



Wait for the revealing of  
our Lord Jesus Christ.

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# The Reporter

## January 2020

The Reporter

Volume 18, Issue 01

### “Perfected Vision”

by Pastor Proeber

On New Year’s Day there was an intriguing cartoon in the News-Press. If you read the comics, you might have seen it. The strip was “Mutts.” The two main characters—a dog and a cat—were sitting on top of a rock. Both were looking over the horizon. The cat said, “I can see great things for the year.” To which the dog queried, “You can?” The cat replied, “Yesh,” as he looked at the rising sun and the clear sky. The last frame has the cat saying, “It’s my 2020 vision.”

I had to chuckle as I read and thought about it. It was so simple, yet so meaningful. Think about it. The great vision for the new year was the simplest of things in life. For the cat in “Mutts,” the 2020 vision for the year was watching the sun rise. What a lesson as we advance into a new year and a new decade.

I’m sure many of us probably have wondered what 2020 will have in store. While the specifics are veiled, there are some things we know will likely happen. There will be joy and disappointment. There will be success and failure. There will be challenges and victories. There will be new experiences and the mundane. There will be the ordinary and the extraordinary. The comparisons and the contrasts are things of which we can be certain. The specific details are filled in as we go along. So, how do we measure a year? What is our perfect vision? What will make 2020 great?

It is easy to place our hopes, dreams, and expectations on what we see around us. Our experiences often develop and nuance our perceptions. Unfortunately, this form of measurement will often bring disappointment. It seems even more unlikely to form a perspective from a comic strip. Yet, we can learn some valuable lessons from this simple vision.

Recall the cat’s perspective. He can see great things—the sun rising and the start of a new day. How often don’t we take this for granted! How often do we really pay attention to a sunset? How often do we take the time to contemplate the countless jewels sparkling in the evening sky? In every day occurrences we see something beyond amazing—God’s control and his incomparable mercy.

Nature is one of the great reminders of God’s goodness to us. When we view the simplest acts of nature from God’s perspective, it is astounding. Recall the promise the Lord gave Noah upon his exit from the ark—“While the earth remains, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22). What does this tell us? Isn’t it a testimony to God’s mercy and control. Day and night, seasons, time itself doesn’t operate by itself. God didn’t wind it up and let it go on its own. God is not a blind watchmaker! He is intensely involved with every aspect of the world around us. He is controlling, intervening, and overseeing all the time. A simple sunrise or sunset does not happen without him giving the command or exercising his power to keep it in perfect order.

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If this is how God watches over creation, his care for each of us is even more awe-inspiring. Still, there is the temptation to think I am in control. I am responsible for myself. I alone have the power to make things happen in my life. This is the philosophy of the world, and frankly, it excludes God. If I am the master of my own destiny, where does that put the Lord? We can look at it from a slightly different perspective. If I am the master of my own destiny, where does that put me? What can I really accomplish if I am blind, powerless, evil, immature, and lacking in wisdom? There may be some successes and achievements, but if God withdrew his oversight, what would life really look like? We couldn't begin to describe how dark, dreary, and desolate our lives would be. This is why 20-20 vision is needed.

Perfect vision is a gift to be treasured. Perfect vision in regard to the Lord is even more precious, yet sometimes we need correction. We can be far-sighted and lose sight of all the blessings God has prepared for us in the here and now. The temptation is to say, "what have you done for me lately." We can also become near-sighted and not appreciate the greatest of all blessings which are ready and waiting for us in heaven. This is why I would like to make the suggestion we strive for "perfected vision."

I suppose perfected vision could be a synonym for corrected vision. Consider this, however. Perfected vision is not simply seeing the blessings of today, tomorrow, or even eternity, it is seeing them through the magnifying glass of God's undeserved love in Jesus. Recall the words of the apostle James—<sup>17</sup>Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the lights, who does not change or shift like a shadow (*James 1:17*). This is a "loaded passage." Everything for our good comes from God. Paul reminds us of the very same promise in Romans—<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose; <sup>31</sup>What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him (*Romans 8:28, 31-32*)? Still, if we describe what God does for us as only being "good," we have lost sight of what he really does for us. His good works are perfect, namely complete in every way. They are just the right thing, in just the right amount, at just the right time, to be a blessing for us throughout our life. This is a perfect gift, and it is what our Lord graciously gives.

This is why we want to strive for "perfected vision." We want to see everything as a complete gift from God who has wholly committed himself to us in undeserved love. It really does change our perspective. No longer are we stuck on what we have or don't have. No longer are we driven by our desire to have more, bigger, and better. No longer do we complain about the unfairness we see in life. Perfected vision sees first a loving Lord who by every right never had any obligation to do anything for us. Perfected vision also humbly recognizes that when we have Jesus in our life we have everything we need—today, tomorrow and for eternity.

So, how does 2020 look? Disappointing? Pretty good? Shaping up to be perfect? It might be hard to say because we are only a few days into the new year. On the other hand, we can conclude 2020 will be a great year. We can say this with complete confidence because we look at the new year with perfected vision. With that, we see a Lord who has loved us in the past, and will always love us. We see a Lord who responded to our needs in the past, and will always be present to help us. We finally see a Lord who has always been there for us, and will always be present.



## Christmas Decorating and Caroling

by Al Todd



Poinsettias

A small group of saints gathered in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 15th at 2:00 pm to set up Christmas decorations. We retrieved all the Christmas decorations from the attic above the east and west sacristies and the storage building. Then we laid out the ladders and tables needed to put together and install the decorations. These included the Christmas banner just above the altar, the Christmas Tree and all the ornaments, the garlands on the east and west side of the Nave and on the organ pipe platform at the back of the Nave, and the wreathes on the rafters and on the pillars at the entrance to the church. In addition, there is a second Christmas tree that is set up in the Fellowship Hall.

The decorating was completed in a couple of hours. After the empty boxes were returned to the attic and the storage building, the church was vacuumed and cleaned and all the lighting checked and tested. The manger display was set up just before the Christmas service and was not part of this decorating activity.

It was all very beautiful and a big “thank you” to the folks who pitched in to help. You are much appreciated.

After all was complete, we retired to the Fellowship Hall to enjoy some world class chili and other offerings that included all the usual fixings. We enjoyed the food and fellowship for about an hour. Then Christmas choir music was passed out to those who expressed a desire to serve the Lord and their neighbor by caroling during the evening meal at Wood Glen Hall.

After the caroling was ended at Wood Glen Hall everyone was invited to the Todd’s home for desserts and beverages. All in all, it was a very enjoyable afternoon and evening of service and fellowship.

## Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Touring Choir

This year, we will have the distinct privilege to host the choir from our Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin. The school is the final step in preparing pastors for future calls to serve in the public ministry. The choir is under direction of Professor James Tiefel. There are 48 voices in this choir, all of which are male. Unlike the other mixed voice choirs we have hosted and heard, the dynamics of an all male choir are genuinely unique.

The choir will be with us Tuesday, April 14th for a 7:00 pm concert. This will be a worthwhile event to invite friends and neighbors to hear the praises of God proclaimed in a memorable way.

With the hosting of the choir, there are some responsibilities for us as a congregation. On the afternoon they arrive, we will serve them a light supper. The time and plans for the meal are not critical at this time. However, we will be responsible for hosting 48 choir members and their director.

We would like to start making plans and arrangements now. We will be in need of people to host at least two members of the choir, if not more—space providing. The Council recognizes that we will not be able to house all the choir members in homes, so we are also planning to hold a block of rooms at either the Ramada or the Extended Stay.

What we need of everyone is:

- Willingness to host people in your home
- Generosity to offer a gift to cover some of the expenses
- Help with planning and serving the meal
- Commitment to attend the concert and invite guests

If you have any questions, or would like more information, please speak with Pastor Proeber.



## Ladies Christmas Fellowship

By Sonja Todd



The Ladies Annual Christmas Cookie Exchange was held at Karolyn Hanna's home on Tuesday, December 10, 2019. Fifteen people attended. Seven of those fifteen were guests. We had some very delicious cookies to exchange and regular food to eat as well.

We also had the usual gift exchange. Remember how it works? 1) you pick a number from 1-16 out of a basket and whoever gets number 1 goes first and so on; 2) the gift is then unwrapped and if # 2 likes # 1's gift, the person that picked # 2 can "steal" #1's gift and then number 1 gets to choose another gift; 3) if # 3 then steals # 2's gift, # 3 gets to keep that gift and take it home. Some people get gifts stolen and some just keep the original gift that they unwrapped. Everyone seemed to remain friends when it was all over!

If you missed this year's Christmas cookie exchange, please plan to attend next year. The fellowship with other Christian women is a special blessing as we share the joy of our savior Jesus Christ's birth and ponder the wonder of God's love.



## Outreach Opportunities

The Fellowship-Outreach Committee continues to sponsor events and provide opportunities for members to invite friends and relatives to Our Redeemer. Some events are conducted outside the formal worship service. There are also special worship services with food and fellowship afterwards. We hope these opportunities will encourage you to invite people you know to learn more about our church and to hear the message of Grace we proclaim. Please plan to participate, and to serve!

On Monday, January 13th, the committee will meet at 7:00 pm to finalize plans for 2020. There are always the “regularly scheduled” events and worship services, still the committee is interested in new opportunities and activities to add to our yearly outreach calendar. Some of the following are already in the works —

President’s Day Pizza and a Movie—February date to be determined  
 Midweek Lenten worship begins February 26th for 6 weeks  
 Palm Sunday is April 5th  
 Maundy Thursday is April 9th  
 Good Friday is April 10th  
 Easter Sunday is April 12th with the traditional breakfast following  
 April 14th is the Seminary Touring Choir Concert  
 July 4th is our patriotic movie, barbeque and fireworks  
 August 16th is the Beach, Bike and Barbeque at Goleta Beach  
 October 25rd is a Luther movie, dinner and fellowship  
 November 22nd is the pre-thanksgiving pot-luck  
 November 26th is Thanksgiving Day  
 December 13th is the church decorating day, chili dinner and caroling  
 December 24th & 25th are Christmas Eve / Day Worship with fellowship

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## January Birthdays



We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

3<sup>rd</sup> — Linda B.  
 5<sup>th</sup> — Jessica D.,  
           Marrissa H.  
 11<sup>th</sup> — David C.  
 14<sup>th</sup> — Karolyn H.  
 16<sup>th</sup> — Jim E.  
           Lucas S.  
 21<sup>st</sup> — Tiera S.

## Church Directory Update

Later this month, the process to revise the directory will take place. A template with names, addresses, phone numbers (cell and land lines), as well as birthdays will be put on a table. Please make necessary corrections through the month of January, so we can have all our information up to date. Thank you for your help in getting this completed in a timely manner.

## Notes & News

### Handbell Choir

After regular practices and playing for our Advent and Christmas worship services, the ringers took a couple of weeks off from practice. On January 20th, the 7:00 pm practices will resume in the fellowship hall.

We thank all those who gave of their time and efforts to be part of this unique ministry of music.

If you are interested in ringing in the New Year, please give prayerful consideration to participating in this special area of service to the Lord and Our Redeemer.

Please speak to Debbie following one of our Sunday worship services.

### Choir

Like its counterpart, the mixed voice choir also took a brief break following the new Year. We are thankful for the service they provide, and for the songs they prepared for our worship services.

Practice for Lent and Easter will begin Thursday, January 16th at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary. If you have ever thought about singing, come! New voices are always appreciated, and welcome.

### Wednesday Evening Bible Study

After a break for Advent and Christmas, mid-week Bible Class will resume until the beginning of Lent. Until that time the study on the Book of First Kings will continue.

In many ways this was a "dark time" in the history of Old Testament Israel. They were unfaithful to the Lord, and ignored his call to repent. Yet, even in their unfaithfulness, the Lord remained faithful to his promise. It is that faithfulness to which we turn our attention, and into which put our trust.

### Mid Week Lenten Worship

On February 26th we will begin a series of worship services which will conclude with Holy Week. This year we will follow the theme: "I Believe in Jesus Christ." It will offer a review of the precious truths contained in the Apostles Creed. In these precious and time-honored words, we confess that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man, and the perfect Savior God provided to take away the sins of the world.

**All the services will begin at 7:00 pm.**

### Sunday Morning Bible Class

As always there is a regularly scheduled class after the worship service. We are about half way through the study of Martin Luther's Christmas Book.

The book which is unfortunately out of print offers the unique perspective only Luther could offer. Topics covered have been —

The Annunciation

The Visitation

The Nativity

Topics yet to be covered are —

The Shepherds

King Herod

The Wise Men

The Presentation

It is not too late to attend the last four sessions. The last four studies reflect on how individuals responded to the good news of the Savior's birth.

### Sunday School

The Sunday School continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month.

We thank the Lord for the teachers who faithfully commit their time to teach our children God's Word. We also encourage our parents to use this valuable service to train their children in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord.





## Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?  
Event report? Potluck—gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to three pages  
Reviewed for scriptural consistency  
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Email to Carl Schueler (cfs\_home@hotmail.com)  
or Pastor Proeber (pastor@orlcsb.net)

***A simple and rewarding way to serve!***

Thanks to Al Todd and Sonja Todd for their articles; and to Pastor Proeber for his Christmas picture of the inside of the church.

There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, (spanning over 19 years) articles authored by members have really made each issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2020. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber, or Carl Schueler for advice. Thanks!

### Meetings for January

Church Council	Tuesday, January 7th at 7:00 pm
Committees	Tuesday, January 7th at 8:00 pm
Voters	<b>Sunday, January 12th after worship</b>
Outreach Committee	Tuesday, January 14th at 7:00 pm

*If you have a question regarding a specific area of ministry, please contact a member of the appropriate Board. He will be happy to help.*

## New Schedules

With the New Year, schedules have been prepared for various areas of service. We thank the Lord for all the people who step forward to serve in love and faithfulness. If you haven't already done so, please pick up the updated information for 2020. Schedules available are for ushers, for church cleaning, for placing flowers on the altar, and for preparing refreshments for our Sunday morning fellowship. In about a week there will be a schedule for mowing the church property.

If you haven't served in the past, and would like to do so in the future, please speak to one of the following people to have your name included.

- Ushers—Greg Grunewald
- Church cleaning—Al Todd
- Altar flowers—Sue Proeber
- Refreshments—Linda Williams
- Mowing—Jim Brown



## Devotional Corner

### The Small Details

"So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He [Jesus] will be called a Nazarene."  
Matthew 2:23

"Don't sweat the small stuff." While most people try to practice this philosophy, God doesn't. He pays very close attention to the small details. This becomes clearly apparent when I consider God's plan to rescue me and all people.

It would be easy to focus on only the big picture that Jesus died and rose again. Certainly this is true. Still, it would lack what some of the smaller details provide. Consider the simple words: "He will be called a Nazarene." It would be easy to dismiss this. However, the city in which Jesus lived his early life becomes important when I consider it in the context of what precedes it: "So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets."

Jesus' early life in Nazareth was recognized throughout his ministry. He received the title Jesus the prophet from Nazareth. He was known throughout Galilee and Judea as the Jesus the miracle worker from Nazareth. He was finally crucified under the sentence, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.

God's attention even to this small detail leads me to trust him. God is faithful in everything. Nothing escapes his divine attention or merciful care. So when I am struggling, burdened, or on the verge of despair, God knows and God provides the help I need. Even more important I have the assurance that my rescue is complete. God did not overlook or leave even the smallest detail to chance. So when Jesus said, "It is finished," everything that was promised and required was completed perfectly. The forgiveness of my sin, the freedom from death and the devil, the promise of life in heaven is certain - nothing was overlooked or left undone. Even the ability to trust that God has rescued me through Jesus has been given to me as a free gift of God's love.

All this leads me to rely on the peace, joy and undeserved love of God's merciful care. My confidence is the result of one simple truth. God pays attention to the small details.

#### Prayer

O gracious Lord, because you know and have all things in your control, give me the faith to trust in your care, and in the rescue you have provided through your Son, my Savior Jesus Christ.

Daily devotions can be accessed through [www.whataboutjesus.com](http://www.whataboutjesus.com) or [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net). Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as "podcasts."