



December 2022

Viborg, SD

605-326-5690

Do you have a favorite character from the biblical Christmas Story? I remember as a kid my parents would read the Christmas story, and we would place each nativity piece one at a time into the stable at the right time. Baby Jesus and Mary were always favorites. Or sometimes the shepherd with the cute little sheep. But for me, it definitely wasn't the Kings. They were so ostentatious (or ugly in my childish mind), dressed in flashy robes carrying fancy boxes. They didn't seem to fit in the "barn" with the donkey and sheep. Interesting how I thought Baby Jesus fit in a manger just fine.

Now today, I know that our Westernized nativity scene isn't exactly how it happened those many years ago in the little town of Bethlehem. The stable really wasn't a barn, but more likely a dark cave. And the manger probably wasn't a cute little cradle made of wood, but a hollow in the rock. And the Kings didn't show up with the Shepherds that night, but probably instead a year or more later at the home of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. But the nativity scene itself has made an impact in many of our lives. It helps us to connect with the characters, to picture what it was really like for them. For us in the Midwest, we wonder what it would be like to have a baby in a barn without any help. How would we respond if we were in each their shoes?

I would love to tell you that I would respond like Mary, easily surrendering my life to God's plan. Praying the prayer of relinquishment, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." (Luke 1:38) But instead, I often find myself holding tightly to the control of my life, as if I have the power to control my circumstances. I don't identify with Joseph either, obeying God's commands despite the criticism and shame he would experience from his family and community. So many times in my life I have gone along with the crowd, doing what is acceptable to them even if it wasn't right.

Instead, I find myself most closely in the Kings, Wise Men or Magi. Now there is some mystery around these men. Who were they, really? And where did they come from? But what I find most interesting is that they were from the outside, probably Persia. The Bible tells us that they followed the star to find Jesus, who they knew to be King of the Jews, and they worshipped Him. (Matthew 2:1-12) But why would they do this? And how did they know He was the King of the Jews? The term Magi in the Greek suggests they were magicians, astrologers, or priests from a different religion. The Message translation of the Bible calls them scholars. Whatever they were, we know they studied and believed enough to travel away from their homeland to search for Jesus. I wonder if we had depicted the Magi in the nativity scene as college graduates or rocket scientists if I would have been more attracted to them as a child. As an adult, I am fascinated by them and why they even made it into the Christmas Story. They remind me that even when I feel like I'm on the outside, to search for Jesus. Even when the road is difficult or when it doesn't make sense, keep following the light that leads to The King. They encourage me to study to know the signs of Jesus, to know The King. They show me that it is worth great hardship to be able to worship at the feet of Jesus. I think God knew we would need these reminders, this outside perspective of the birth of our Savior.

I pray that today you too would be encouraged by these men. I pray that you would follow their example and search for Jesus, the King, and worship at His feet.

~ Merry Christmas ~ Kianne



Winter Retreat 2023 Schedule

Senior High.....January 6th-8th

7th & 8th.....January 13th-15th

5th & 6th....January 20th-22nd

There is still time to register!

www.myslcc.com/register



Do you know someone who might be interested in working at camp this summer?

We are hosting an informational meeting.

January 8th at 2 PM in the SLCC Chapel

This is open to youth (16 and up) and their parents. Come learn more about working at camp this summer, and the camp training sessions we are offering in January through May.

Save the date for our Annual Meeting

March 12th, 2023

RSVP at 605-326-5690 or email campoffice@myslcc.com

2023 Summer Camp Schedule

Day Camp 1 (Pre-k though 2nd)..... June 15

Day Camp 2 (Pre-k though 2nd)..... June 16

Day Camp 3 (Pre-k though 2nd)..... June 19

3rd & 4th Grade Camp 1..... June 7-9

3rd & 4th Grade Camp 2..... June 11-14

5th & 6th Grade Camp 1..... July 9-14

5th & 6th Grade Camp 2..... July 16-21

7th & 8th Grade Camp 1..... July 2-7

7th & 8th Grade Camp 2..... July 23-28

Senior High Camp (Grades 9-12)..... June 25-30

Greeting from the shores of Swan Lake Christian Camp.

I just want to take a minute to thank each of you for your prayers and for your support this last year. God has been so faithful and I believe our staff, board members and, well, all of the camp leadership has been faithfully listening for His guidance. I am so thankful to work with a really great group of people.

Today, I was installing the little bumper things that protect the door knobs in the two newest cabins. We are still searching for appropriate names. At this point, they are still "cabin A" and "cabin B". I put up mirrors and lights over the vanities and discovered that we still need shower curtains. Basically, they are finished. The beds are in and the heat is on. Thanks primarily to the busyness of the retreat center, we built them with no specific fundraising. Praise God for all the people who came to camp this past year. My prayer is that each one left knowing Jesus in a new and deeper way.

Many of you have heard me dreaming of a new worship space. That is still in the near future planning stages. The goal is to get the function of this new space just right. I believe that we are going to build a chapel space that seats between 225 and 250 people to accommodate both our youth camp needs as well as the numerous adult ministry driven groups that are using the camp. We have currently hosted and re-scheduled seven three day weekend groups specifically geared towards growing the faith of adults. This is a relatively new emphasis for Swan Lake Christian Camp and one that I am particularly excited about.

It is also very exciting to recognize that the current chapel is no longer large enough for our youth camps. I believe that people are drawn to camp because of the clear gospel message that is being delivered. Pray that that continues. Our intent is to build space that invites people to experience Christ without distractions. I am sure that we will discuss more of these plans at the upcoming annual meeting the second Sunday in March.

Again, I just want to ask you to continue praying for the camp. I had another person saying that as they simply looked at our website, they felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. I have had too many others say similar things about just turning on to the driveway not to believe that this is because this place is slathered in abundant prayer. We appreciate your financial support, but I covet your prayers even more.

Blessings Jerry

