

CLARION

DECEMBER 2022

FROM PASTOR'S DESK



What Advent is Really About

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. – *Philippians 2:4-8*

We've entered into the season of Advent, and we're surrounded by all of the ways that modern culture (and the retail marketing machines of the world) misunderstand it.

I saw an ad the other day for an "Advent calendar" that consisted of a dozen different hot chocolate mixes, which sounds delicious, but conflates Advent (the four weeks or so leading up to Christmas) with the Twelve Days of Christmas (which is actually the days between Christmas and Epiphany, ending on January 6). Another "Advent" calendar I saw featured twenty-four little treats, suggesting that the Advent season always runs from December 1 to 24 as a lead up to Christmas. That's closer, but still not quite right. I suppose we can take comfort from the fact that at least modern culture has preserved the notion of Advent in some way. In a culture that generally rejects any kind of religious observation (particularly of the Christian variety), maybe it's a win that they would preserve the term "Advent."

In fact, Advent always begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (so, November 27 this year) and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent marks the beginning of the Church Year; the cycle of readings and events that we focus on throughout the year including Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, and so on. It is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ, and although most of the focus is on Christmas (understandably so), our focus is also on preparation for the second coming of Christ in judgment on the last day. In a sense, we focus on the "now" (the reality that Jesus Christ came some 2,000 years ago, lived, died, and rose again to secure our salvation) and on the "not yet" (the future reality of Christ's return when we will enter into "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13)).

I think the passage above from Philippians is a pretty good place to anchor our Advent preparations. As we prepare for Christ's coming, we focus not just on ourselves, but on others (you know, that whole "Lord God. Love Others." thing). And we do so because Christ came focusing on us. Paul draws out the amazing contours of this: Christ Jesus has brought us together. Jesus! The second person of the Trinity willingly set aside His divinity and humbled himself to come in service to you. God Himself, born as a human; creator becoming one of His own creatures! And not just that, but He showed us what it looks like to follow God the father; he was obedient even to the point of death. And not just death, but death on a cross. And all of this for one purpose: that your sins would be forgiven in order to reconcile you to God the Father, with the promise of eternal life with Him.

(Continued on page 2)



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How do we prepare for *that* kind of “coming?” A lot of it comes through the five principles that we learned as we worked through the Red Letter Challenge recently: **Being** in God’s Word; **Forgiving** others as He has forgiven you; **Serving** others and reflecting God’s love; **Giving** generously of the gifts that God has given to you; and **Going** out into the world to share this Good News with others. But in the end, our preparation simply consists of trusting God and His promises; in hearing the Word, recognizing ourselves, understanding God’s love and provision, and looking to Jesus Christ as the way, and the truth, and the life.

Christmas isn’t about trees, or lights, or big meals. And while it IS about an amazing gift, it’s not what the retailers would have you believe; it’s about the gift of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, which is the most important and valuable gift ever. My hope is that knowing what Advent and Christmas are really about will make the trees, the lights, the big meals, and the gifts that much more meaningful, as they underscore the real meaning of the season: the coming of Jesus Christ way back when AND some day in the future.

A very blessed Advent and Christmas to you and yours!

In HIS Service,



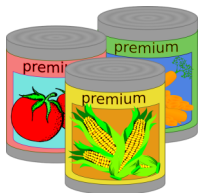
Pr. Longman

From the office...

FOOD PANTRY

Hours

Tuesday-Friday
2 pm-4 pm.



A Friendly Reminder

Any information you need put into our weekly **NEWS & NOTES** needs to be submitted to the office by **NOON** on **WEDNESDAY** of each week.

PASTOR’S CARE FUND

Hours

Thursday-Friday
2 pm-4 pm.

Any information you’d like put into the **CLARION** is due to the office by **NOON** on the **15th** of every month.



CRAFTY CREW

We gave out 367 scripture books at Trunk or Treat this year! We were blessed to hear some of the parents comment things such as, "we look forward to these books every year," and "thank you so much for your time to make these." The frosting on the cake was one little boy who said, "I just love to read about God." Thank you to everyone who donates used cards, double stick tape, and funds to purchase supplies.

Enjoy some relaxing fellowship time **every Thursday** from **4-8 pm**. We have people who scrapbook, crochet, embroider, make ornaments, and other various crafty goodness. Come check us out!



CHURCH BUS

We offer rides to our Sunday services in the church van. The van does **NOT** have wheelchair access so riders will need to be able to get in and out with a hand from the driver. We are looking for drivers to help with this ministry as well. If you could help even one or two Sundays a year it would be greatly appreciated!

If you are interested call or text Ted Reinker at (409) 750-9633.



PINOCHLE

Friday, December 9th will be our next date for playing cards. Hopefully you have your calendar marked and will be ready to help set up at 6:00 pm and get cards in your hand for play at 6:30. Don't forget to bring a little something to share for a snack. Looking forward to seeing everyone and perhaps a few new faces!



Sunday,
December 4th

4:30 PM

Chapel

Info and sign up sheet in the Narthex
Contact Pam Pickett for more details

Advent by Candlelight

2 0 2 2

Generations at Holy Trinity Lutheran Serving Rogers for Christ Since 1959



The Rogers Christmas Parade is scheduled for **Friday, December 2nd**. The parade is a great way to share the joy of Christmas with 1000+ viewers as we make our way through downtown Rogers. The theme for the parade this year is Past, Present, Future Rogers. We are planning to incorporate this theme into our float by highlighting all generations of Holy Trinity and we need your help! We would like to have 15-20 people to walk with the float to hand out candy. We will also need help building the float. Contact Nancy Eisma for more information!



Advent 2022 Services

Sunday November 27

8:00 AM—WORSHIP
9:30 AM—EDUCATION
10:45 AM—WORSHIP

Wednesday November 30

10:00 AM—WORSHIP
5:30 PM—SOUP SUPPER
7:00 PM—WORSHIP

Sunday December 4

8:00 AM—COMMUNION
9:30 AM—EDUCATION
10:45 AM—COMMUNION

Wednesday December 7

10:00 AM—WORSHIP
5:30 PM—SOUP SUPPER
7:00 PM—WORSHIP

Sunday December 11

8:00 AM—WORSHIP
9:30 AM—EDUCATION
10:45 AM—WORSHIP

Wednesday December 14

5:30 PM—SOUP SUPPER
7:00 PM—CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Sunday December 18

8:00 AM—COMMUNION
9:30 AM—EDUCATION
10:45 AM—COMMUNION

Saturday December 24

7:00 PM—CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Sunday December 25

10:00 AM—COMMUNION

What is Advent?

The church divides the year into different seasons that emphasize the life of Christ and the life of the church. Beginning on Sunday, November 27, 2022, we will enter the season of the church year called Advent. Advent is the season of preparation and anticipation leading up to Christmas, and continuing to Epiphany January 6, 2023.

The focus of Advent is two-fold. On the one hand, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world as both God and Man so that our sins might be forgiven. On the other hand, we anticipate the day when Jesus will return to Earth and bring an end to this world. Those will be scary days, but we can look forward to the end of the world with hope because through faith in Jesus, the end of this world will mean the beginning of a new life with Christ for eternity.

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - ROGERS



Parents' Day Out

Faith-based education and care for children 0-5

Emergent play-based curriculum

Fun & engaging Biblical lessons

Experienced teaching staff

Art experiences

Songs & stories

Tuesdays & Thursdays

9 am - 2 pm

\$60 per week

For more information:

holytrin.org/pdo

pdo@holytrin.org



Breaking Taboo: Mary and Advent Sermons

Mention the "Blessed Virgin Mary" in some Christian circles today and you are likely to be labeled an idol-worshiper and lumped in with "those Catholics" (whatever that is supposed to mean). The prevailing mood and thinking within casual Christianity and American Evangelicalism is decidedly anti-Marian. The charge is usually the same: Remembering Mary in your sermon is tantamount to betraying Christ. Compounding the challenge to preachers is the assertion that Jesus was born of a virginal Galilean teenager which finds repudiation in the modern mind. People today believe everything continues according to ridged laws of nature and nothing extraordinary does or could ever happen; like the miracle of God visiting us in a way that would signal something extraordinary taking place. What, then, does the faithful preacher do about the Mother of our Lord during Advent and Christmas? The answer: confidently and boldly preach the Word of God.

The Virgin's role towers in front of us in many of Advent's pericopes, as well as the Creeds themselves, to be openly confessed by thinking, rational Christians, and preached by clear-minded pastors. Not only that, but the story of Christmas and the events leading to the birth of Jesus necessitate the monumental role Mary plays. Indeed, Mary is a monument to the Church and in the Church, so says the Word of God. So, be bold and confident in your Advent proclamation. Mary, the mother of our Lord, cannot be avoided or sidestepped during this season, no matter how "taboo" publicly mentioning the all-too-Catholic-sounding "Blessed Virgin Mary" may be to the Protestant mind. The pericopes of Advent and Christmas are there to safeguard the Bible's teaching about who the Christ is (that is, Christology). Without Mary, the good news of "God with us" falls susceptible to becoming the heresy of, "Jesus, the friendly ghost," without a blood atonement and bodily resurrection, with further implications to vacate Holy Communion of His true body and blood.

According to the divine disclosures, the Biblical logic of redemption, and also due to subversive lies about it (see for example, Matthew 13:55), the virgin birth had to be asserted and proclaimed from the earliest days of the Christian Church. Therefore the line, "born of the Virgin Mary," was foundational in the Old Roman Creed (just a generation or two after Saint John himself died), the baseline for the Apostles' Creed, and the cornerstone of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Athanasian Creeds. The virgin birth was preached and defended boldly as bona fide apostolic doctrine because it was understood as both a fact of history (Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds in the fields recounting the story) and the truth of divine revelation; from the Holy Spirit, to the prophet Isaiah (7:14) and the Evangelist Matthew (1:23).

The preacher's confidence stands upon unassailable, Biblical texts. It is only of Mary that the Holy Spirit says in Luke chapter 1, "all generations will call [her] blessed" (Luke 1:48), because she is the favored one of the Lord, being uniquely, "full of grace" (Luke 1:28), and hailed by even the highest of archangels, Gabriel (1:26ff). The texts of Advent and the Biblical narrative of Christmas simply cannot be proclaimed while omitting the role of Mary and duly extolling her special place in the account.

In sixteenth-century Wittenberg, Martin Luther recognized and respected that in the New Testament, the Virgin figures prominently in the birth stories of Matthew, and especially Luke, and is mentioned several more times throughout the Gospels, culminating in her appearance at the crucifixion of her Son. In the upper room in Jerusalem, Mary witnessed the growth of the early Church. Both her maternity and virginity are stated in the Gospels; she miraculously conceived and gave birth to Jesus without losing her virginity (Matthew 1:20, 20; Luke 1:34f). For his part, Luther firmly held to these beliefs and insisted, just as Scripture declares Mary is highly favored of the Lord and most blessed among women, she should be esteemed within the Church for her role in God's great work of redemption, this Mary is essential to the Gospel of Christ itself. After all, Mary and the Apostles remain a part of the living Church in Heaven, and the Church is one in Christ, whether saints are alive on Earth or not. As Jesus Himself put it: God, "is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mark 12:27).

Evangelical reforms during the Conservative Reformation stood firmly within the most ancient and orthodox teachings about Mary, when the earliest patristic writings about Mary were penned shortly after the time of the Holy Apostles. From Clement to Augustine, the Virgin Mary is always mentioned with the highest respect and honor, not the least bit inferior to the Apostolic Saints because of her role in God's great work of redemption. Justin Martyr in 165 AD, for example, famously contrasted Mary's obedience with the disobedience of Eve in Genesis 3. At the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD, in an effort to combat those who denied the true humanity of the Son of God, Mary was designated Theotokos – "Mother of God" of "God-Bearer." To deny this, they said, is tantamount to denying the incarnation of the Son, for Mary bore and birthed into this world, in the human flesh her body provided, God Himself. It is, therefore, perfectly orthodox to speak of, "Mary, the Virgin Mother of God," or the, "Blessed Virgin, Mother of our Lord." In fact, to say the opposite is not merely taboo to the Church, but rank heresy.

Lest we slip into a host of heretical teachings about Christ as one person with two natures, the Church must assert it was Mary's flesh which enfleshed the Word that was with the Father in the Beginning (John 1:1-3). It was her Holy Spirit inspired obedience and humility that begins the climax of God's epochal work of salvation through the incarnation. Adam was taken from the dust of the ground, but Jesus came by way of the Virgin's body; the new Eve of the new creation. The Advent of our Lord happens in and through the fact of Mary; Mary's faithfulness, Mary's being "full of grace," Mary's sanctified body, and Mary's birthing God's only Son, Jesus. So, she cannot be sidestepped but stands at the heart of the Gospel proclaimed during Advent and Christmas everywhere as a respectful and dignified Church stands in awe of God's wonders and the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Preach, therefore, the full council of God even as it focuses on the Virgin Mary who was the virginal handmaid of the Lord and through whom Immanuel, "God with us," happens.

Being born of this woman, Mary, in fact is essential for our justification. The Son of God had to be made truly human in order to represent us from conception through death, even death on a cross. The doctrine of representation is lost without Jesus, "being born of a woman, born under the Law" (Galatians 4:4). Goats and bulls could not take away the sin of the world of humanity, but the righteous blood of, "the one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5), can and did. You cannot preach justification without incarnation and the incarnation cannot be established without declaring the role of the Virgin Mary. Be bold and confident preaching the enfleshed Word of God, lest Jesus become conflated with the Holy Spirit.

By giving deference to the role of the Virgin Mary in the incarnation and, by extension, our justification through God's grace because of Christ, we see and hear about the dignified role women have played in the story of the world's redemption. Too often Protestants associate women with the Eve figure: insubordinate, freethinking, power-plating, troublesome. Mary explodes this image in the first pages of the Gospels through her courage, her obedience, and her gifted holiness. It will be the woman of the New Covenant, not the Old Testament, who exemplifies new life in the Kingdom of God to come. Mary, then, restores the dignity of womanhood Eve had undone. So, following the Blessed Virgin Mary, the New Testament Scriptures provide us with a host of eminent, exemplary female saints: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, Junia, Sapphira, Lydia, Phoebe, Aquila, and many others. These all followed the holy life and path of the Virgin Mary, which of course led straight to the foot of the Cross where her Son was crucified. It is there worship begins, not of the vessel of the Messiah, but of Messiah Himself.

Faithful preachers do well to break the Protestant taboo during Advent. Women, indeed, have a place in redemptive history. A woman stands right at the center of what God accomplishes for our Salvation through Jesus Christ. So, too, women have a place in the Church. They are not in the back, not in the kitchen, and neither in preaching nor the pastorate, but in public proclamation as a key part of the Bible's story of what and how God saved us through the One, "born of a woman." If we lose this, as has been done in the past, if women cannot hear and see the role they have played in salvation history and the Church through Mary who is the representative woman, if this role is not honored and proclaimed in keeping with Biblical truth and the parameters of trustworthy doctrine, then an egalitarian backlash will occur (as it has) and the glorious role of women and the feminine Bride of Christ will be perverted and we will be driven back to emulating rebellious Eve in the Garden. In the Gospels, however, it is Mary, not Eve, who graces the Church with the holy fruit of her womb and labors of love from her heart in raising the Son of God who is, at the same time, Mary's son. So, far from taking the focus off Christ, preaching the role of Mary drives us to the core of the Gospel itself during Advent and Christmas: God has come in the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth to redeem a people for Himself. Preachers honor Christ by breaking Protestant taboos to honor the uniqueness and blessedness of His mother, Mary.



ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

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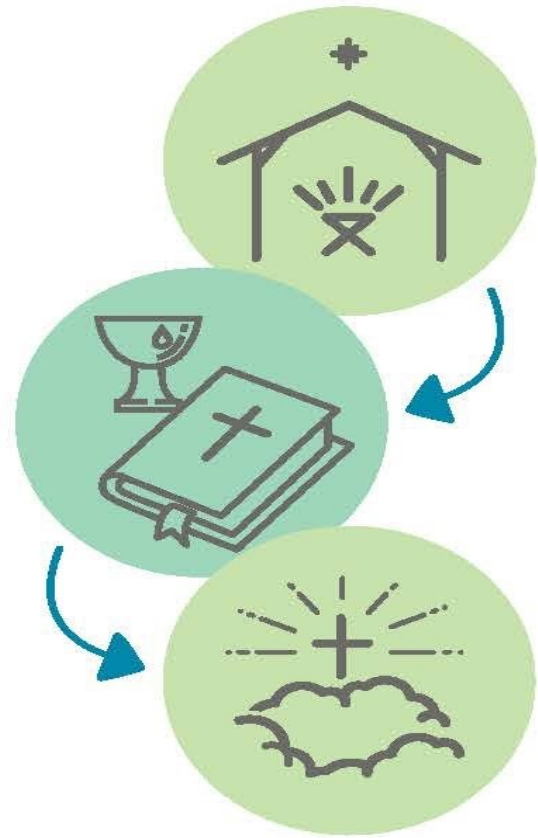
KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

The Advent of Christ

As you may remember, the word Advent means “coming.” During the season of Advent, we prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. But that is not the only coming of Jesus that we hear about in the Advent story.

What is the rest of the Advent story?

The Advent of Christ has three parts. God’s Word tells us that Jesus not only came to earth as a man at Christmas, but that He comes to be with His church through His Word and Sacraments. Finally, God’s Word reminds us that He will return in judgement on the Last Day. If you think about it, there sure are a lot of great things to remember and look forward to during the season of Advent!

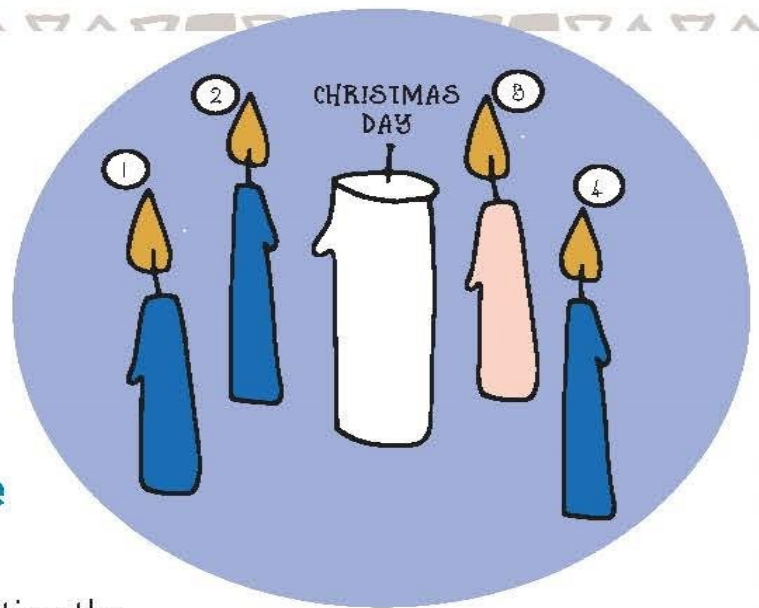


Parents:

When Holy Communion is offered, allow your children to attend the altar with you. Remind them that Jesus is truly present here in the Sacrament, and that we will see Him face to face on the Last Day!



KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



What does it mean when four candles have been lit on the Advent wreath?

You've been preparing and patiently waiting for that wonderful day of celebration. When four of the candles on the Advent wreath have been lit, it means that Christmas is almost here! That's right! The day on which we remember the birth of our Savior is right around the corner!

What does this mean to me?

Today is the Fourth Sunday in Advent. Today is the last Sunday of preparation for the birth of Jesus. Next week the Church will celebrate Christmas Day, one of the most important days of the whole year. As you can see, Advent has prepared us for the coming of Jesus, our wonderful Savior from sin!

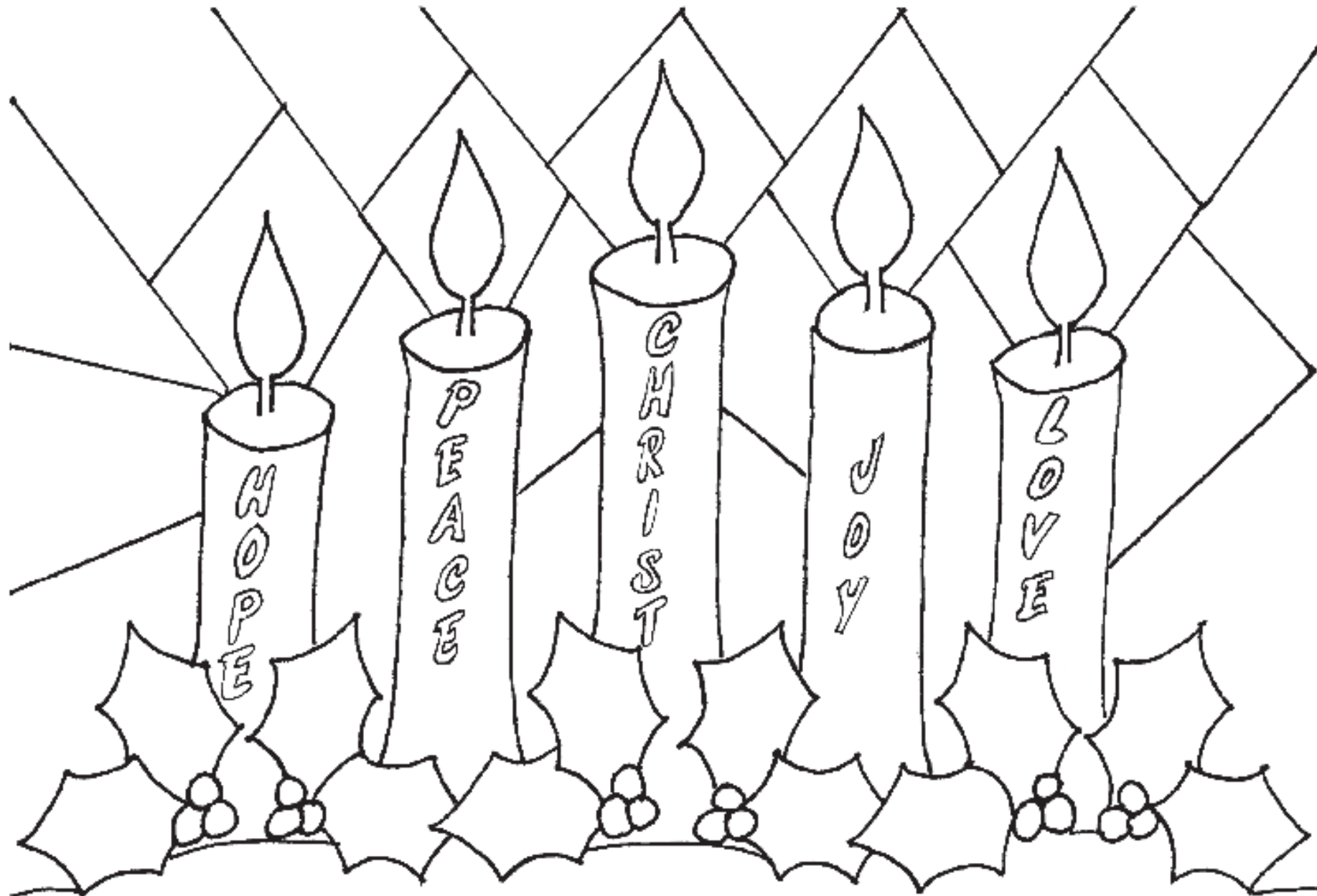


Parents:

Remind your children of the important part that Advent plays in the lives of all Christians. This is the time in the Church Year that prepares us for the coming of our Savior. Be sure to bring your children to both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.



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CHRIST IS BORN

Bev Wicher 2017

FEED MY SHEEP

October 2022

Total Households = 37 (129 people total)

Food Pantry Statistics

Adults (18-60) = 79
Children (0-17) = 35
Senior Citizens (61+) = 15
Other (*Unknown*) = 0



PASTOR'S CARE FUND

October 2022

These disbursements are from money designated for the Pastor's Care Fund. Your contributions bring a tremendous relief to your neighbors who are in difficult circumstances.

Total Households = 23

Bibles = 3
Utility Help = 7
Rent/Mortgage = 2
Motel = 9
Transportation = 2

Clothing = 0
Other = 0





December

Birthdays

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Gary Black | 10 Dolores Hermes | 20 Debi Hartwig |
| Natalie Wahl | John Jenkins | 21 James Stracar-Pinoski |
| 2 Camiran Brockhoff | 11 Kayla Phillips | Marian Venenga |
| Adalyn Fanning | Charles Scott | 22 Lynn Chapman |
| Jackson Muller | Jennifer Vojdani | Erin Reinker |
| 3 Bob Bauer | 13 Roger Gust | 23 Tommy Byrd |
| 5 Helen Jones | 14 John Augustine | 25 Cathy Dodge |
| Bettye Platt | 15 Mary Hanson | Peter Tang |
| 6 James Sij | Chase White | 26 Chris Reimers |
| Derrick Varble | 17 Levi Wright | Christopher Wilken |
| 7 Scott Gutche | 18 Jeff Blake | 27 Rev. HL Bernthal |
| 8 Boone Miller | Joanne Byrd | Natalie Scott |
| Vernon Schmiegelow | Caleb Wilken | 30 Dan Martin |
| Charlie Wilken | 19 Jean Gregesich | 31 Gene Kiesel |
| 9 Adrienne Kerr | Matthew Stottlemyer | Jenny McCarthey |
| Donna Spencer | 20 Brian Bulin | |



Anniversaries

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 Bryan & Kati Evans | 20 Dan & Laurie Martin |
| 7 Lee & Elaine Landauer | 22 Chris & Jen Reimers |
| 14 Jerry & Kathy Lavender | 28 Gary & Marcia Black |
| 15 Alvin & Gayle Brewer | 30 Ron & Gloria Sommers |
| 16 Christian & Jennifer Lehenbauer | Marlan & Carol Wahl |
| Paul & Stella Ned | 31 Mike & Debi Hartwig |
| 19 Ben & Melinda Miller | Andrew & Jen Ockinga |
- 

SERVING IN DECEMBER 2022



	December 4th (ADVENT 2)	December 11th (ADVENT 3)	December 18th (ADVENT 4)	December 25 (CHRISTMAS DAY)
READERS				
8:00 AM	JOHN AUGUSTINE	MARY FREVERT	KAREN LAUNDERVILLE	—
10:45 AM	SKIP SHANE	KATHLEEN THOMPSON	LEE LANDAUER	REV. JOHN LINDNER
GREETERS				
8:00 AM	LB & ILA TEETER	DAVE & WENDIE FERGUSON	RICH RUMPF & MARIAN VENENGA	—
10:45 AM	BRENT & LIBBY GARNER	MIKE & BETTYE PLATT	LEE & ELAINE LANDAUER	JOHN & KATHLEEN THOMPSON
MEDIA				
8:00 AM	DAVID HEINTZ	JENA EISMA	JOHN JENKINS	—
10:45 AM	JEAN GREGESICH	TED REINKER	ZACHARY GUST	JEAN GREGESICH
STREAMING	MAC MACGOWAN	OWEN WINTERS	—	OWEN WINTERS
LEAD COUNTERS	MAC MACGOWAN & HT MEANS	MAC MACGOWAN & HT MEANS	MAC MACGOWAN & HT MEANS	MAC MACGOWAN & HT MEANS
LAWN CARE	TEAM 5	TEAM 1	TEAM 2	TEAM 3
ALTAR GUILD ELDERS	SABRINA ISBELL & KRISTA MALONE 8:00 AM – ALLEN WINTERS 10:45 AM – DUANE WRIGHT			
USHERS	8:00 AM – TEAM A (DAVE FERGUSON, VERN SCHMIEGELOW, SAM WELBORN, ZACH SANDERS, LOU HOLTZ, COLBY ISBELL) 10:45 AM – TEAM B (FRED LEWIS, BRENT GARNER, KEVIN BROCKHOFF, DON MAYER, GIL CAMPBELL)			



DECEMBER 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY	2 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY	3 JOURNEYMAN BONFIRE
4 ADVENT 2 (FEED MY SHEEP) 8 AM—COMMUNION 9:30 AM—EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM—COMMUNION 4:30 PM—ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT	5 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	6 6:30 PM—ELDERS	7 10 AM—WORSHIP 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM—SOUP SUPPER 7 PM—WORSHIP	8 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY 4 PM CRAFTY CREW	9 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY 6 PM—CARDS	10 6 PM—PROGRESSIVE DINNER
11 ADVENT 3 8 AM—WORSHIP 9:30 AM—EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM—WORSHIP	12 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	13 6:30 PM—COUNCIL	14 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM—SOUP SUPPER 7 PM—CHILDRENS SERVICE	15 12 PM—CLARION DUE 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY 4 PM CRAFTY CREW	16 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY	17
18 ADVENT 4 8 AM—COMMUNION 9:30 AM—EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM—COMMUNION	19 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	20	21 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM—CONFIRMATION	22 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY 4 PM CRAFTY CREW	23 2—4 PM FOOD PANTRY	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 7 PM—CANDLELIGHT SERVICE 
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10 AM—COMMUNION 	26 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	27	28 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM—CONFIRMATION	29	30	31 NEW YEARS EVE