

# **ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE**

## ***Topical Bulletin, December 2021***

This coming December 25<sup>th</sup> is once again the Christmas holiday on which we recognize and honor the birth of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the appropriate topic for this month's bulletin is: **Why we should certainly celebrate Christ's birth.** As usual, all Scripture quotes are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version.

To celebrate Christ's birth is surely right since the Son of God, Jesus Christ, took upon Himself a human nature and was born into this world for an important reason, for He says: **"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."** (John 12:46-48)

*Comment: Every naturally conceived human being is by nature in the darkness of sin and unbelief, because if we are honest we must all confess, as did David the Psalmist, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5) Such inherited corruption leads to all manner of actual sins in thoughts, words and deeds, which is why Holy Writ relates, "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psalm 14:2-3) And, "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble." (Proverbs 4:19) Note well that God's Word is clear: every naturally conceived human being is in spiritual darkness before conversion and NEEDS JESUS CHRIST, the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, who is THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD; for, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:9-10) Think of it: Jesus Christ is the propitiation – the atoning sacrifice – for our sins! Hence, we should certainly celebrate Christ's birth!*

We all need to recognize we are sinners in dire need of Jesus Christ the Savior, for He says: **"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."** (Luke 5:32)

*Comment: Those who think they are righteous in God's sight by means of their own works or their family heritage are dead wrong; for, "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isaiah 64:6) "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:19-20) John the Baptist laid the truth on some pompous, self-righteous folks, who trusted in their works and their family heritage; for Holy Writ relates, "when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And*

think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. (Matthew 3:7-9) Hence, *self-righteousness does NOT meet the demands of the high and holy God who says, "Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy."* (Leviticus 19:2) *God NEVER says, "just do your best and that's good enough for Me."* No, God commands and demands **PERFECTION!**

**"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:17-19)**

*Comment: Faith in Jesus Christ – the Light of the world – as one's personal Savior and Lord is an absolute necessity, if one would be saved; for it is written, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36) God's Word is crystal clear!*

**"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:38-40)**

*Comment: Jesus – the eternal, only begotten Son of God – took upon Himself a real human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary and was born into the world that He might keep God's Law perfectly for us and pay for our lack of keeping God's Law. Indeed, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:5-11) So, it is vital to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!*

**"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)**

**"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with**

**justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”  
(Isaiah 9:6-7)**

**“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matthew 1:18-23)**

*Comment: Jesus Christ is true man and true God, the one true Savior of the whole world. Jesus had to be true man in order to take OUR place under the Law, and in order to be able to suffer and die FOR US. Jesus had to be true God in order that His perfect fulfilling of the Law might be sufficient for ALL people, and that His blood might be sufficient ransom for the redemption of ALL people, and that He might be able to overcome death and the devil FOR US; “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21) “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.” (Hebrews 7:26-28) Jesus Christ is the one true Savior of the world— the PERFECT HIGH PRIEST AND THE PERFECT SACRIFICE for ALL the sins of ALL people. Hence, we should certainly celebrate Christ's birth!*

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”  
(Romans 6:23)**

*Comment: Our sins earn us temporal death and never-ending death in hell. But thankfully, eternal life has been gained for us by Christ, who has paid for all of our sins in full with His own holy and precious blood that He shed while nailed to the cross of Calvary. “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:19) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17) “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17) Yes, it's by God's power that people come to believe on Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) **THUS, ETERNAL LIFE IS TRULY A GIFT OF GOD THROUGH OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.***

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)**

**“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)**

**“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1:8-10)**

*Comment: Jesus Christ is not just A WAY to God and heaven; JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY to God and heaven! Therefore, we ALL need to daily and sincerely repent of our sins and cling to Christ in heart-deep faith, for Jesus Christ is our ONLY Deliverer from never-ending doom! Jesus Christ is the ONLY Source of salvation! Jesus Christ IS THE GREATEST GIFT of all! **Accordingly, we should certainly celebrate Christ's birth!** Yes, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4) Indeed, let us always remember that Christmas is first and foremost about CHRIST. All praise, honor and glory be to our beautiful Savior, the only true Savior, JESUS CHRIST— for, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)*

Have a blessed, Christ-centered Christmas!

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