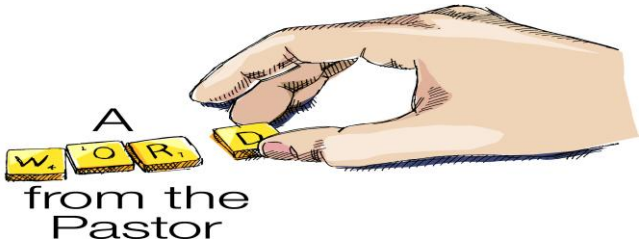
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Brenden Harrell, Pastor

Lutheran Church of Our Savior **Volume 64 – Number 12** **December 2026**



Storehouses or Monuments?

Over the last few months we have taken a tour of the first few stories in Genesis to see how they might help us navigate our changing technological landscape. To recap the major points we covered:

1. Technology, both internal and external, are good but damaged gifts from our Creator.
    1. On one hand, they are gracious gifts from God to ease the suffering of sin and provide for our needs.
    2. On the other, they are all embedded as firmly as we are in a broken and sinful world. Their shape and structure are derived to solve issues only necessary in a fallen world.
2. The dream for techno-utopia is old and rears its ugly head whenever we:
    1. Use any technology to “free” ourselves from God.
    2. Hope to “save” humanity by technological means.

The final stop for this discussion brings us to Egypt. And what do you know? We meet bricks in action again. First, God works through Joseph; "he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities." - Gen 41:48 (ESV). Cities most likely made primarily out of brick. Then four hundred years later, we find that the building continues for much the same outward purpose: "They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses." - Exodus 1:11. But while the stated purpose may be the same, the character and effect of what is being built could not be farther apart.

Joseph built and stored to preserve life. Pharaoh built to grind life down. Both worked to build "store cities," but Pharaoh had completely lost the original purpose of those cities. They had become a signet of his power and a way to oppress and control the Israelite people.

This brings us to a few final considerations for technology. Tools and systems are bound within the flow of history. In many ways, they codify and enshrine human decisions.

The horrible slavery the Israelites suffered? It wasn't Pharaoh's idea. It started with Joseph! "So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. The land became Pharaoh's. As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other." - Gen 47:20-21 (ESV).

Joseph leveraged the technology of store cities to create a completely different social order in Egypt. One that made total sense when it was instituted. It was even a gracious and unheard-of system to give as much food as was needed to help everyone survive even after there was no way for them to pay for it. But in time, that system was bent away from its original gracious purpose to fit the greed and power hunger of the Pharaoh: "who did not know Joseph." - Ex 1:8 (ESV).

Human technologies make different worlds possible. Without God showing Joseph how to use store cities to prepare, there would not have been an Egypt four hundred years later at all. This is indeed a wonderful way God intervened in history for the benefit of humanity.

Yet at the same time, from generation to generation, humans accumulate decisions within our technologies and systems. Servanthood to Pharaoh because of famine eventually becomes oppressive slavery. Bricks made by free workers becomes bricks made by slaves. Store cities build for the good of all become store cities build for the power of Pharoah. That trajectory does not start in Moses day but is unknowingly set up by Joseph. Every human decision that is imbedded in our technology push us down a particular road whether we realize it or not. This leads us to one of the most contested observations about technology. Technology is not neutral.

This is tangibly seen in the history of every building and every road. The decisions of past generations often create unforeseen issues or headaches in the present. Our world is shaped and even constricted by these past decisions. Over time they create the infrastructure we often take for granted. For example, there was a time when indoor plumbing was a luxury, but today, a building is almost immediately marked as uninhabitable without it.

Therefore the accumulations of these decisions within technology creates the long tail of it's influence and trajectory. Starting from a good place now does not automatically mean that the road is headed in a productive direction. We stand (as all generations stand) at the crossroads between the accumulation and pressure of past decisions with the potential direction of our own technological decisions hurtling us forward into the future.

How we handle what we are given, and what we build, can change the direction of society in ways we will not live to see. The weight of that should sit with us. God does indeed call us to use technology to it's greatest extent to care for life around us. But we must be aware that we do not do so in a short-sighted manner.

Summary, technology is not a "blank slate":

1. It holds and accumulates human decisions over time that shape and constrict the world of the future.
2. These decisions may even be made in good faith but can set up a path that leads to unintended places of slavery.

With all this in mind, we must carefully consider the path along which we decide to employ and build the technologies of our day. God clearly works through the healthy use of technology to preserve and provide for His people. But we must ever be humble in this use, lest we unwittingly set up a new path to slavery.

Pastor Brenden Harrell



We offer many thanks to the Foleys for the delicious thanksgiving feast. They not only feed those of us who came to the dinner but many to-go boxes were delivered to those who can't get out. It was another grateful time shared by our church family and friends.

DECEMBER
Events

Dec 01 3:00 pm – SH in use (Shelter)
Dec 01 5:00 pm – P/S Task Force
Dec 01 5:30 pm – P/S Board Meeting
Dec 02 6:00 pm – Soup Supper
Dec 02 7:00 pm – Advent Service
Dec 06 9:00 am - SS/Bible Study
Dec 06 10:00 am – Communion Service
Dec 08 9:30 am – Quilters
Dec 09 6:00 pm – Soup Supper
Dec 09 7:00 pm – Advent Service
Dec 12 Mowing – Riddiough, Schofield
Dec 13 9:00 am - SS/Bible Study
Dec 13 10:00 am - Worship Service
Dec 13 5:00 pm – Christmas Extravaganza
Dec 14 4:30 pm – Elders' Meeting
Dec 14 6:00 pm – Men's Group
Dec 15 9:00 am –Ministry Availability Due
Dec 16 6:00 pm – Soup Supper
Dec 16 7:00 pm – Advent Service

Dec 18 6:00 pm – Parent's Night Out
Dec 20 9:00 am – SS/Bible Study
Dec 20 10:00 am – Praise/Communion Service
Dec 21 9:00 am – Dec. Newsletter Deadline
Dec 24 6:30 pm – Christmas carol sing
Dec 24 7:00 pm – Christmas Eve Service
Dec 25 10:00am – Christmas Day Service
Dec 26 Mowing – Atrops, LaBelle, Allred
Dec 27 9:00 am - SS/Bible Study
Dec 27 10:00 am – Worship Service

DECEMBER
Birthdays

Dec	02	Harold Oliver
Dec	03	Susan Atrops
Dec	06	Karl DiModica
Dec	07	Brenden Harrell
Dec	08	Vicki Amaral
Dec	13	Linda Bornhoft
Dec	13	Fred Lee
Dec	14	Estelle Schofield
Dec	14	Debbie Wobrock
Dec	15	June Hahn
Dec	16	Louis DiModica
Dec	17	Darrell Heuchert
Dec	23	Jean Janssen
Dec	28	Debra Mattson
Dec	28	Devon Zamudio
Dec	28	Ivy Zamudio
Dec	30	Clara Rowe
Dec	31	Trevor Schofield

DECEMBER
Anniversaries

Dec	21	Jordan & Julie Hahn
Dec	22	Rudy & Cheryl Stowell

DECEMBER
Altar Guild Schedule

Dec 06 –Comm. Svc.
10:00 AM – Becky Foley
Flowers: - In memory of Michael Williamson

Dec 13 –Worship Svc.
10:00 AM – Lori Williamson
Flowers: - Linda Bornhoft & Vicki Amaral's birthdays

Dec 20 – Praise/Comm. Svc.
10:00 AM – Connie Hathaway
Flowers: - In memory of Ruth Lange

Dec 24 –.Christmas Eve Svc.
10:00 AM – Kelly Olney
Flowers: Diana Brown

Dec 25 – Christmas Day Comm. Svc.
10:00 AM – Becky Zielke
Flowers: - Diana Brown

Dec 27 –Worship Svc.
10:00 AM – Becky Zielke
Flowers: - OPEN

MOWING for DECEMBER



Dec 12 – Riddiough, Schofield
Dec 26 – Atrops, LaBelle, Allred



Renewing My Faith

In 1971, I returned home from Vietnam. As a combat veteran, I came home carrying a heavy burden on my soul – one that, for many years, I couldn't explain or put into words.

For nearly 15 years I couldn't bring myself to attend church. Vicki eventually encouraged me to go, but even then, I couldn't bring myself to take communion. I had convinced myself that God was done forgiving me.

Then Pastor Zielke helped open my eyes and my heart. Through his guidance and the support, kindness, and encouragement of others, I began to realize that God's forgiveness and love were still there for me.

Today, my faith has been renewed and I am deeply grateful.

I want to sincerely thank all our pastors, the members of our church, Vicki, my loving wife, and Dennis Payne for the part each of you has played in helping me find my way back to faith.

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, patience, and support. You have helped me more than words can express.

Above all, I thank God for never giving up on me.

Again, thank you for all the support. God bless you all!

Respectfully submitted, Greg Amaral



Plan on joining Parents Night Out to love on our preschool and church families. We play with the kids from 6-8pm the third Friday of the month. Plan to be there December 18th! For more info, ask Lisa DiModica at 805-354-4443.
To plan ahead, PNO in 2027 will be January 15, February 19th, March 19th, April 16th and May 21st.



Join us in answering Fikisha's 2026 Annual Appeal. Our church is one of the major donors to Fikisha, the mission outreach in Kawangware, Kenya, for the last 10 years. Moses visited us last year and Moses and Frank plan to visit in May 2027. We are planning to reciprocate the visit in June 2028. In the meantime, we are supporting the Gospel being shared in their neighborhoods. Sharon, who is on staff with Fikisha now, was one of those young people who "shared that she often felt she wasn't good enough and wondered whether she was special to God." Sharon met with a girl who had the same doubts and questions and was able to share the reassurance and hope of Jesus. Fikisha is going into its 15th year of serving Nairobi, Kenya. Join us in continuing to support the Gospel by donating through our church and specifying the donation to go to Fikisha or BWAB (Boy With A Ball) Kenya. Gary knows what to do with it! For other questions, ask Paul and Lisa DiModica at 805-354-4443.

A trip to Fikisha in Nairobi, Kenya, is planned for June of 2028. Start saving your funds. We are always happy to host Moses and Frank here, but this is your chance to visit them and be an eyewitness of the mission we support. For more information, please see Paul and Lisa DiModica.



The 2027 Flower chart has been posted in the narthex. Sign up now to sponsor flowers for next year. Regular arrangements are $49.00 and special holiday arrangements (denoted with an *) are $65.00



Plan on attending Christmas Extravaganza this year. Animals, the Christmas story, kids singing, and cookies! What more could you want? **Sunday, December 13** starting at 5:00 pm followed by a cookie carnival! Sign-up in the courtyard to attend and/or bring cookies!



Advent worship will take place on **Wednesdays (December 2, 9 & 16) at 7:00 PM** preceded by **Soup Suppers at 6:00 PM**. Sign-up sheets for the Soup Suppers are in the entrance of Stahnke Hall. Please sign up today!! ☸

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS

🎄 **Celebrate Christmas With Us!** 🎄
Join us as we celebrate the joy and wonder of Christmas!

🎶 **Christmas Carol Sing – 12/24 @ 6:30 PM**
🕯️ **Christmas Eve Service – 12/24 @ 7:00 PM**
✝️ **Christmas Day Communion Service – 12/25 @ 10:00 AM**
🎉 **New Year's Eve Gathering – 12/31 @ 6:30 PM**

Everyone is welcome! Come celebrate the birth of our Savior and share in the joy, peace, and blessings of the Christmas season.

We look forward to celebrating with you! ❤️



Special Dates for December 2026

- Second Sunday of Advent, *December 6, 2026*
- Third Sunday of Advent, *December 13, 2026*
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 20, 2026*
- First Day of Winter, *December 21, 2026*
- Christmas Eve, *December 24, 2026*
- Christmas Day, *December 25, 2026*
- New Year's Eve, *December 31, 2026*

A Child Is Born

Let us go to Bethlehem today, joining the wondering shepherds and adoring Magi as they behold the One born King of the Jews. By faith, we too may rejoice and proclaim, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

Let us reverently bow before the holy Child, whose innocence restores humanity to its ancient glory, and pray that Christ may be formed within us.

—Adapted from C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*



A Christmas Prayer of Love and Peace

Gracious Father, as we celebrate the birth of Your Son, draw our hearts toward the quiet wonder of Bethlehem. Help us receive Jesus with the joy of the shepherds, the reverence of the wise men, and the faithful love of Mary and Joseph.

Let Your peace settle over our homes and reach those who feel lonely, weary, or forgotten. Open our eyes to the needs around us, and make our hands willing to serve. May every gift carry kindness, every greeting offer warmth, and every gathering leave room for someone who needs to belong.

Forgive our impatience and selfishness. Teach us to forgive one another freely and to treasure people more than possessions.

When Christmas Day is done, may our gratitude remain. Help us carry the love of Christ into ordinary days, sharing His hope wherever You lead us.

In the name of Jesus, our Savior and newborn King, we pray. Amen.



Grace for the Year Ahead

As this year draws to a close, we remember its joys, its challenges, and the prayers still waiting for answers. Through every season, God has been faithful.

Tonight, we place our regrets in His mercy, our sorrows in His care, and our hopes in His hands. We do not need to know all that tomorrow holds to take the next step in faith.

May the coming year find us loving more freely, forgiving more readily, and sharing kindness wherever we go. With grateful hearts, we welcome a new beginning, trusting that God will walk beside us each day.

December 2026

CHRISTIAN MINISTERS AT LUTHERAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR

DAY	TIME	GREETER	ACOLYTE	ELDERS	USHERS	LESSON READER	MEDIA	ALTAR GUILD/ FLOWERS
Wednesday 2	7:00 PM	Lori Williamson	Elder	Mark Hathaway	Bill Williamson		Estelle Schofield	
Sunday 6	10:00 AM Communion	Linda Bornhoft	Trevor Schofield	Todd Martin/Paul DiModica	Mike Foley	Debbie Heuchert	Julie Martin	**Altar:** Becky Foley **Flowers:** In memory of Michael Williamson
Wednesday 9	7:00 PM	Jane Riddiough	Elder	Tom Heuchert	Michael Southern		Diana Brown	
Sunday 13	10:00 AM	Evie Cronan	Carter Schofield	Paul DiModica	Paul Mattson	Marjorie Hord	Estelle Schofield	**Altar:** Lori Williamson **Flowers:** Celebrating Linda Bornhoft and Vicki Amaral's birthdays
Wednesday 16	7:00 PM	Diana Brown	Elder	Todd Martin	Diana Brown		Jim LaBelle	
Praise Sunday 20	10:00 AM Communion	Lange Family	Lucy Chaney	Dennis Payne/Greg Amaral	Jim LaBelle	Becky Zielke	Terry Murdock	**Altar:** Connie Hathaway **Flowers:** In memory of Ruth Lange
Christmas Eve 24	7:00 PM	Sarah Ganschow	Elder	Mark Hathaway	Jim LaBelle	Diana Brown	Dennis Payne	**Altar:** Kelly Olney **Flowers:** Diana Brown
Christmas Day 25	10:00 AM Communion	Kathy Lee	Trevor Schofield	Tom Heuchert/Greg Amaral	Michael Southern	Gary Lange	Dennis Payne	**Altar:** Becky Zielke **Flowers:** Diana Brown
Sunday 27	10:00 AM	Mayes Family	Drew Schofield	Greg Amaral	Bill Williamson	Melanie Mayes	Jim LaBelle	**Altar:** Becky Zielke **Flowers: OPEN**
Please phone person* at right if you are unable to serve>>>>>		**GREETERS** *Estelle Schofield 598-6907 *Sarah Ganschow 266-0046	**ACOLYTES** *Mark Hathaway 937-9675	**ELDERS** *Tom Heuchert 934-1051	**USHERS** *Greg Amaral 260-6766	**READERS** *Todd Martin 801-3873	**MEDIA** *Dennis Payne 934-1101	**ALTAR GUILD** Becky Zielke 598-6924 **FLOWERS** Sara Chaney 714-8031 **FLOWER MINISTRY** Fred Lee 530-263-1767

1. **PLEASE ARRANGE FOR ANY CHANGE(s) BY TRADING WITH ANOTHER MINISTER.**
2. **PLEASE NOTIFY THE PERSON WHO OVERSEES YOUR ASSIGNMENT OF ANY CHANGE(s).**
3. **INFORM CHURCH OFFICE *ONLY* AFTER CHANGE(s) IS/ARE MADE TO SCHEDULE – 937-1116**

December 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 9:00am SS/Bible Study 10:00am Worship Svc.	30	1 3:00pm SH in use (Shelter) 5:00pm P/S Task Force 5:30pm P/S Board Mtg.	2 6:00pm Soup Supper 7:00pm Advent Service	3	4	5
6 9:00am SS/Bible Study 10:00am Communion Svc.	7	8 9:30am Quilters	9 6:00pm Soup Supper 7:00pm Advent Service	10	11	12 Mowing: Riddiough, Schofield
13 9:00am SS/Bible Study 10:00am Worship Svc. 5:30pm Christmas Extravaganza	14 4:30pm Elders' Meeting 6:00pm Men's Group	15 Ministry Availability Due	16 6:00pm Soup Supper 7:00pm Advent Service	17	18 6:00pm Parent's Night Out	19
20 9:00am SS/Bible Study 10:00am Praise/Comm. Svc.	21 Newsletter Deadline	22	23	24 6:30pm Christmas Carol Sing 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service	25 10:00am Christmas Day Service	26 Mowing: Atrops, LaBelle, Allred
27 9:00am SS/Bible Study 10:00am Worship Svc.	28	29	30	31	1	2