



The Christ Messenger

Christ Lutheran Church
Vienna, West Virginia

December 2021

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Our Mission:

As Children of God, nourished
by the Word, Sacrament and
Fellowship of loving, forgiving,
and hopeful believers—

WE are guided by the Holy
Spirit to WITNESS to Christ's
saving presence in the World!

Advent Expecting & Preparing

It seems that Advent has crept up on us this year, or maybe it just seems that way, the older we get. At any rate, we are in the midst of an Advent that is still in the throes of the Covid pandemic. This pandemic had brought out both the best and worst of humanity. Inflation is beginning to creep up and our economy is not where it needs to be with consumer demand outstripping our ability to supply, had made shopping for Christmas a real chore. Its very likely that our shopping will not be as extravagant as in years past and maybe our holiday meals will be cut back some. Perhaps the upside of our upcoming season is we have the opportunity to strengthen our spiritual life instead of our material one.

I was reading 1st Samuel the other day and the introduction of that book mad a comment about the many characters described in the book. It said there that the important thing in life isn't so much where you start but how you use that beginning in order to finish the race. The really neat thing about Advent is that it begins where we are now and moves backward in time to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. That very progression from week one to week four points us all toward the very vine of our faith, it points us to, Jesus, in whom we abide.

Advent is about living in the expectation and preparation. For so many people, it will become an extension of Christmas and because of that it meaning is often overshadowed. It has become more of preparing for a single event as opposed to gathering

strength for the journey. Our first readings of Advent for all three years of the lectionary are from Jeremiah and Isaiah. This year we hear the promise form Jeremiah that God will provide a king from the city of David, and that through this leader there will be safety and justice. In other years our readings are from Isaiah and the one has our God of justice turning the weapons of war into instruments of peace. The other reading from Isaiah, I feel, describes our current condition. There Isaiah says to God, come down here like you did in the past and take care of our enemies. Then Isaiah goes on to say we've all become like enemies, like filthy rags that are full of sin. Isaiah said no one calls your name God or tries to talk with you and because of that we are laid waste because of our sins.

But then he proclaims the Advent hope. "Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand." That is our Advent hope- that through our renewed daily devotions, our intensified prayer life, that God would make a good work out of us. That is my

Advent hope for you that God would meet you where you are and mold you into the person He wants you to be.

This season of Advent we begin where we are, since that is where God meets us. We will travel back to our baptism and remember how God blessed us with His gifts and whispered His purpose for us into our ears. Finally, we will celebrate where the cornerstone of our faith rests in Jesus Christ. All the while we will be abiding in Him who is God's Word in the flesh. Let us all continue to abide in our Lord this season, living in the promise that God will mold us all into something new, because we all are the work of His hands.

May you have an expectant Advent and a Blessed Christmas,
Pastor Tom

ELDERBERRIES

Elderberries met at der Dog Haus for our monthly Lunch and Fellowship on Thursday, November 18, 2021. The weather was rainy and cold but we were a warm, happy group. We were seated in the Sutton Room and the good news once again is that we had to squeeze together to accommodate the group. Three times since May, we have reached that number.

Those attending were: Kay Rowan, Liz Darr, Norton Woodward, Loreta Delaney, Rocky Freeman, Carolyn Stanley, Larry Armstrong, Jenny and Mike Knotts, Fran and Tom Williams, and Delores and Jerry Steege.

We sang "Happy Birthday" to Larry and Woody, who have birthdays on Sunday. Other entertainment was a couple of funny jokes by Mike, our MC. We also decided to meet on the second Thursday of the month next year in order that Pastor Tom can come because he has a conflict with the third Thursday.

There will be no meeting in December. Our January 13 meeting will be in the church Fellowship Hall and will be a planning meeting for the rest of the year. People are asked to bring ideas on new venues or your favorite old ones. Food plans are in the air as of now. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

Delores Steege

December Schedule at a Glance

Sundays:

December 5th – 9:30 Sunday School

10:45 Communion Service

December 12th & 19th – 9:30 Sunday School

8:30 & 10:45 Communion Services

December 26th – 10:45 Lessons & Carols Service

Mid Week Services:

December 1st, 8th, & 15th – Soup & Service at 6pm

Events:

December 4th – Vienna Christmas Parade

(Meet at the Church at 10am)

December 11th – Christmas Dinner

4pm – Parsonage Open House

6pm – Christmas Dinner in the Fellowship Hall

Good Samaritan Center Item of the Month



Cream Soups

Quiet Moments – December 2021

May the God who shakes heaven and earth. Whom death could not contain, who lives to disturb and heal us, bless you with power to go forth and proclaim the Gospel. Amen... Janet Morley, England

Merry Christmas to you and yours!!

Dear Friends,

I love the above prayer since it typifies the upcoming 2022 to me. What it tells me is that no matter the kind of year 2021 has been for each of us; it doesn't define us. We are God's children in all circumstances. The pandemic, political and cultural atmosphere, and our own personal challenges should not be indicative of our faith. God promises to walk with us no matter what it is.

Therefore, let us welcome Jesus with joy and song! We are His. No matter what we must do or have done, let us go forth in God's power and let everyone who meets us see His word in our actions and especially reactions. Let His peace be ours during this Christmas season and onward.

Blessings,
Liz

Birthdays



December 12 – Jenny Knotts
December 13 – Bill Rogers
December 14 – Jerry Steege
December 16 – Gean Secreto
December 22 – Andrew Padgett
December 23 – Kim Wagoner
December 28 – Cynthia Rogers
December 30 – Will Rogers

Church Address:

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Church Phone Number:

304-295-9241

Church Web Page:

<https://christlutheranviennawv.org/>

Church Facebook Page:

[Facebook.com/christlutheranchurchviennawv](https://www.facebook.com/christlutheranchurchviennawv)

We keep the following people in our prayers:

Russell Behnke; Jerry John DiNicola; Sally Ebeling; Pam Goots; Heather; Mary Hennen; Laura Lemley; Joel McGuier; Rob Miser; Gary Miller; The Family of Jay Patel, Gean Secreto; April Sowards, Caren Thomas; Donna Vincent; Betty Williamson; Terry & Vicki Wilson; Tiffany Wilson; police and first responders; our troops; Christians and other minorities in the Middle East; people in the Ukraine and eastern Europe; pray for peace; and for our military, especially for Airman Elijah Modesitt (U.S. Airforce); Jon Shorr serving in Afghanistan; Conner Allen serving in China; families of all those who serve in the military; for all who have been diagnosed with COVID 19 and/or hospitalized for the virus, for all who have died from the virus, for all of our medical personnel and first responders who are treating patients, for all families and loved ones separated by quarantines, for people who do not have access to medical care to be treated, for folks who are unemployed and the underemployed.



Church Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 9:00-12:00

The week of December 5th, Pastor Darr will be in the office during normal office hours. Kelley Padgett will be in and out of the office due to volunteer commitments.

Pastor Darr will be on vacation December 25th - December 30th. During this time, please contact Kelley Padgett with church needs and Pastor Patrice Weirick for any pastoral needs.

Kelley will be out of the office on December 23rd and 27th. Please feel free to contact her by church email or cell phone (225-326-7028) if you need anything during that time.

ADVENT STEWARDSHIP

Prepare for a new thing

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."—**Isaiah 43:19**

Advent and Christmas are all about celebrating the "new thing" that God was doing for the sake of God's people, the incarnation of God's divine essence and presence in the human form of Jesus, our savior and lord.

December will close the books on a tough year. With its racial unrest, political divisiveness, riots, wildfires, hurricanes and COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 will go down as one the most turbulent years in recent history. And we as God's people are bracing for a "new normal" that is still in formation.

As the church year begins, we can prayerfully ask, "To what 'new thing' is God calling us in this time?"

We are already adjusting as the pandemic precludes our traditional in church celebrations of Advent and Christmas. Faithfully stewarding the mystery of the incarnation and God's story will require creative, inventive thinking.

More broadly, we may pray for guidance to steward our lives to be, as Jesus directed, the salt of the earth and light to a world that needs us more than ever.

The four traditional Advent themes offer a template for how we can do a "new thing." We cultivate these themes in our hearts and congregations and share them with the world:

Hope as an antidote to the culture of despair.

Peace in our hearts to bring to the world.

Love for our friends and enemies alike.

Joy in Christ, who makes all things new.

God, who promises to make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, will lead us to new ways of stewarding our lives to meet the challenges of the new normal.

—Rob Blezard

Copyright © 2020, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.