



December Cross Talk



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Risen Christ Lutheran Church and School

41 E Possum Road Springfield, Oh 45502
(937) 323-3688 www.risenchristlcms.org
Sunday Services 10am

Contemporary and Traditional Services
(Week 1 & 3) (Week 2 & 4)

Church Office Staff

Pastor

Brad Viken

Office Manager

Bethany Viken

Elders

David Arnold

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Kindergarten

Megan Ramsey

1st Grade Teacher

Deb Rutledge

2nd Grade Teacher

Dawn Wells-Kitt

3rd Grade

Joetta Garberich

4th Grade

Korie Near

5/6/7th Grade

Jeff Parks

Mike Garberich

Martha Werner-Brown

School Support Staff

Kelli Cole

Sarah Leighley

Lisa Mulkey

Betty Ward

Andrew Kiple

Bethany Viken



RISEN CHRIST

Lutheran Church & School

Risen Christ Lutheran Church Mission Statement

As God's church in this place, our mission is to enrich and renew lives by bringing Christ to the community.

Risen Christ Lutheran School Mission Statement

We support the belief that children are the precious gift from God. Our mission is to provide, together with families, a high-quality education for the whole child within a loving, Christ-centered environment.

Risen Christ Lutheran School Vision Statement

The vision of RCLS is that each student will: possess a life-long love of learning, possess a deep love for God, and possess a habit of prayer, possess a strong sense of responsibility and integrity, possess a respect for inherent value of every person, possess a curious mind open to new ideas, and possess a love and respect for life.

Pastor Bradley's Mission Statement

I have been created to let God's Holy Spirit use my life experiences, my unique style, humor, and personality, and my love of Christ to lead others to know and trust the loving embrace of Jesus.

The Church's Mission:

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. *Matt 28:19-20 ESV*

Pastoral Ponderings Pt 1

In You Is Gladness

In You is gladness Amid all **sadness**,
Jesus, Sunshine of my heart.
By You are given
The gifts of heaven;
You the true Redeemer are.
Our souls are waking,
Our **bonds** are breaking;
Who trusts You surely
Has built securely;
And stands forever: Alleluia!
Our hearts are pining
To see Your shining,
Dying or living To You are cleaving;
Now and forever: Alleluia!

2 If He is ours, We fear no powers,
Not of earth nor sin or death.
He sees and blesses
In **worst distresses**;
He can change them with a breath.
Wherefore the story
Tell of His glory
With hearts and voices;
All heav'n rejoices
In Him forever: Alleluia!
We shout for gladness,
Win over **sadness**,
Love Him and praise Him
And still shall raise Him
Glad hymns forever: Alleluia!

Author Lyrics: Johann Lindemann, 1549-1631 Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878) (lyrics 1598) Public Domain
Tune: IN DIR IST FREUDE Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi (1556-1662) (an Italian Dance tune from 1591) Public Domain

Johann Lindemann grew was born 4 years after Martin Luther died. Growing up in newly “Evangelical” Germany, he was influenced mightily by the writings, teachings, sermons, songs of the reformers. Lindemann wrote the lyrics for the hymn you see quoted on the other half of this page about 70 years after the Lutheran Reformation began.

At first blush, one might wonder as to the mood of the lyricist. While he is referencing the victory in Jesus quite clearly, he seems to also be focused on the idea that “life is hard.” Phrases like “Amid all sadness” and “In worst distress” indicate some sort of struggle.

As you look at timing of this hymn, you see that there was also constant threat of war, from both the Holy Roman Empire (Roman Catholic Church) and the “Turks” (Muslim invaders). Life was not easy, in fact, tomorrow was not certain. For many, their next meal was not certain. Poverty, struggle, strife, sickness, the plague and grief were simply parts of everyday life for the average person in Germany around 1590.

Growing up as essentially part of the second generation of Lutheranism, worship life was in flux. Religious scholars were joyfully preaching grace, but still struggling to polish the overall message of the newborn Lutheran church. This made worship life new, exciting and uncertain. Hymns were being written to give the former Roman Catholics a clearer religious focus as they sang in worship week after week.

Pastoral Ponderings Pt 2

Lutheran hymnary was increasingly becoming a balancing act, with tension between living in a broken, corrupt, sinful, painful world and having the sure and certain hope of salvation because of God's grace shown and given freely in Jesus.

"Yes, life is going to be hard, but you are ultimately victorious," was a prominent theme, a realistic theme. Yes, a Biblical theme!

Bring this forward to today, it is no secret that December is a month of roller coaster emotions for many people. How about you? Ponder these issues for a moment.

Decorating: The beauty of the colors/lights amid the tension of keeping the lights burning and the temporary remodeling of your home to accommodate the season.

Food: Baking and cooking. Food allergies. Transporting prepared food to another house. Presenting and eating the various meals from Thanksgiving through the month of December; and then — the leftovers — so much food!

Gifts: Lists, decisions, shopping, budgeting, shipping, hiding, wrapping, unwrapping, exchanging. Then — "That's just what I needed" or — "Oh my, I can't use this — it is hideous?!"

Gatherings: Family traditions, family divisions/tensions, reunions, hugs, tears, memories, laughter & love. Friends. Office parties. Remembering departed loved ones.

Worship: Singing all the favorite songs but tiring of them by mid-December because of overuse, or the annoying pastor who won't use any Christmas songs until Christmas Eve. Extra worship services! Venturing out amid winter weather — to join a handful of brave or insane people who braved the elements to get to church on a Wednesday night.

Yes, so many mixed emotions and experiences, attitudes and actions, traditions, traumas, thrills and tragedies.

Pastoral Ponderings Pt 3

But – there is the Birthday Boy – Jesus. The Babe of Bethlehem! The Christ of Christmas! Paul tells us, ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

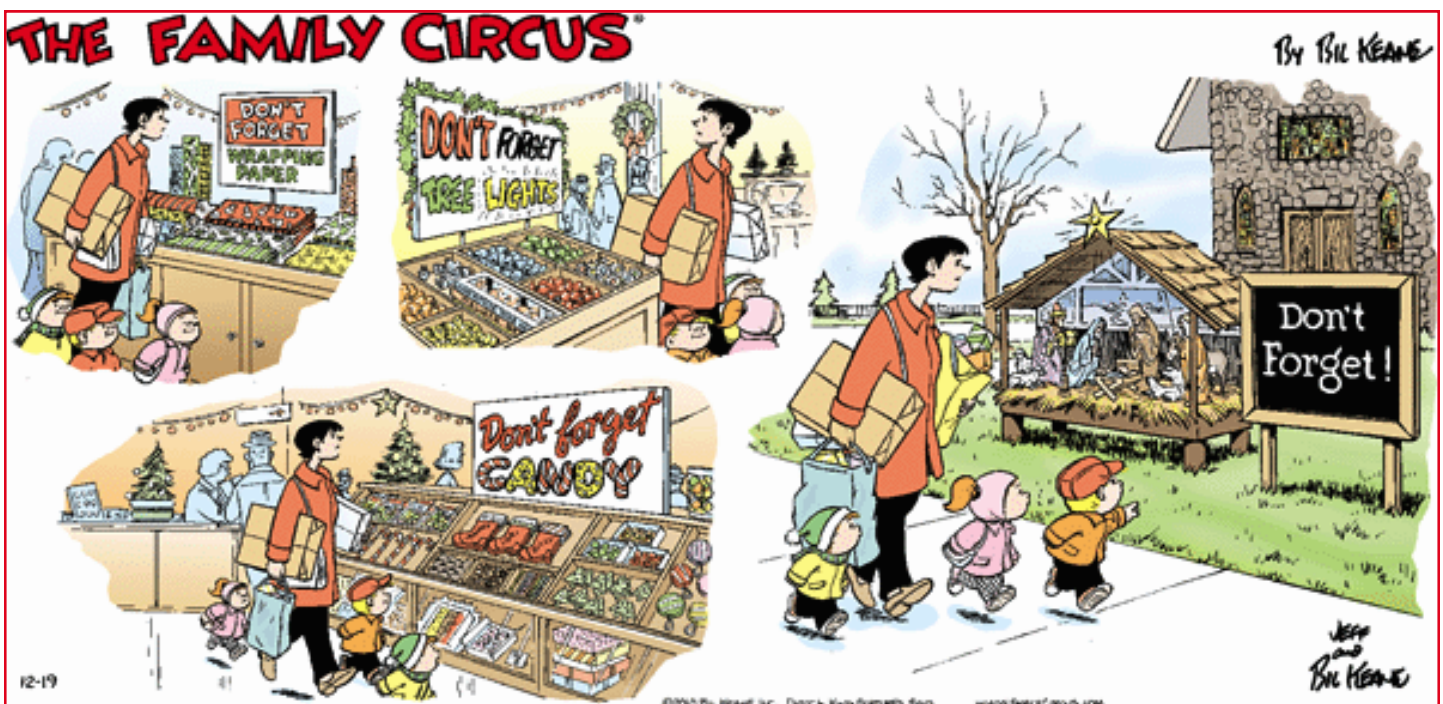
Rom. 8:35,38-39 ESV

You may be feeling some stress. I know I am. The world is broken, but you are already victorious, because the baby Jesus went to the cross and grave for you, and broke through in victory.

Even as your days are hard, your eternity is glorious and perfect, painless and tearless. The last line of the hymn says, “Glad hymns forever: Alleluia!” Indeed – this is your future.

Jesus overcame your mess. Merry Christmas.

Pastor Brad



ELDERS' REPORT PT 1

Remembering

"Forget the past, it's behind you."

"Just press forward and never look back."

"The past is the past. Just move on."

"Don't dwell on the past...."

How many times in your life have you been counseled with any of these words? They sound like good advice, and I suppose may sometimes apply to a person's circumstances, but quite often God has a better idea. God is all about you remembering your past...both the **good** stuff *and* the **bad** stuff. Let me explain....

God had just miraculously extracted his people from Egypt. When he was creating the Hebrew nation and giving them the Jewish religion at the foot of Mount Sinai, many decided that they did not want to trust him and developed their own plan. Because of this sin, God had Moses lead the children of Israel into the desert for 40 years to train them and their children in his ways, and to replace this "stiff-necked people" with the next generation. The history of God's people over the next 40 years was, well, less than stellar. God had covenanted with them that if they would simply follow him and his ways, then he could and would bless them in ways that they did not deserve or could not imagine. Israel continued to run hot and cold in their relationship with God through this time.... Mostly cold. Many times they failed to trust him as he led them through their hardship and adversity, complained about his blessings given them, and sometimes even intentionally disobeyed the ordinances/ boundaries God had set up for their own good.

"Father knows best" As every good father knows what's best for his children, God knew how to mold them, when and how to best chastise them, wanting to forgive them and always/continually loving them beyond anything they deserved. After 40 years Israel's second generation was encamped on the east side of the Jordan River ready to enter the promised land. Moses knew he was not crossing the river with them so he gathered together the millions of Israelites and preached his "Remember when...." sermon we find recorded as Moses's last inspired book of Deuteronomy. God tells them in this book to **always** look back and **always** remember their past.

ELDERS' REPORT PT 2

Remember my great power and the deliverance it has always brought to you.

Remember my provision for you.

Remember your lack of trust in me, your flagrant violations of my covenant, your selfishness and greed, your hate, pride, and obstinance.

Remember your sin.... remember it well!

Remember my righteous wrath, my holy judgment, and your punishment.

And after you reflect on your wavering, consider then my own steadfastness.

Remember my compassion for you and the forgiveness that I gave you.

Recall my blessings of provision and grace.

Remember my great and abiding love for you.

God commands his people to always look back into their past to remind them of who they are and who he is. Accurately remembering your past relationship with your God, you will see the original sin that has brought depravity in your life. This is a good thing because it highlights, points the spotlight on, God's continuous love for you in the grace of his forgiveness. As a Christian appropriately looks at their past, God intends the end product to be a warm smile of joy knowing they are forgiven. Intentionally looking back to see our shortcomings, we can fall to our knees thanking God for his forgiveness, for his provisions, for his never-ending love, for using our past to sanctify/mold us into the servant he wants us to be. Don't miss out on what God wants to do in your life. Sin, born from our own free will, sets a limit to what he can do in our lives! He often can't and/or won't bless us if we continue to intentionally sin. So look back, learn to sin no more, enjoy God's benevolent grace of forgiveness and provision!

We can pray.... Thank you Lord for the lessons of our past. Show me what I can best learn from your teaching. Show me how to not repeat my sin, and open my eyes to see the pitfalls so that I do not fall into others. Save me from myself. I trust you to mold me into the type of person you know is best. Continue to forgive me, continue to renew me, continue to bring me back to my past so that I can best move forward with you. I love you! Amen!

May you find Peace in your remembering!

Rob

GWIB!

(God's Way Is Best!)

THE FAMILY CIRCUS™





As we go on this Advent journey together may the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with warmth, gratitude, and a renewed sense of faith reminding us that the greatest gift of all is the love of JESUS that binds our family together.

UP COMING EVENTS FOR DECEMBER

Sunday Dec 7, 2025 Christmas Caroling

Friday Dec 12, 2025 at 6:30 pm Preschool & Kindergarten Christmas Program

Sunday Dec 14, 2025 RCLS Kids Singing in Church

Sunday December 28, 2025 Pastor Viken's Retirement Party and last Sunday

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" Romans 15:13

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Thanks to John Michael Sullivan (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-23-2005

AT LEAST WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT
UP IN A STABLE HOME



Young Adult Ministry

(December 2025 Update)

The **YAMs** are a group of young adults blended between members of the church and the local colleges. We have been meeting since September on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, enjoying good food and hanging out together playing games. It's been great just sitting around and enjoying each others' company. We meet in the fellowship hall at 2:00 and are normally gone by 4:30. Everyone is invited to bring their friends. There's always plenty of food & fun to go around!

We are also continuing our **Weekly Wednesday** study on World Religions. We have finished up with Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Soon we will be looking closely at the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, and many others. Even if you missed the first few religions you can jump in at any time. There's still much to learn! We begin promptly at 7:00pm. Along with the conversation, the fresh cookies are pretty yummy too!

Because of the holidays and Advent service schedule, the **Sunday Food & Fun** and **Weekly Wednesdays** will be moved around a bit. This is our schedule through January:

11/26 (Wed) ~ No Class (Thanksgiving)

12/4 (Thur) ~ Weekly Wednesday on World Religions

12/7 (Sun) ~ Sunday Food & Fun (Caroling and Pizza)

12/11 (Thur) ~ Weekly Wednesday on World Religions

12/18 (Thur) ~ Weekly Wednesday on World Religions

1/4 (Sun) ~ Sunday Food & Fun

1/7 (Wed) ~ Weekly Wednesday on World Religions

1/14 (Wed) ~ Weekly Wednesday on World Religions

1/18 (Sun) ~ Sunday Food & Fun

1/21 (Wed) ~ Weekly Wednesday

1/28 (Wed) ~ Weekly Wednesday



In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

Ephesians 1:7 ESV



I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

Isaiah 6:8 ESV



For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23-24 ESV

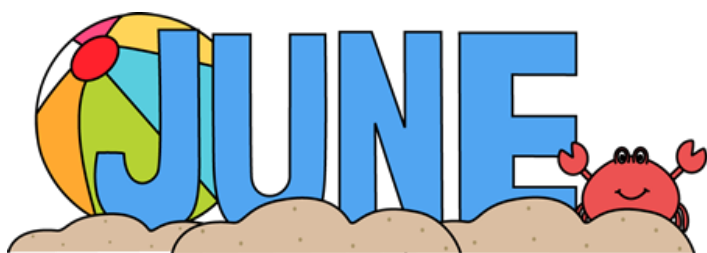


He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.

Ephesians 1:7 NLT



For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. 2 Tim 1:9 NLT



From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!

Psalms 113:3 ESV



For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

...for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:5b-6 ESV



This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3-4 ESV



...may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you. 1 Thessalonians 3:12 ESV



But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18 ESV



In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 3:1-2 ESV

ESV Scripture for December

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:1-2 ESV

<u>Dec 7</u> 2nd Sun in Advent	<u>Dec 14</u> 3rd Sun in Advent
First Reading: Ruth 1	First Reading: Is 35:1-10
Second Reading: Ruth 2 & 3	Epistle Reading: James 5:7-11
Third Reading: Ruth 4	Gospel Reading Matt 11:2-15

<u>Dec 21</u> 3rd Sun in Advent	<u>Dec 28</u> 1st Sun after Christmas
First Reading: Is 7:10-17	First Reading: Is 63:7-14
Epistle Reading: Rom 1:1-7	Epistle Reading: Gal 4:4-7
Gospel Reading: Matt 1:18-25	Gospel Reading: Matt 2:13-23



1	Brooke Woods
2	Sandy Davis
2	Kim Hunt
4	Brian Perks
7	Chris Kit
10	Gene Baumgardner
16	Julie Cunningham
16	Natalie Montecalvo
16	Holly Viken
17	Sarah Bussell
20	Dawn Wells-Kitt
23	Brad Reid
27	Joshua Cunninham



1	Brenda Montecalvo
6	Linda Bacevic
6	Richard Hockemeyer
10	Mary Norden
18	Kaiden Davis
22	Matt Rutledge
25	Deb Rutledge
26	Natalie Montecalvo



Joy to the world



		Years
12/2	Howard & Ruth Romaker	58
12/13	Roger & Abby Wright	1
12/18	Chris & Dawn Kitt	15

National Universal Human Rights Month

Operation Santa Paws

- 2 National Special Education Day
- National Day of Giving
- 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 13 National Unity Day
- 14 National Wreaths Across America Day
- RCLS Students Sing in Church
- 17 Wright Brothers Day
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas Day
- 28 Holy Innocents Day
- Pastor's Last Sunday
- 31 New Years' Eve



This is the season This is the reason

