

Iowa District West



Human Care

DECEMBER 2009

“Are You Ready for the Holidays?” (by Pr. Asmus)

A while back, I received an e-mail devotion from one of my parishioners entitled, “Are You Ready for the Holidays?” by Van Walton. May you be blessed in the message it brings.

How many times have you been asked lately, “Are you ready for the holidays?” What does that mean exactly? Usually the answer that follows is a long list of to-do’s before Christmas Day. So much needs to get done before Christmas Day...baking, sending Christmas cards, buying and wrapping gifts, hiding presents from the

children till Santa comes, delivering gifts to neighbors, choir practice, Christmas program practice, preparing for guests, getting ready to travel, house cleaning, and of course decorating.

I wonder if Jesus were making a holiday preparations list, what would He include? What if those who were there on that first Christmas Day would advise us, what would they say should be on our list?

*“But in your hearts...
set apart Christ
as Lord.”*

(1 Peter 3:15)

Joseph might recommend that we listen closely to the voice of God to prepare (our hearts).

Mary might suggest we ponder the miracles of heaven.

The angels might propose that we sing anthems praising our King.

The shepherds may gently guide us to follow their act of worship.

The wise men might just want to teach us what the most valuable gifts really are and how we can give them to the Lord.

The innkeeper probably would tell us how important it is to make room for Jesus in our heart and home and to practice hospitality.

And Jesus...He encourages us to be His light on a stand pointing the way for others to know Him.

May God guide you to cut out the distractions that don’t really matter, so that you may focus on what really does matter. Let’s not forget why we celebrate. He’s the Reason we celebrate the season! Joy!

Cuckoo for Cocoa (from Better Health—Concordia Plan Services)

Hot cocoa not only warms your body, but it also helps your brain! Researchers at Cornell University found that the antioxidant content of two tablespoons of pure cocoa

powder is almost two times stronger than red wine; 2-3 times stronger than green tea; and 4-5 times stronger than that of black tea.

The antioxidants in hot cocoa protect brain cells from oxidative stress (when the supply of the body’s antioxidants is insufficient to handle and neutralize free radicals) that can lead to Alzheimer’s and other disorders. Be mindful, however, that most hot cocoa mixes contain plenty of sugar, and that will add calories to your drink, as also will those little marshmallows we like to use for toppings. Enjoy anyway!



Building Healthy Families (Lutheran Family Service of Iowa)

Men and women in the military sacrifice a lot that many of us take for granted, including day-to-day activities with families, special occasions (birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc.). Think of the families you know with members deployed this Christmas. Pray for them and their families. Reach out to them. Let them know they are cared for, especially during times of separation.

To be the best parent you can be, take care of yourself. Get your flu shots. Get enough sleep at night. Sometimes in managing the details of our busy lives, it's easier to take care of everyone else than ourselves. God calls us to find refreshment and rest in Him. That, my friends, is the best Christmas gift of all! Joy and Peace!



If you or someone you know has domestic issues, special concerns, or might be interested in international adoption, please invite them to call. Lutheran Family Service of Iowa has offices that serve our Iowa District West, located in Des Moines, Fort Dodge, and Sioux City. To contact them for help in times of need, just call their toll free number: 800-622-7285

For your questions or comments, contact:

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“A Life Quote” (from *Lutherans for Life—“LifeDate”* Fall 2009)

What if John the Baptist were preaching in today's world? What would he say? How would he answer the question, “What then shall we do?” (Luke 3:10) Today's fruit of repentance might include: honor Biblical

marriage; remain sexually pure; welcome children instead of aborting them; care for the infirm rather than killing them. Boldly speak God's truth for life, but do so in love.

For more such quotes, issues, and answers, go to www.lutheransforlife.org.

A Prayer for you at Your Table

Dear Father, we ask You to bless this family with a warm place by the fire when the world is cold; a light in the window when the way is dark; a welcoming smile when the road is long; a haven of love when the day is done, a sense of joy and peace in Your Son.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our Guest. Let these gifts to us be blest.

Oh give thanks to the LORD. For HE is good and His mercy endures forever. Amen.

