       |



### HOW TO ENJOY DECEMBER

These days, "Christmas" seems to come right after Halloween. How can Christian couples celebrate Christ's birth joyfully and appropriately - while still finding time for each other? Here are a few ideas:

Take a few minutes early every morning or at night after the kids are in bed to read a good Advent devotional.

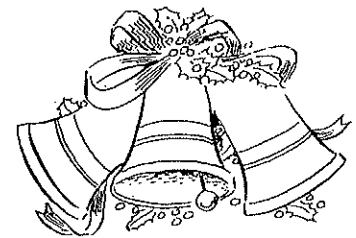
As much as possible, turn Christmas chores into an opportunity to have fun together. For example,

card-sending can be a good time to sit together and reminisce about old friends. (Kids love to help with this too.)

Sing carols in the car. Do not worry about what people think.

At some point during the season, take a walk together, preferably away from crowds and noise. Try to be silent.

Do something for someone else.



### Telling the Christmas Story

Have you shared the Christmas story?

Have you told its message true?  
There are others who would gladly  
Hear the word of life from you.

Have you told them how the angels  
To the humble shepherds came?  
Have you given them the tidings  
That the herald did proclaim?

Have you told them how the radi-  
ance  
From the Christmas star did  
guide  
The band of seeking Magi  
To the little Christ-Child's side?

Have you told them how this Jesus  
Was the Savior long-foretold  
And to him they brought rich tribute  
Of myrrh, frankincense, and  
gold?

Have you told them he's the Savior  
Who alone redeems from sin?  
Have you told them he can give  
them  
Peace and joy and love within?

If you have, then you will surely  
Know the bliss of love sublime;  
And if not, oh, haste to share it  
While the bells of Christmas  
chime.

—Author unknown



# DECEMBER COMING EVENTS

**Dec. 2** ✠ **Worship at Premier** ✠  
(Wed.) **Estates 10:00 AM**

LWML will join Pastor Duffy and the residents of Premier Estates in celebrating Christmas. Fresh fruit will be given and Christmas cards will be handed out.

**Dec. 2** **LWML Coffee**  
(Wed.) *Hosted by Pam Binfield*  
**St. Paul's Fellowship Hall**

Following worship at Premier Estates. Offering for Bethesda

**Dec. 3** **Ladies Aid Christmas**  
(Thurs.) **Luncheon 12 Noon**

St. Paul's Ladies Aid to celebrate Christmas with luncheon for members only and guests.



**Dec. 3** **Preschool Christmas**  
(Thurs.) **Program 7:00 PM**

The preschool children will be singing for you and will be joined by a surprise guest. Refreshments provided by LWML.

**Dec. 6** **Open House at the**  
(Sun.) **Parsonage 2 - 5 PM**

Pastor, Sharon and family invite all of you to the parsonage to help celebrate the Christmas Season. Come join us for fellowship and refreshments.

It's our way of saying Merry Christmas to you!  
*Jesus is born!*



**Dec. 9** **OGT Sort & Pack Day**  
(Wed.) **10 AM - 2 PM**

St. Paul's monthly sort and pack day at the Grand Island warehouse. Pool rides from the church at 9:15 AM.

**Dec. 14** **January Newsletter**  
(Mon.) **Deadline**

Please place your news items, lists of volunteers, etc. on the desk in the workroom. Thanks!

**Dec. 16** **Midweek Christmas**  
(Wed.) **Party 3:30 PM**

**Dec. 20** **LYF Caroling &**  
(Sun.) **Supper 4:00 PM**

The LYF will meet at the church to sack candy, go caroling and have supper. It will be a fun evening for our youth.

**Dec. ?** **Church Council**  
**Meeting**

The church council will meet the last week of December, watch the bulletin for details.

**Dec. 31** ✠ **New Year's Eve**  
(Wed.) **Service 7:00 PM**  
Communion (individual cup)

Prepare for the new year in celebration with Christ.

## Sunday Morning Schedule

9:00 AM Sunday School and Bible Class

10:00 AM ✠ **Worship Service** ✠  
Communion 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday

## ✠ Advent Services ✠

*"Jesus, Thou Son  
of David"*

Sundays, Dec. 6, 13, 20  
10:00 AM

Wednesdays, Dec. 2, 9, 16  
7:30 PM



### Advent Meals

5:30 - 7:00 PM (Free-will Offering)

Dec. 2 Fellowship League  
serving yum-yums. Proceeds  
designated for Sharon Owens, our  
missionary to Macau, China.

Dec. 9 This date available,  
contact Pastor

Dec. 16 LWML Soup Supper &  
Bake Sale.



### Christmas Cantata & Advent Worship

December 16<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM

St. Paul's choir will be presenting a  
special program of music.



### Christmas Eve Children's Service

December 24<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

St. Paul's children will present the  
Christmas Story.



**Christmas Day  
Festive Worship**  
December 25<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM

Come and celebrate.  
*Jesus is born*



**LWML Soup Supper & Bake Sale**  
Wed., Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Warm up with a hot bowl of soup - many  
varieties to choose from. Cookies,  
cakes, breads and more to satisfy any  
craving. Free-will donations from the  
bake sale will be given to the Kenesaw  
Backpacks of Love Program.

## January Upcoming Events

**Jan. 4- Feb. 8 Ladies Evening**  
(Mondays) **Bible Study**  
7:00 PM

A six-week bible study, led by Gloria  
Hoban, will center on six of the  
"deadly" sins: Pride, Anger, Greed,  
Jealousy, Gluttony, and Slothfulness.  
This study, "Fatal Distractions" by  
Kay Arthur will help identify the  
subtle ways they invade our lives and  
equip us to conquer them before they  
become fatal to our spiritual growth.  
Cost of the study guide will be \$8.00.  
**Sign-up deadline is Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>** (to  
allow for ordering study guides).  
The sign-up sheet is by the church  
mailboxes. Please bring a friend!

**Jan. 6 ✠ Midweek Epiphany**  
(Wed.) **Service** 7:30 PM

**Jan. 10 Annual Voter's Meeting**  
(Sun.) 2:00 PM

### Church Office Vacancies to be filled in 2016

- Financial Secretary ● Trustee
- Elder ● Secretary
- Board of Education
- Board of Evangelism/Stewardship

*Please prayerfully consider to use  
your God given talents and gifts  
if asked to serve.*

Jan. ? **LLL Annual Pancake  
(Sun.) & Sausage Supper**  
Watch for details.

### Other Area Events

#### **Dec. 1 Giving Tuesday**

On giving Tuesday - a day set aside for upholding charitable giving - you can make a gift to the nonprofit charity most meaningful to you. To learn more, please visit [www.givingtuesday.org](http://www.givingtuesday.org) or [www.lcms.org/givingtuesday](http://www.lcms.org/givingtuesday)

#GIVINGTUESDAY™



### *Living Nativity*

**Wed, Dec. 2** (Dec. 9 snow date)  
6:30 - 8:30 PM  
15 minute guided tours

Christ Lutheran Church  
13175 W. 70<sup>th</sup> St., Juniata

Come take a journey with us to the bustling town of Bethlehem, as you take in the sights, sounds and smells of that first Christmas night. Hear the noisy crowd, the bleating of sheep and the choir of angels. See the chickens and the baby donkey all gathered around the sweet baby Jesus. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served following the guided tour.



**Breakfast with  
St. Nicholas**  
**Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**  
9:00 -11:00 AM

Peace Lutheran Church  
906 N. California, Hastings

*For children of All Ages  
(and adults)*  
**Meet the REAL ST. Nicholas!**

Come and enjoy breakfast with St. Nicholas, fun crafts and a game. You will hear the story of the REAL St. Nicholas, and there will be a special treat at the end.

We kindly ask you to bring a donation of nickels for our Nickels for Nicholas Drive. The money will be used to help families in need this holiday season.

There is no cost but space is limited. Please RSVP so we can make sure we have enough food and craft supplies. Call to reserve your spot by Dec. 3rd at the church office 402-462-9023 [www.peacelutheranhastings.org](http://www.peacelutheranhastings.org)



**Dec. 6 CHRISTMAS**  
**(Sun.) ABENDMUSIK 7 PM**

Zion Wanda Lutheran Church  
4080 S Wanda Ave., Juniata, NE

*An Evening of Christmas  
Music & Readings*  
featuring  
**1-2-5 & FRIENDS**

*Free-will offering .  
Refreshments following*





**Dec. 5 Benefit for John Uden**  
**(Sat.) 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

Zion Lutheran Church & School  
 465 S. Marian RD, Hastings

- Soup and Pie Luncheon (Free-Will)
- Silent Auction ● Bake & Craft Sale

*Hosted by Thrivent Little Blue River Chapter*

John was diagnosed with stage 4 aggressive lymphoma on Dec. 5, 2014. He received six months of chemotherapy. After 3 separate week long stays in the ICU he was diagnosed with a perforated colon and underwent 4 months of rehabilitation. John is currently in remission. John works on a very limited basis at Krieger Electric as a Warehouse Manager. He serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the Village of Juniata. John is a retired EMT and firefighter after 25 years of service.

We invite you to come out and join us for a great afternoon of fellowship and friendship. Show John you support for his service to Adams County and his fight against cancer.



*Concordia University, Nebraska invites you to join music lovers from around the country at **Christmas at Concordia**, scheduled December 4-6, 2015 at St. John Lutheran Church, Seward.*

Admission is free, but tickets are required. Register by phone (402)643-7150 or (402)643-7160. For more concert information and for other events visit the website [www.christmasatconcordia.net](http://www.christmasatconcordia.net)



**CHRISTMAS**

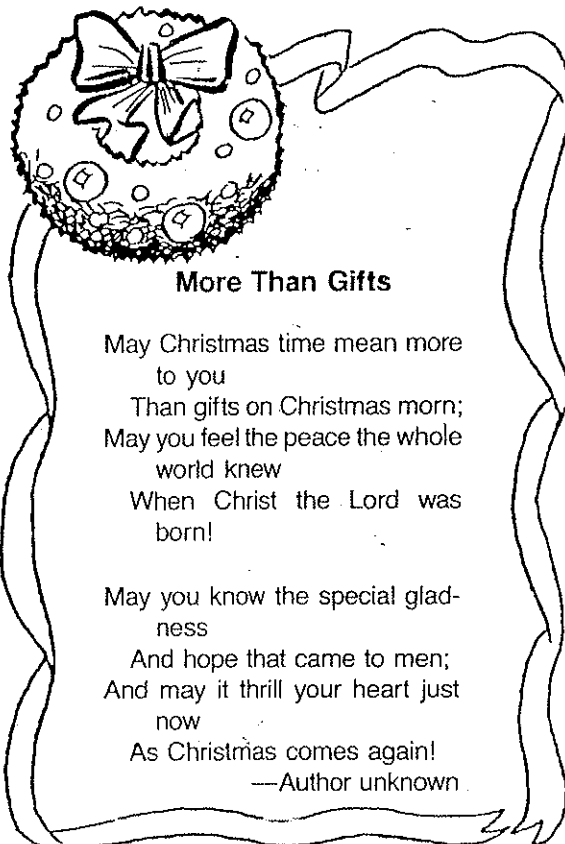


A Christian believer tells about her discovery of joy one Christmas while shopping. It was a minor episode, but one that brought home to her a bit of joy, as well as to the recipient of her kindness. She tells it in these words:

"One Christmas I had been waiting for some time to be waited on in a store. My turn was next when a child began to be very unhappy and fretful. His exhausted mother tried to comfort him but they had just come in and would have a very long wait. I suddenly felt a great deal of love for these strangers. I got this feeling that since Christmas is a time of joy, this situation was an opportunity for joy. Spontaneously, I gave the woman my place. The look on her face was reward enough.

"This experience has stayed with me over the years, reminding me that through a willingness to embrace our opportunities for joy, we learn to know Christ—God's presence with us."

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**More Than Gifts**

May Christmas time mean more  
 to you  
 Than gifts on Christmas morn;  
 May you feel the peace the whole  
 world knew  
 When Christ the Lord was  
 born!

May you know the special glad-  
 ness  
 And hope that came to men;  
 And may it thrill your heart just  
 now  
 As Christmas comes again!

—Author unknown

# STEWARDSHIP TIPS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

## Stewardship Involves Giving Some of What God Has Given Us Back To Him - Part 1

In order to use wisely the money and things God constantly gives to us, it is important that we give back to Him. Without a doubt, as we said two months ago, as Christian stewards we are called upon to plan ahead and put money away for college one day, or other big ticket items we see down the road. That being said though, we are also called upon to return to God a portion of that with which He has blessed us. You have probably heard the number 10% tossed around as a good number. (As you know, the tithe, the giving of 10%, is an Old Testament regulation, but since we are freed from the Law by Christ, we are not bound to it.)

I would still say though that it is a fine number, as long as it does not somehow become a New Testament requirement in our thinking and thus a stumbling block to Christian stewardship. We taught our children that 10% was a good place to begin, and as I have visited with you about this before, from there the sky is the limit as you are invited to increase that percentage year after year. With children I think we can begin there,

as we have said, while the numbers are small and the teaching is taking place.

If we are dealing with folks who are a little older and the numbers are a little bigger, maybe we need to start with 5%, or some other percentage that we have prayed about, endeavoring all along to increase that number year after year as we grow in this grace of giving.

We should also add again that this giving does not just have to be dollars and cents, but that it can include the time we give in service to our Lord as we serve others. It may be through the giving of our time or the talents with which God has blessed us. It may be through our gifts of tissue and touch and testimony and trash and our recycling efforts.

(Stay tuned for Part 2 in the January issue for stewardship examples that can be applied within the family.)

Rev. John Heckmann  
LWML Senior Pastoral Counselor



### **Stewardship News**

### 2015 Budget Analysis

	Amount Proposed For the Year 2015	Amount Received as of 10/31/15	Percent of Budget Met To Date	Amount Needed To Meet Budget
<b>Missions</b>	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 8,943.61	45%	\$ 11,056.39
<b>Current</b>	\$ 166,040.00	\$ 104,764.73	63%	\$ 61,275.27
<b>Commodities and Assets</b>	\$ -	\$ -		
<b>Sharon Owens, Missionary</b>	\$ -	\$ 1,245.00		



# December 2015

## PRAYER GUIDE FOR LWML MISSION GRANTS

Prayers for: Renovation of JEM Seminary Buildings

### PRAYER #1

Dear Lord God, We thank and praise You for the gift of salvation You have provided us through Your Son, Jesus Christ. As we contribute our mite offerings for the support of renovating Jonathan Ekong Memorial (JEM) Seminary in Nigeria, keep us ever mindful of the importance of sharing this Good News with others. We humbly ask that You continue to richly bless their efforts in training young men to prepare for and then proclaim the Gospel to all people of the world. In Jesus' Holy name we pray. Amen.

### PRAYER #2

Oh Triune God, bless our efforts to support the renovation of the buildings of the Jonathan Ekong Memorial (JEM) Seminary in Nigeria by contributing our mites in a generous way. Guide us, Oh Holy Spirit, to keep in mind the great need for funding to provide safe and serviceable structures allowing the continuation of instruction in Your Holy Word. Heavenly Father we thank You for sending Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, to redeem us and all people, and ask that You continue to richly bless JEM Seminary so they also may continue to proclaim to others of Your generous gift of salvation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### PRAYER #3

Dear Lord, we confess that all men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We acknowledge that Jesus came to save sinners, and this was accomplished through His death and resurrection. Since we have been blessed by Your Spirit with this knowledge, help us to remember the need for all people to hear this Good News of salvation in their own language. As we contribute our mite offerings to You, Oh Lord, keep us mindful of the needs in Nigeria at Jonathan Ekong Memorial (JEM) Seminary for safe and serviceable buildings so that they can continue to train up ministers to proclaim Your precious Gospel with others. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

### PRAYER #4

Grant Oh Lord, we pray that we be moved by Your Holy Spirit to generously contribute our offerings to You so that the mission grants selected in convention may be abundantly supported. We ask at this time for Your blessings on the funds given for the renovation of buildings on the Jonathan Ekong Memorial (JEM) Seminary campus in Nigeria. As our partners in Gospel proclamation, we pray their needs are met so they are enabled to continue to serve You as they prepare men for the ministry of Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[www.lwml.org/missions](http://www.lwml.org/missions)

PLEASE FOLD OR CUT THIS GUIDE ON THE DOTTED LINE,  
AND KEEP PRAYER GUIDE IN YOUR BIBLES  
FOR DAILY MISSION SUPPORT REMINDERS.

## MISSION GRANT STORY

### RENOVATION OF JEM SEMINARY BUILDINGS \$120,000

The Lutheran Church in Nigeria (LCN) is the LCMS's oldest partner church in Africa, currently with approximately 80,000 members in 339 congregations. The seminary in Obot Idim, Jonathan Ekong Memorial (JEM) Seminary, continues to be an important partner for gospel proclamation, preparing young men for the ministry in the LCN in the most populous country in Africa.

To accommodate the record-high number of students enrolled in JEM, the existing dormitories need renovations such as repairing roof structures and termite damage. Without renovation work, these buildings will become dangerous to the students, if not useless. The goal is to make the buildings safe and serviceable for the growing student population as well as serving the Seminary community made up of teaching and non-teaching staff and students totaling approximately 150 people, not including visitors.

The proposed repair work is to resurface the floors and walls, replace roofs and ceilings, replace all electrical and plumbing installations, and paint. Termite treatment is also planned.

In addition to making the buildings safe and serviceable, the seminary is preparing to apply for accreditation from the Nigeria Universities Commission. Students at JEM complete five years of academic work and three years of internship before graduation. The seminary seeks to provide recognized credentials for their students as well as for the development of the seminary and church.

LWML grant money will help pay for some of these renovations providing a safe and serviceable space for the continuation of training pastors to carry the message of salvation to people of various languages and cultures in their respective homelands.







Relief for Human Need Worldwide

Dear Friends in Christ:

It has been quite a while since I have written to you. This has been a somewhat different year for me. I didn't go to Europe in May. Our daughter, Karen, took a group of nine to Russia and the Baltics in May. I spent a few days in the hospital while they were gone. Medical issues have been a part of our lives since then. On 02 November I finally had a "pacemaker" installed. Things are looking up.

Karen and her group were able to visit about 25 orphanages. Not nearly all of them. They all report the same need for the medical and hygienic supplies that we provide. Our Russian co-workers all tell us of the frequent communication from orphanage directors. They are all aware of the tension between our two nations. Their constant plea is for us to continue to help the children.

The other reason for my letter is to remind you of the approaching Christmas. Many of you have sent a special Christmas offering for the children in the past years. If you are able to do so, that would be wonderful. If not, we want to thank you for your regular support and place no additional burden on you.

If you send a special Christmas gift into the office at Norfolk, be sure to include the account name and/or number and specify that it is for Christmas. The same information would be helpful if you send it to me.

We ask for your continued prayers for our orphanage, prison and hospital ministry. God's greatest gift to us always has been His Son, Jesus Christ. Pray that we will share Him with everyone that our ministry touches. His name be praised!

Your fellow servant,  
Pastor John D. Reehl

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN  
PO Box 1466  
NORFOLK, NE 68702-9915

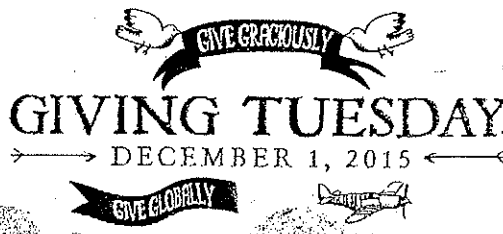
PASTOR JOHN D REEHL  
1623 W ANNA ST  
GRAND ISLAND, NE 68801

**Account # 8674**

**Orphanage Priozersk 2 Kenesaw**

Be sure to include the account number  
and name of the orphanage.

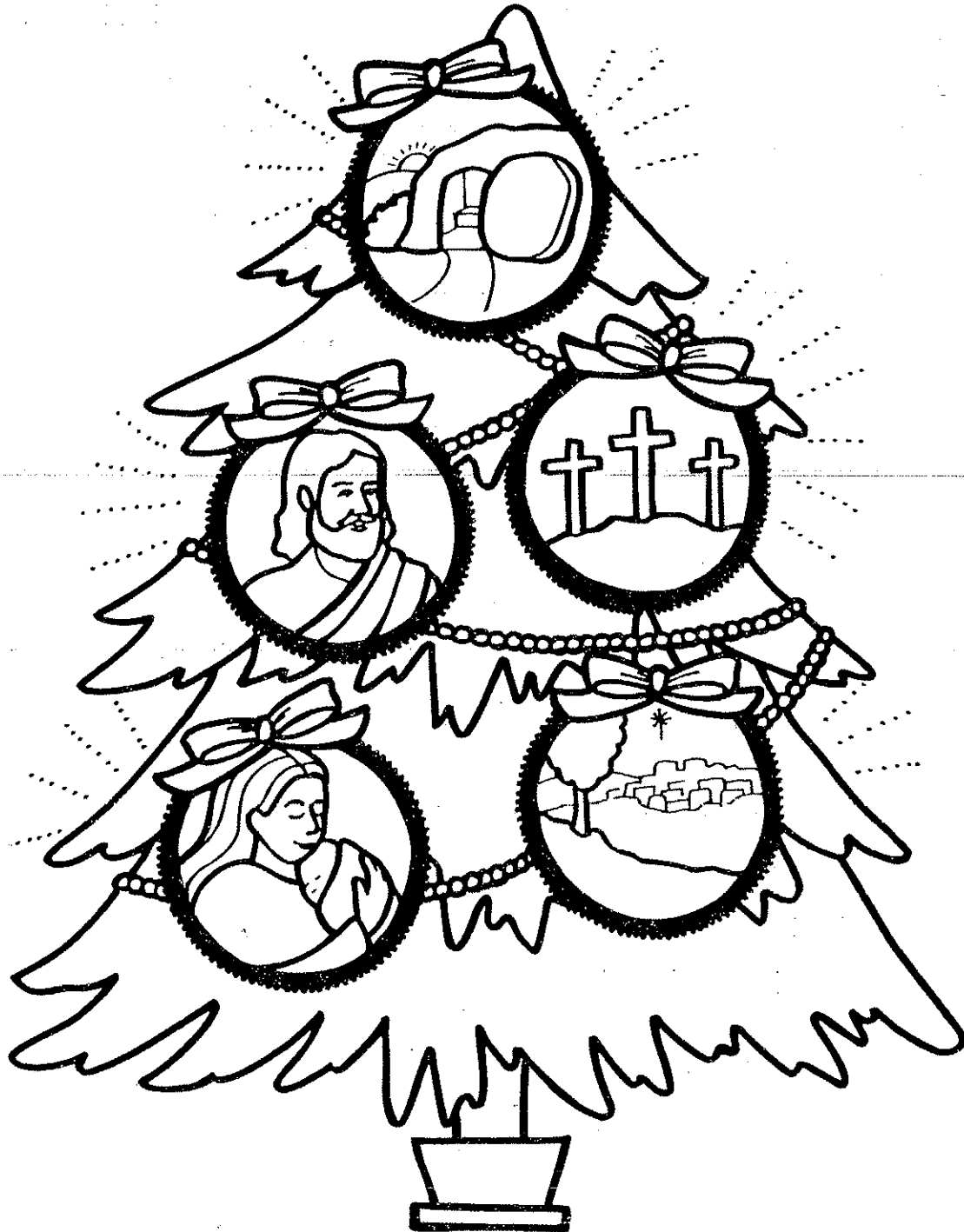
On the memo line or on a note, be sure to  
mention that it is for "Christmas".



The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is joining giving Tuesday and asking people around the world to make a difference through charitable giving on a single day, Dec. 1. The LCMS' "Give Graciously, Give Globally" effort will benefit the church's Global Mission Fund. The Global Mission Fund impacts people around the world and in our own backyard through acts of Christian compassion, wherever the opportunities are greatest at the time the gift is made. Gifts to the fund are immediately directed wherever the opportunity for ministry is most critical in the world to carry out Witness, Mercy, Life Together work. Giving Tuesday follows on the heels of Cyber Monday, Small business Saturday and Black Friday annual promotional events that profit the retail industry and kick off the holiday shopping frenzy. In an bout -face of this intense consumerism, Giving Tuesday was conceived as a day for amplifying small acts of kindness through charitable giving in an effort to change the world for the better. To learn more or donate go to <http://www.lcms.org/givingtuesday>

# PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

God revealed His plan for the Messiah through His prophets. A prophet was someone who told God's messages to the Hebrew people. These messages were called prophecies. Many told of events concerning the Messiah. Because of these prophecies, the Hebrews were waiting for the Messiah. Look up these verses to see which prophecies are pictured on the Christmas tree: Isaiah 7:14, Psalm 22:16, Psalm 16:10, Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 40:11. Draw a star on top of the tree.



*The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6*