

Christmas 2 1/5/14
Ephesians 1:3-14 A

IN HIM WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE, HAVING BEEN PREDESTINED ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKS ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL, SO THAT WE WHO WERE THE FIRST TO HOPE IN CHRIST MIGHT BE TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY. IN HIM YOU ALSO, WHEN YOU HEARD THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION, AND BELIEVED IN HIM, WERE SEALED WITH THE PROMISED HOLY SPIRIT, WHO IS THE GUARANTEE OF OUR INHERITANCE UNTIL WE ACQUIRE POSSESSION OF IT, TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.

What did you get for Christmas? That's the questioning you're hearing a lot these days.

So, let's get to the crucial question: What did you get for Christmas? I'm guessing you got some good things, some nice stuff: toys, new laptop, new clothes, a Wii, gift certificates, and, maybe, some cold, hard cash.

Want to know what I got for Christmas? Sure you do. Even if you don't, you know I'm going to tell you anyway. I got lots of good stuff. I got an Under Armour hoodie, because that's what all of us young people wear. I got a book -- you can tell we are a family of readers because we give each other books for Christmas. I got a tie, but not just any old tie, but a tie from St. Anthony's College at Oxford where Christian is studying. I received a very generous gift from the LWML, the congregation, and many of you remembered my family, as well. I got a lot of really nice stuff for Christmas.

But, you want to know what the best gift was that I got for Christmas? The best gift was that I got an inheritance. Now don't be envious or jealous, you got an inheritance, too. This inheritance is the best thing ever because it involves things like a mansion, a gold crown, a white robe, eternal life lived in your own body, but a body transformed, resurrected, glorified, which has no disease, no illness, no aches or pains in it; an inheritance where we get to live in a kingdom, and this inheritance can never perish, fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.

The reason you received this inheritance is because God works all things according to His good and gracious will. This is what Paul is

teaching us in our Epistle lesson this Sunday. It is God's will that you live with Him as His own, in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

The problem with that is that righteousness, innocence, and blessedness doesn't describe us as we are in, in and of ourselves. Sinful, unholy, destined for eternal damnation – that describes us as we are, in and of ourselves. The reason we are like this is because that's the inheritance we got from our first parents when they ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden. And, this sin shows itself in our daily lives, in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and it shows itself especially at Christmas time. Think of how much greed, and lust, and coveting, and jealousy are part of the days of Christmas.

Think about how it is when the family gets together and how often those wonderful moments get turned into bickering, knock down, drag out, bare knuckle free-for-alls. Think about how easy it is for a holiday get-together to turn from a joyous occasion to a drunken gossip fest.

These things happen to us because we are sinners and we are guilty and destined for the destruction of death. Yet, God wants us to be with Him. God's will is greater than our sin.

So that you would have an inheritance, Jesus is born in Bethlehem to save us from our sin, cancel our guilt and give us eternal life in place of eternal damnation.

Jesus did all that for you by being born of the Virgin Mary and becoming like you – taking on your flesh and blood so that He could take on your sin, your guilt, your damnation.

As Jesus journeyed to the cross, He met and interacted with many people – the sick and infirm, and social outcasts, tax collectors, sinners. He healed them, went to their homes, ate with them, touched them, and allowed them to touch Him. But, Jesus did more than that – He took their sin and their guilt and even took their place, so that when He gets to Calvary, He stands before His Father having their sin, their guilt, -- your sin, your guilt, as well -- saying "I have it all. Punish Me instead of them." And the Father did. When the Father turned His back on Jesus and abandoned Him, that was your damnation. Jesus did it for you, in your place. And

because He did, all of your sins are forgiven, all of your guilt is gone, all of your eternal damnation is replaced with eternal life in heaven with God. Because Jesus died, you have this inheritance.

There are a few things you need to know about this inheritance. This inheritance is yours. God has given it to you. It became yours when you heard the Gospel of your salvation and you came to believe and have faith in Jesus Christ.

For most of us, that happened at the font of Baptism. As little babies, the Word, along with the water, gave us faith and we believed. For others, it came later in life, when they heard the Word of God and the Holy Spirit used that Word to bring them to faith in Jesus. Either way, God the Holy Spirit did all the work. "Faith comes by hearing," Paul teaches us in the book of Romans (Ro 10:17). And, the Holy Spirit used that Word to bring you to faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Paul teaches us in our lesson that the Holy Spirit is "the guarantee of our inheritance." That means that the Holy Spirit has brought you to faith, keeps you in that faith in every joy and sorrow of earthly life, and He will raise you from the grave on the last day.

Something else you need to know – this inheritance is yours, but you don't have full possession of it yet. This inheritance means that you will live in a mansion, wear a gold crown and a white robe, and live in a resurrected, glorified body. The Scriptures guarantee all these things are yours, but you will not take full possession of them until the last day, the last day when Jesus comes again in glory.

Another thing about this inheritance – you did nothing to earn it. God simply gave it to you. You got it the way you typically get an inheritance, someone died. Yes, Jesus died for you, so that you would have all these gifts.

And one last thing about your inheritance: it is not an afterthought. God did not look at Adam and Eve the day they ate of the apple and say, "Oh gosh, they sinned! Now what do I do? I better send Jesus." No, Paul teaches us that God had this all planned out before the foundation of the world. Paul says that God "predestined" us to receive this inheritance.

In these days of Christmas, people are asking you, “What did you get for Christmas?” So, tell them what you got --- toys, clothes, games for the Wii, and tell them of the greatest gift – the inheritance of heaven that you got from God.

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Concordia Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

801 Beacon Lane

Beulah, North Dakota

Rev. Toby H. Heller, Pastor

January 5, 2014



*The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.
And the favor of God was upon Him.*

Luke 2:40

"Ask what I shall give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

Gradual

To us a child is born, to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Sing to the Lord a new song,

for he has done marvelous things!

Epistle Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14 (ESV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus

Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

“Alleluia”

p. 190

Holy Gospel: St. Luke 2:40-52 (ESV)

And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him.

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing Him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for Him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for Him. After three days

they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when His parents saw Him, they were astonished. And His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us so? Behold, Your father and I have been searching for You in great distress." And He said to them, *"Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?"* And they did not understand the saying that He spoke to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Nicene Creed p. 191

Hymn of the Day # 410

Sermon: What Did You Get For Christmas?

Offertory p. 192

Offering

Installation of Officers

Prayer of the Church

Service of the Sacrament p. 194

Distribution Hymns: # 556 (st. 1, 5-7, 10), 862, 632

Nunc Dimittis p. 199

Thanksgiving p. 200

Benedicamus and Benediction p. 201

Closing Hymn # 725

Today we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion in which we joyfully receive Christ's Body and Blood, under bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins. As we celebrate the Sacrament, we also give public witness that we are in complete agreement with the denomination's doctrinal teachings at whose altar we commune. Therefore, we ask that only communicant members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commune with us. All guests are asked to talk to Rev. Heller before coming to the altar to receive the Sacrament.

Welcome to worship in the season of Christmas, the season of celebrating our Savior's birth. The Evangelist Luke records for us the only two incidents we have in the life of Jesus as a boy: His presentation at the age of 40 days and the 12-year-old Jesus who returns to Jerusalem for the Passover. Both take place in the temple. What Simeon foretold when Jesus was 40 days old, Jesus now states clearly at age 12: He is the Son of God, and He must be in the temple in Jerusalem, for it is here that He will show Himself to be our Passover Lamb. Visitors, please sign our guest book and worship with us again soon!

Installation of Officers: The following members of our congregation have been chosen by their fellow members to assume positions of special importance and service in our congregation, assisting the pastor in the work of Christ's Church:

Chairman, Evangelism	Gerald Bieber
Chairman, Fellowship	Kent Larson
Chairman, Public Relations	Ray Sorge
Chairman, Youth	Vicky Yeager
Finance Committee	Lonny Buchmann
Lay Ministry	Faron Scherer
	Bruce Voegelé
	Shanan Weigum

Topic Leaders will meet Tuesday, 3:30 pm. The topic will be "Connecting Heart to Heart, Part III: Building Bridges," from the Winter 2013 *Quarterly*.

Council Members, we will meet Wednesday, January 8, 7:00 pm.

The 2014 offering envelopes are on the table outside Pastor's study.

2014 Greeters are needed. A new sign-up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

An updated telephone directory of Concordia members has been completed. If you would like a copy, sign your name on the sheet of paper on the table in the fellowship hall. A copy will then be put in your Church mailbox.



The January calendar, birthday and anniversary sheet and November Council minutes are in the black stacking trays in the fellowship hall.



The January Human Care Project is collecting soup for Women's Action & Resource Center. Please put your donations in the shelf unit in the entryway. Thank you.

In our thoughts and prayers,

† Kyle Miller (Nona Blaisdell's brother) and Marvin Weigum;

† Our newly installed officers, as they are installed today.



Stewardship of Offerings & Attendance

Attendance: 82 Offerings: \$4m556,57

And [Jesus] said to them, "Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?" What a privilege the Lord has giving to us by calling us to come to His house! It is not a burden but rather an honor and a blessing for us to always be able to come to a place where we know God is present for us in His gifts of Word and Sacrament. Likewise, the Lord has honored us by allowing us to support the work of His house with our tithes and offerings.

† This Week at Concordia †

Sunday	8:30 am	Divine Service *Installation of Officers
	9:30 am	Sunday School/Bible Class
	11:00 am	<i>Worship @ Glen Ullin</i>
Monday	10:00 am	Circuit Pastors @ Hazen
Tuesday	2:00 pm	Bible Class
	3:30 pm	Topic Leaders
Wednesday	3:30 pm	1 st -year Catechism
	4:30 pm	2 nd -year Catechism
	7:00 pm	Council Meeting
Thursday	1:30 pm	Vesper Guild
Sunday	8:30 am	Divine Service *Installation of LWML Officers/Mites collection
	9:30 am	Sunday School/Bible Class
	11:00 am	<i>Worship @ Glen Ullin</i>

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Church: 873-4388 Parsonage: 873-4223
revheller@westriv.com
concordiasecretary@westriv.com
Website: www.concordiabeulah.org

*Please use a pew card to record your worship and/or
Communion attendance this morning.*