

# The Visitor

December 2018

St. John's Lutheran Church ELCA • 2190 Jackson Hwy Chehalis, WA 98532  
www.stjohnschehalis.net • 360/748-4741 • office@stjohnschehalis.net

## Miracle vs Magic

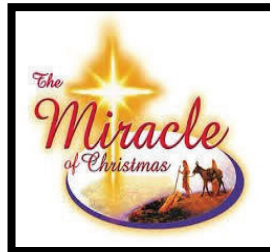


Middle school youth and I were discussing the meaning of Communion and I asked the kids, "What is the difference between a miracle and magic?"

Their answer: A miracle is something amazing that is real, magic is something amazing that is a trick.

Communion is something amazing that is real. Pulling a rabbit out of a hat is something amazing that is a trick. Authentic Christian community is something amazing that is real. Putting up with someone for the sake of getting along is something amazing that's a trick.

Christmas is a miracle that creates real community among people who are used to the magic of just getting along. Real community doesn't pretend that differences don't exist for the magic



of good feelings; real community challenges us to see the other through the eyes of Christ — to see them as truly human.

The real on any street is not the music or decorations or entertainment that creates the temporary magic of Christmas. The real miracle is found in the baby born in Bethlehem in normal everyday circumstances to a couple of no-name people from a backwater town called Nazareth. The real Miracle

is that we find that baby active in the everyday normal lives of people on your street.

This Christmas, I pray that we will experience the magic of Christmas because magic is fun and temporarily feels good. I pray more fervently that we will experience the miracle of Christmas because the miracle is real and changes lives and community forever.

*Pastor Matt*

## St. John's Women's Ministries

The Annual Christmas Smorgasbord will be held on Sunday, December 9. The afternoon begins with the children performing "Journey to Bethlehem" at 4:00 pm in the church sanctuary. The children's program will be followed by dinner for all ages beginning at 5:00 pm in the community center. Each family unit is asked to bring one hot dish or salad to share and a dozen cookies. Please RSVP on the

sign-up sheet in the narthex so we plan enough seating. If you are willing to decorate a table for this event, please indicate this on the sign-up sheet.

Following dinner there will be entertainment for all.

The annual Women's Advent Event will be held on Monday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Please bring one dozen cookies to share as we gather for an advent program and prepare ourselves for

Christmas. This event will be in place of our Saturday Women's Brunch and Bible Study for December.

Women's Book Guild will meet on Tues. December 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Susan Russell. Cori Jo Duncan will lead the discussion on *Kind is the New Classy* by Candance Cameron Buie. If you are interested in joining our group, contact Joan Jahnsen, 360-748-3901

### St. John's Lutheran Church Statement of Mission:

Rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we exist to:

- **PROCLAIM** God's unconditional love as an invitation to all,
- **GROW** in discipleship as we follow in Jesus' steps, and
- **SERVE** others as instruments of God's Holy Spirit.

St. John's  
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360/748-4741  
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Minister of Music:  
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748-3901  
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Office Hours:  
Monday - Thursday  
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Editor:  
Linda Lowery

### Worship Schedule:

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:00 a.m. Worship

### Summer Worship Schedule:

- One Worship Service at 9:45 a.m.

## What's in the Works . . .

St. John's Council met on November 13. Here are a few notes about what we're working on.

Thanks to all of our committees who meet monthly to keep our church running smoothly.

### Altar Guild

- Paraments will be changing for Christ the King Sunday (white) and then again for Advent (blue)
- Poinsettias are being ordered.

### Church Growth:

- Consider writing a devotion for the Lenten Devotional. Topics will be out soon!
- This committee is also looking for new members.

### Financial Review:

Monthly income October: \$14,886  
Monthly expenses October: \$19,297

	Actual
YTD income:	\$188,163
YTD expenses:	\$202,133

### Worship Attendance:

	<u>8:30</u>	<u>11:00</u>
November 4	70	31
November 11	90	27
November 18	78	34
November 25	65	27

## Bits and Pieces

### New Addresses:

Jim and Joan Jahnsen  
461 Pennsylvania Ave  
Chehalis, WA 98532  
360-748-3901

### Social Ministry

- The Giving Tree is up. The focus this year is on children. Please take a tag and help make Christmas special for someone.
- This committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:00 pm. We are looking for some new members.

### Worship & Music

- The children's Sunday School program will be on December 9 at 4:00 pm followed by the Smorgasbord.
- We have been working on planning for Advent and looking ahead to planning for Lent

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Jim and Joan Jahnsen  
461 Pennsylvania Ave  
Chehalis, WA 98532  
360-748-3901

Jordan and Cori Jo Duncan  
461 Pennsylvania Ave  
Chehalis, WA 98532

Mike and Katie Guliano  
71 SE Fairview Drive  
Chehalis, WA 98532

# December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>Wednesday's Together!</i>            4:15 p.m. Kids of the Kingdom            (No KOK on December 26)            4:30 p.m. St. John's Knitting Ministry            5:30 p.m. Dinner is Served – <b>All are welcome!</b></p>						<p><b>1</b>            12:00 p.m.            Birthday Party</p>
<p><b>2</b>            8:30 a.m. Worship            9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Confirmation Class            Adult Study            11:00 a.m. Worship            5:00 p.m. Webelos Scout Troop #373  <i>First Sunday of Advent</i></p>	<p><b>3</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            1:00 p.m. Bible Study            3:30 p.m. Girls Basketball            6:00 p.m. Social Ministry            7:00 p.m. Youth and Family</p>	<p><b>4</b>            9:30 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship Leaders            3:30 p.m. Soccer Practice            5:30 p.m. Property Committee            5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center            7:00 p.m. Church Growth</p>	<p><b>5</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            9:30 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship            4:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday's Together</i> (see schedule)            6:30 p.m. Advent Service</p>	<p><b>6</b>            3:30 p.m. Soccer Practice            5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center</p>	<p><b>7</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            3:00 p.m. Homeschool Sporting Activities            Pastor Matt's Day Off            Office Closed</p>	<p><b>8</b></p>
<p><b>9</b>            8:30 a.m. Worship            9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Confirmation Class            Adult Study            11:00 a.m. Worship            4:00 p.m. Children's Christmas Program            5:00 p.m. Annual Christmas Smorgasbord</p>	<p><b>10</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            1:00 p.m. Bible Study            3:30 p.m. Girls Basketball            6:00 p.m. Social Ministry            7:00 p.m. Women's Advent Event</p>	<p><b>11</b>            9:30 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship Leaders            11:30 a.m. Women's Lunch Bunch at Denny's            3:30 p.m. Soccer Practice            5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center            6:00 p.m. Mutual Ministry            6:30 p.m. Church Council</p>	<p><b>12</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            9:30 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship            4:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday's Together</i> (see schedule)            6:30 p.m. Advent Service</p>	<p><b>13</b>            3:30 p.m. Soccer Practice            5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center</p>	<p><b>14</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            3:00 p.m. Homeschool Sporting Activities            Pastor Matt's Day Off            Office Closed  <b>Visitor Deadline</b></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>
<p><b>16</b>            8:30 a.m. Worship            9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Confirmation Class            Adult Study            11:00 a.m. Worship            5:00 p.m. Webelos Scout Troop #373</p>	<p><b>17</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            1:00 p.m. Bible Study            3:30 p.m. Girls Basketball</p>	<p><b>18</b>            9:30 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship Leaders            3:30 p.m. Soccer Practice            5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center            7:00 p.m. Book Guild at the home of Susan Russell</p>	<p><b>19</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            9:30 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship            4:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday's Together</i> (see schedule)            6:30 p.m. Advent Service</p>	<p><b>20</b>            12:00 p.m. Young At Heart</p>	<p><b>21</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            3:00 p.m. Homeschool Sporting Activities            Pastor Matt's Day Off            Office Closed</p>	<p><b>22</b></p>
<p><b>23</b>            8:30 a.m. Worship            9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Confirmation Class            Adult Study            11:00 a.m. Worship            5:00 p.m. Webelos Scout Troop #373</p>	<p><b>24</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            11:00 a.m. Altar Guild            1:00 p.m. Bible Study            3:30 p.m. Girls Basketball            7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service            10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service</p>	<p><b>25</b>  <i>Merry and Blessed Christmas</i></p>	<p><b>26</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            9:30 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship            4:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday's Together</i> (see schedule)</p>	<p><b>27</b>            3:30 p.m. Soccer Practice            5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center            7:00 p.m. Men's Evening Bible Study</p>	<p><b>28</b>            8:00 a.m. Women's Exercise Group            3:00 p.m. Homeschool Sporting Activities            Pastor Matt's Day Off            Office Closed</p>	<p><b>29</b>            10:00 a.m. Mobile Meals at Gather in Centralia</p>
<p>Pastor Matt on vacation through January 2</p>						
<p><b>30</b>            8:30 a.m. Worship            9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Confirmation Class            Adult Study            11:00 a.m. Worship            5:00 p.m. Webelos Scout Troop #373</p>	<p><b>31</b>  <i>Happy New Year</i></p>					

★For up to date calendar information, visit our website, [www.stjohnschehalis.net](http://www.stjohnschehalis.net) and click on the “News” tab ★

## December Celebrations

### Birthdays

1 Craig Mitchell  
4 Jan Cosser  
5 Ann Salzer  
Sam Teitzel  
6 Chuck Ziegert  
8 Michael Thomas  
9 Candice Tobin  
10 Jim Gilliland  
13 Anna Kreutz  
14 Luanna Deming  
15 Bruce Graham  
Linda Lowery  
Andrew Michal  
16 Courtney Cox  
17 Jack Cosser  
18 Allen Unzelman  
19 Lincoln Duncan  
20 Sara Shelton  
Lynette Gage  
Kellen Justice  
Lauri Kreutz

24 Keith Birchard  
Mary DuBois  
28 Brynne Bailey  
Katrin Kreutz  
30 Katrina Kirsch  
Pastor Matthew March  
31 Travis Newman

### Anniversaries

8 Joann and Bill Hulse  
30 Mindy and Jon Judd  
Nancy and Wally Jordan  
Cathy and John Torvik  
31 Pat and Al Soderquist

### Baptism Anniversaries

2 Heidi Meier  
4 Mariah Unzelman  
9 Michael Grega  
10 Steve Kostanich  
12 Steve Dean  
15 Bob, Jan & Dave Cosser  
Kathryn & Russ Cox  
16 Nathan Suhrbier

17 Barbara Grega  
20 Ann Salzer  
21 Ben Suhrbier  
22 Jackson Humphrey  
Rachel March  
23 Zach Stanfield  
Johnathan Vlach  
26 Jamison Scott  
27 Ashleigh Cox  
31 Katie Meier

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, let us know! Call the church office at 748-4741 or e-mail: [office@stjohnschehalis.net](mailto:office@stjohnschehalis.net).

## Giving to Support St. John's

As a church we encourage those who are part of the St. John's family give to the work of our congregation. We believe you should not feel burdened by the issue of giving but in fact, find it a joy! We are pleased to provide e-giving options as an alternative to giving cash and

checks in the offering plate (your cash and checks are always welcome!).

- **Mobile Phone:** Scan the QR code provided here to access our mobile giving site and follow the prompts.
- **Our Website** – on your computer, go to [www.stjohnschehalis.net](http://www.stjohnschehalis.net)

[stjohnschehalis.net](http://stjohnschehalis.net) and click on the “donate” button.

- **Online Banking** – Arrange to give through bill-pay at your own bank's website.



St. John's Altar Guild has fresh cedar, holly (both regular and variegated) and pine-cones for sale in the church narthex beginning December 2-16. The greens are great for your home decorating projects or as gifts for family and friends). Cost is \$1.00 per package for cedar and holly. Packaged pinecones are 50 cents.



## So Now What?

By *ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton*



October marked the 501st anniversary of the Reformation.

Last year it was all Reformation all the time. It was our year!

News, media and the public paid attention. Hundreds of Reformation-themed events took place. Documentaries were produced and joyful liturgies with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters were held. I have lost track of the number of “Flat Luther” photos that were taken. We walked with a spring in our step. We read Martin Luther’s Small Catechism together. Even Lutherans in parts of the U.S. where Lutherans are not dense were noticed!

But the spotlight has dimmed, the public and the media have turned their eye to other things. Reformation 500 swag has taken up residence in the backs of closets and the bottoms of file drawers. And, I’d wager, our Small Catechisms sit alone and unopened on shelves and apps. This really is Oct. 32.

But, dear church, now is the time for us to refocus our attention on the gospel of our freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation given to us through God’s indescribable act of love in the

death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Take out your Small Catechism and take a fresh look at Luther’s clear and concise exposition of the faith.

To start, turn to Luther’s explanation of the second article of the Apostles’ Creed. In beautifully spare language, he lays out the truth about God and human nature: “I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also a true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.”

Two things jump out—the God of all creation, infinite and omnipotent, set aside all of that to become finite and helpless as the Christ child and the broken one on the cross, and this Jesus is Lord. There are many things that claim our attention and allegiance, but none of these can save us and none of these is Lord.

Luther continues: “He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned human being.” He had a conservative and realistic assessment of humankind. Yes, we affirm with the psalmist that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), but it is also clear that we are seriously and terminally broken. We are a rebellious lot constantly rising up against God’s good and gracious will and trying to set ourselves up as savior. This never ends well. And while there is pain in acknowledging that we are sinful, there is also freedom

in confessing that truth.

Here’s the thing: we have to get past a kind of Billy Joel theology in which God sings “I Like You Just the Way You Are” to the realization that God does not like us just the way we are and in infinite love has done something about it. In Christ, Luther wrote, God has “purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.”

Here is pure grace. It is God’s action, not ours. We don’t have to—in fact, we cannot—do anything to save ourselves or the world. God has done it.

So now what? So now we live, really live, in freedom and in service. Luther wrote: “He has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally.”

This is what the world needs to see in us and hear from us—not a vindictive, capricious god who must be appeased, nor a purveyor of therapeutic moralism, but an all-powerful God who comes to us in humble human form to set us free from our murderous rebellion so we may be whole, holy and wholly devoted to joyful service.

This is most certainly true.

# Poinsettias for the Sanctuary

St. John's Altar Guild members are asking for your help in decorating the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas Services. Poinsettias will be used to decorate the sanctuary and are available through the Altar Guild for \$9 each. Poinsettias can be given in honor or memory of a loved one, or given to the

glory of God. You are welcome to bring your own poinsettia (mark your name on the bottom and take it home after Christmas services). To donate toward the purchase of a poinsettia, fill out the form below and give it, along with the money for the poinsettias, to any Altar Guild member, or mail the form to the church

office by **December 22**. Please make checks out to St. John's Altar Guild.

Altar Guild members are Jan Cosser, Gail Dean, Mary DuBois, Marilyn Fenn, Joann Hulse, Nancy Lynch, Patty Olsen, Mary Rogers, Diane Rudorfer and Linda Young.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to donate # \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettias at \$9.00 each. Total amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

To the Glory of God

I will provide a poinsettia



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