

# Reaching Out

December 2009 • Christmas Newsletter Supplement

Open Arms Lutheran Church & Daycare • Belleville, MI • [www.openarmscenter.com](http://www.openarmscenter.com)

## *Greetings to you in the name of our newborn King!*

Dear Members and Friends of Open Arms,

Another Christmas season is upon us, as evidenced by all the holiday-related items, decorations, retail displays, and music we are beginning to see and hear around us. We live in a world that makes a very big deal about Christmas—such a big deal, in fact, that often we are annoyed by how early all those retail displays start popping up. This can be a good thing, in fact, as the colder weather often brings with it a change in our moods and emotions. The holiday season serves to give us a wintery boost—to keep our spirits cheerful often when we can't even stand to leave our homes! But is that it?

Was it a big deal when the promised Savior of the World was born 2,000 years ago? The Bible shares the account of a new family making the arduous journey to a small town called Bethlehem. They came for such a mundane purpose as registering for a census. The town was so crowded that there was literally nowhere to get a room. Desperate, they ended up in a barn. This does not sound like the celebrant entry of the King of the Universe. Donkeys, cows, sheep and their shepherds were his only visitors that night. Even the wise men from the east may not have visited Jesus until years after he was born (despite common nativity scene depictions), and they were the closest he got to regal visitors.



As we consider how different these two situations are, we must realize a critical point. Our Savior did not need the attention and recognition of the rulers of this world. All of heaven was rejoicing at his birth, as God's perfect plan of salvation was unfolding. The shepherds were able to glimpse only a tiny sliver of this majesty. Our Lord chose to come in such an unceremonious way so that he could demonstrate his purpose for living among us—to offer himself as a servant and sacrifice for many. As his followers, we now have the opportunity to point our family, friends, and all those we meet back to the humble birth of the man who would, through his unfailing love and commitment, forever change the outcome of history for us.

Buying gifts and putting up Christmas trees alone won't give glory to our King. "Holiday" cheer by itself will never help a wandering soul find healing in a relationship with Jesus. Let us remember that the Christmas season is not about giving presents, decorations, or even yuletide cheer. The Christmas season belongs to us—the family of God—and the message of hope and salvation found in the babe in Bethlehem is ours to share. We join now and forever with the angelic host in proclaiming the splendor and majesty of Jesus Christ, whose birth this season commemorates. May God's Spirit reaffirm Jesus' love for you, and use you and your family powerfully to share that love this Christmas season and throughout the coming year!



*Angelic Christmas display at Rockefeller Center in New York City*

***The Staff of Open Arms***

# Come and worship



## ***Christmas Worship Opportunities***

*Our glorious newborn King is worthy of our praise, and we hope that all of our members and friends would join us for several special holiday worship gatherings.*

### **Child Care Christmas Program • Thursday, December 17 • 7:00PM**

Our daycare classes have been working hard to practice many special songs giving praise to the baby Jesus. Join us as they share the message of his birth. A time of fellowship and refreshments will follow the program.

### **Children's Church Christmas Worship • Sunday, December 20 • 10:30AM**

Open Arms will hold **only one worship service this day** so that all of our members and friends would be able to enjoy the special Christmas message prepared by our Children's Church students and teachers. **Please note: the dress rehearsal will take place on Saturday, December 19, at 10:00AM. All children and adults with a part of the program should plan to attend.**

### **Christmas Eve Worship Service • Thursday, December 24 • 7:00PM**

We gather on the eve of our Savior's birth to reflect on the wonder of the newborn babe, the significance of his coming, and the joy that his arrival brings in the hearts of his people.

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#### **ANGEL TREE GIFTS**

Thank you to all the families and individuals who are donating gifts for our Angel Tree families. Through this program, we get to brighten the Christmas of many children who otherwise may not receive a gift. Many hats and mittens have also been donated and are being distributed to children who need them. Generosity like this helps Open Arms to fulfill it's mission of being a beacon of love to our community.

#### **ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT**

Many thanks to all who helped make Advent By Candlelight such a successful outreach event for those who attended. Many guests this year were un-churched or de-churched, and we pray that our simple drama, dance, and musical presentation communicated God's message of love found in Jesus. We praise God for the blessing of talented performers and musicians who are passionate about their Lord.

#### **2010 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AT OPEN ARMS**

A new thing for a new year! Watch for upcoming details about an exciting new program starting in January for ministry leaders at Open Arms. We will be designing a monthly gathering to provide leaders with opportunities for worship, fellowship, sharing, and learning as we help our ministries grow to become as effective as possible for the glory of God and the expansion of his kingdom.



***"Pointing hurting people to the cross"***

***Open Arms Lutheran Church & Daycare***

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