

# Cross Lutheran Church Proclamation December 2019

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Sunday Education at 9:00am    Sunday Worship at 10:00am  
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## “A Man in a Red Suit or a Baby in a Manger?”

Every year at this time Christians find themselves pulled in two different directions. There is the worldly understanding of Christmas as little more than a winter break with the opportunity to give and receive gifts from one another under the guise of the gifts being given by an old man in a red suit. And then there is the Christian understanding; a celebration of the giving of the greatest gift in history, Jesus born a babe in Bethlehem; and a forward look towards Christ’s return. Two different symbols of the season – a man in a red suit and a baby in a manger.

Not too long ago Starr and I were at a Christian bookstore and we came upon a figurine that had Santa Claus kneeling at the manger. It turns out that this image has been around for some time now, but we hadn’t seen it before and so we started talking about it. Did we like it? What did we think about the blending of the two images? Is it a “theologically” appropriate image? According to the store manager it had caused controversy for him as well; he had the figurine in the store window until someone complained loudly about it and he took it out.

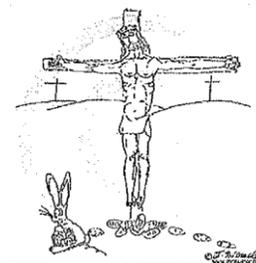


When Starr first pointed it out to me I cringed. I didn’t like the image at all (nor did she). We simply saw it as another way that culture tries to water down the true meaning of Christmas. After all, if you can make Santa and Jesus interchangeable then Christians will eventually see Santa and Jesus as the same thing with the same meaning.

But, as our conversation continued, we thought that that maybe it wasn’t actually such a bad image. After all, Santa is kneeling to baby Jesus. That image of the secular and materialistic approach to Christmas is kneeling in worship to the Son of God. That, at least to us, seemed to place the proper perspective on the issue. However – does that mean that Santa has been around forever? Or at least that he lived before the Christ child was born? Hmmm, of course there has always been God’s way and our way. If Santa represents more than just Christmas but also our rebellion against God’s way, then it’s true that Santa has existed as long as people have.

That, however, places Santa in a very negative light. I’ve always enjoyed the story of St. Nicholas from whom the Santa Claus tradition grew. St. Nicholas was a bishop in the early church (around 300 AD) who inherited a lot of money from his parents when they died. He was known for secretly giving gifts of money to the poor. Saint Nicholas’ name changed over the centuries and the Dutch eventually knew him as Sinterklass, which became, in English, Santa Claus. For St. Nick, and for modern Christians, gift giving is an outward sign of our loving response to God’s great gift to us.

So; is Santa, at least originally, a symbol of humanity’s rebellion against God and God’s hope for us? Or is he a symbol of our loving response to God? Regardless of the answer to where Santa comes from; is he in competition to our celebrating Christmas as Christians? Is it better that we place him at Jesus’ feet or in opposition to him? All of us respond to images differently. Maybe Starr and I over-analyze them just a bit☺. But as each of you enter into this season I would invite you to consider the images you use to symbolize Christmas. Do those images reflect your faith? Do they uplift God and the great gift God has given us?



Do they water down the message of Christ? Would a stranger walking into your home immediately know that you worship the One, True God? Or would they think you worship the material world?

In the end, for Starr and I, we both decided we didn't like the figurine. We just can't put Santa and Jesus into the same image. Starr put it best for both of us when she said it would be just like having the Easter bunny hopping around a cross and hiding eggs in the empty tomb.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Doug*

### **Worship:**

**Holy Communion:** Holy Communion will continue to be offered every Sunday. We need your help to serve as communion assistants and Altar Guild. Please see Sue Genz to volunteer to help.

**Worship Team:** If you would like to serve on the Worship Team, please let Pastor Doug or Sue Genz know.

*We would like to use baked bread on Sundays when possible. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex to bring bread if you would so choose.*

**Dear Cross friends ,**

**Thank you to all the readers for participating in the thank offering Sunday and to Sandy West for her wonderful sermon!**

**We collected \$237.41 and again I'm reminded how grateful I am to belong to a little church that gives with a big heart. Thank you all for your donations. I will send a check from the women's account to Women of the ELCA towards the Thank offering giving!**

**Enjoy the holidays and just like my children's sermon let us be happy with what we have and not want more of things we don't need. Amen**

**God's blessing - Tammy Ninmann**

### **Education:**

#### **Adult Education:**

*Wednesday morning we will gather from 9:30 – 11:00 at Zion, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of December. There will be no Adult Education on Christmas Day. Class will resume on January 8<sup>th</sup>.*

*Thursday evenings we will gather from 6:00 – 7:30 at Cross, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of December. There will be no Class on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

Members of either church are welcome at both gatherings so please come to whichever best suits your schedule – or both! At Cross we are doing a text study on Sunday's readings for the week.

**Confirmation class:** We will be meeting every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday from 5:30- 7:00.

**Sunday school:** Our Christmas Program will be December 15<sup>th</sup>. Zion will also be joining us here at Cross on that day, so it should be a festive celebration. Coffee hour that day will be a potluck...bring in your favorite Holiday treats.

## **Serving:**

**Endowment committee:** The next meeting will be January 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Ixonia School:** Please continue to bring in your BoxTops for Education for the school.

**Ixonia Food Pantry:** Since Mary has moved, we've lost our Church Pantry coordinator, if anyone is interested in taking up this role please let the office know. Also the Pantry is in need of volunteers, if you have the heart and the time please consider serving the community at the pantry. Otherwise, you can still help by donating canned and boxed goods this holiday season. From our church they have requested specifically Jello and pudding products. We will be Thank you!!!

**Family Promise:** This month the dates for family promise are December 15-22<sup>nd</sup>. There is a sign-up sheet located in the narthex for donating food items. Please sign up and bless those in need!!! Also, there will be a volunteer training at the Day Center on December 5 at 10 AM. The trainings last about 1 1/2-2 hours.

The Day Center is located 543 A J Allen Cir D, Wales

## **Leadership:**

**Church Council:** Council will meet on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **Fellowship:**

**Friends of Cross Lunch** will be held at Café LaBelle on Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. Come and be fed with good food and light conversation! All are welcome!

**Coffee Hour** There is a new sign up sheet out on the table, please sign up to host.

**Cross Book Club** The next book club meeting is to be determined.

**Coffee Shop conversation** with Pastor Doug. Come and have casual conversations to get to know Pastor Doug. He will be at Whelan's the first three weeks of this month. He will not be there on November 29<sup>th</sup>, December 27<sup>th</sup>, or January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Christmas Program:** After the Children's Christmas Program we will be having a little celebration as part of coffee hour all are invited to share a tray of their favorite Christmas treats.

## **Maintenance:**

**Carpet/Interior work.** The Decorating Committee is comprised of Elmo Wendorf, Cathy Stein, and Terri Watermolen.

**This month we finished up the recovering of the pew benches. The Church now looks wonderful!!! Thank you the all who helped!!! A Special Thanks goes to Elmo and Pastor for all of their heavy lifting, thank you!**

Please contact Kurt or Brian if you can help with maintenance work on the parsonage or church.

Kurt: 262-490-2362 or [kketcham@wi.rr.com](mailto:kketcham@wi.rr.com)

Brian: 920-988-4949 or [trs@netwurx.net](mailto:trs@netwurx.net)

## Upcoming Events:

- December 4<sup>th</sup> Confirmation Class
- December 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Adult Education at Cross
- December 10<sup>th</sup> Church Council meeting
- December 15<sup>th</sup> Christmas Program
- December 15-22<sup>nd</sup> Family Promise
- December 18<sup>th</sup> Friends of Cross Lunch at 11:00 am
- December 18<sup>th</sup> Youth and Youth Volunteers Christmas Party 5:30 p.m.
- December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas eve service at 6:00 pm

## Worship Assistants

**This Month's Worship Assistant Calendar will be printed next week after the Worship Team Meeting.**

The Office emails: [pastor@crosslutheranchurch.com](mailto:pastor@crosslutheranchurch.com) and [office@crosslutheranchurch.com](mailto:office@crosslutheranchurch.com)

Pastor Doug's number: (262) 490- 8737

Pastor Doug's office hours: Tuesday mornings and all day on Thursdays

Adeline will be in the office on Thursday Mornings

### 2019 council members:

(Financial Secretary) Angie Thrane: [althrane22@gmail.com](mailto:althrane22@gmail.com) Cell: 414-841-8009

(Vice President) Barb Nyland: [bnylandtuss@gmail.com](mailto:bnylandtuss@gmail.com) Cell: 920-390-9054

Beverly Paulsberg: [biffpaulsberg@hotmail.com](mailto:biffpaulsberg@hotmail.com) Home: 920-474-4972 Cell: 920-988-5838

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(Treasurer) Stan Jaeger: [sjaeger1@wi.rr.com](mailto:sjaeger1@wi.rr.com) Cell: 414-745-4979

(Recording Secretary) Terri Watermolen: [twatermolen@gmail.com](mailto:twatermolen@gmail.com) Cell: 414-614-9243