



Outreach Ideas
English District
Evangelism Team
Newsletter

July/August 2024

Christmas and Easter Outreach

Part Two

The season, with all of its special services, has arrived. However, a lot of preparation has taken place in the time leading up to it.

In the months and even years leading up to these two important seasons, friends and family members may have been longing and praying that this day would come. Their hesitant friend or loved one has accepted their invitation to sit with them in the pew and hear God's Word in worship.

Here's the opportunity to proclaim to them the incredible good news of the salvation God has accomplished for them. Some may have never heard the Gospel before. Some may have heard only a caricature of what these seasons and events are all about.

While many may recognize that Christmas is about the birth of Jesus, and are familiar with some of the details, they may not fully understand the reason for our Savior's incarnation or the salvation He came to accomplish for them.

A [Barna report](#), from a number of years ago, also noted that "most Americans continue to view the Easter

holiday as a religious celebration, but many of them are not clear as to the underlying reason for the occasion."

It's not hyperbole to say that for some, sitting along side of you in the pew for the first time, this may be their only opportunity to hear the Gospel. This may be the first time they come to recognize our Savior's great love for them and what it is that God has accomplished.



We gather together for worship knowing that we will hear a well-crafted sermon that rightly divides Law and Gospel, and points sinners to Christ. We rejoice to sing the liturgy and hear the comfort of God's absolution wash over us. It's understandable that we want others to share this same soothing joy and confidence that He gives to us by faith.

The time spent planning for these special services in the church year is time well spent. Happily, summer provides the opportunity to get a head start.



Toolbox

Ideas, Suggestions and Handy Bits



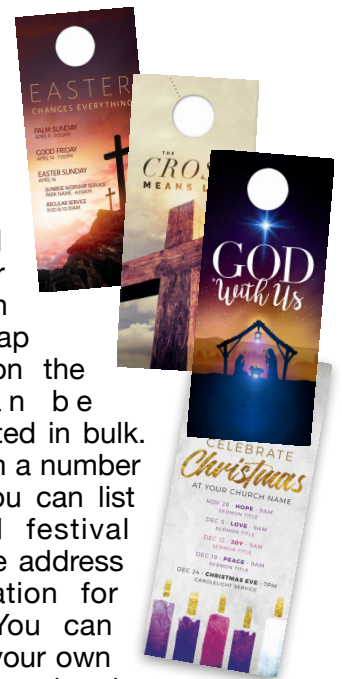
A beautiful Christmas parade float constructed by the members of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sarnia, ON.

Christmas Parade Float

How about assembling a float for your community's Christmas parade? If you've already built an outdoor nativity display for your church you could mount it on a flatbed trailer and pull it with a pick-up truck. If you're feeling even more ambitious consider added hay bales and children with adults. Nothing beats smiling faces, singing and waving to the crowds along the way. (Be sure to include your church name on the float. You could even have a sign on the end with the times for your Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.)

Door Hangers

How about taking a Saturday morning to deliver door hanger invitations in your neighborhood? You can order preprinted cards and have your service times, church name and address, map and more included on the back. These can be purchased and imprinted in bulk. They are available from a number of different outlets. You can list your mid-week and festival services as well as the address and contact information for your congregation. You can also take a design of your own making and have them printed with a company like VistaPrint.



Answering Machine

Be sure to add your special service times to the announcement on your church answering machine. It's a detail that's easy to overlook.

Christmas / Easter Photo Spots

Create a specific "Photo Spot" in the hallway or narthex for families to take pictures together after Christmas and Easter services. You can set up an area with poinsettias or Easter lilies. You can use a digital camera or even your smartphone. This is often the one time families are all together and dressed up. You could even have someone on hand who is there to take those photos so that everyone can be in the picture. This has the benefit of creating a welcoming atmosphere and creating a treasured keepsake. It also provides another opportunity to learn names for follow-up.



Here are some ideas for Easter and Christmas outreach to young families.

Easter Egg Bible Verse Cards

Free downloadable [Easter Egg cards](#) are available. You could also print the verses which correspond to each and include them in plastic eggs or as a matching game to teach your children what Lent and Easter is all about.



You could couple your Easter Egg Hunt with a special showing of “[The Puzzle Club Easter Adventure](#).” You can even have an egg decorating contest with different categories for children and adults.

Easter Resurrection Rolls

Here’s another opportunity for young families to share an invitation to Easter worship with their friends and children. It’s a sweet cinnamon treat with a twist. The marshmallow that is put inside at the time of baking melts. As the women discovered that the tomb was empty on Easter morning so will those who open up these tasty and easy to make rolls. [Taste of Home](#) has a free recipe, with illustrated instructions, that you can download from their site.



Illustration from *Taste of Home*

Jesus’ Birthday Party

Organize a children’s birthday party for Jesus. Here’s another opportunity for young families with children to invite other young families in their circle of friends, who may not be churched, to join them. It’s a great time to sing “Happy Birthday to Jesus,” and even teach an easy hymn, as another opportunity to focus on the celebration of our Savior’s birth. This can include a cake with candles, crafts, activities, icing cookies, and story time to share the Christmas Gospel. You can even have a special showing of “[Red Boots for Christmas](#).”



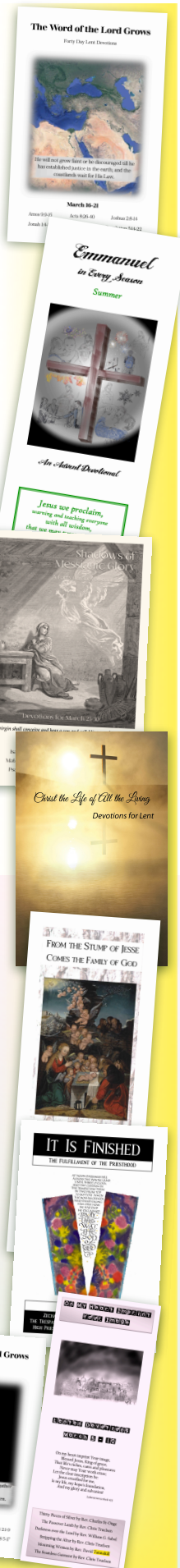
Advent and Lenten Devotional Booklets

You may want to consider creating [Devotional Booklets for Lent and Advent](#). This will take considerable work and preparation but the return on this investment of time and creativity can be amazing.

Click the booklets to the right for sample pages. Rev. Dan Guagenti has served for many years as the coordinator and creative director for this particular series of seasonal devotions which have been well-received across our Synod.

You can collaborate with your fellow-circuit pastors or work together with interested colleagues throughout the English District. Here’s an idea that works especially well with our non-geographical district!

Select a leader who will choose a theme and compile the devotions into weekly booklets. These can be shared digitally on the web sites and social media of the congregations taking part. You can also print them and have them available on your table at church.





Movie Night

Have a movie night during Lent and Advent. Check out the terrific selection from our [Lutheran Hour Ministries \(LHM\)](#). You can download them free from LHM and you can also find the videos on YouTube and Vimeo. LHM also provides bulletin inserts, customizable posters and PowerPoint slides for advertising.



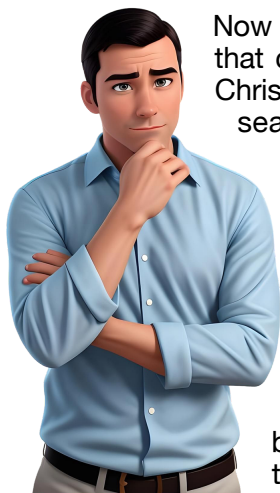
The Wisconsin Synod (WELS) also has produced some excellent festival season videos to share. They can be purchased from [Northwestern Publishing House](#) (limited remaining stock). You can also find *My Son, My Savior* and *Road to Emmaus* free online on YouTube.

A collection of resources for [My Son, My Savior](#) and [Road to Emmaus](#) are available and easily adaptable for local use.

Consider creating invitation cards which your members can share with their family and friends and advertise it to the community.

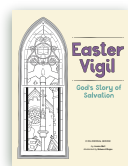
Follow-Up Sermon Series and Classes

Now is the time to also consider special events that can serve as “on-ramps” for your visitors at Christmas and Easter. Build follow-up into your seasonal services by promoting a special sermon series for New Year and the 40-day Easter season. With a little creativity you can look ahead at the pericopes for the coming weeks and tie them together with a theme and special artwork. You can build on the Good News that they have just heard, perhaps for the first time, at your festival services. You may wish to also consider scheduling a new Bible Study or beginning a new Adult Information Class for those hoping to hear more.



From the Field

Our Pastors and Congregations



A number of our congregations have made good use of free downloadable materials from our LCMS including



the children’s “[Easter Vigil](#)” coloring book and the “[Kids in the Divine Service](#)” bulletin insert for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.

Articles, Books and Research

Current Research and Writings



Check out Concordia Technology Solutions’ [article](#) on *Developing a Post-Easter Strategy for Your Church’s Website*.



Lutheran Hour Ministries has a useful publication titled, “[Christmas Outreach Ideas](#)” that’s worth reading.

Our Synod and District Programs

Materials and Workshops Available



Have a look at Lutheran Hour Ministries’ [Spiritual Conversations in the Digital Age Kit](#).

Thank You

With this issue my time as your Evangelism Team Lead draws to a close. This will help to ensure a steady supply of fresh new ideas. The collegial sharing of tips and ideas is a blessing for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this exciting work.

[Pastor David Tannahill](#)