

As We Gather

Today we REJOICE! Zephaniah the prophet calls for rejoicing because the Lord is in the midst of His people. In Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi, he repeatedly encourages the Church to rejoice, because the Lord's coming is at hand. Our Lord came to us once, He will return, and even now is with us in Word and Sacrament. So REJOICE!

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING

OPENING HYMN: *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"* **Hymn #357, st. 1-4**

THE INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS AND ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The reason for rejoicing is the good news that our Savior has come. We are nearing the day on which we celebrate His birth. But we do not always rejoice. This is a symptom of our fallen human nature, and it shows our continued need for Christ. So, let us confess our sins to God, our heavenly Father.

(please kneel)

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have often let the cares of this world, the expectations of our neighbors, and our own self-images distract us from You and Your Word. We have let the things of this world come between us and Your promises, the peace You offer, and even Your Son's presence among us now. We have failed to love You with our whole heart; we have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us for Jesus' sake, and restore in us right spirits and joyful hearts. With the psalmist we plead, "Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation."

"Surely God's salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land." In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH – THE SHEPHERD’S CANDLE

As we light the third candle, the shepherd’s candle on our Advent wreath, we recall the shepherds outside Bethlehem who heard the news of Jesus’ birth and ran to worship Him. Remembering their joy and witness we pray:

Merciful Father, as with the shepherds of old, bring to us once again the Good News that the Savior has come! Then send us out to share the news with others; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

THE HYMN:

“Angels from the realms of Glory”

**Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o’er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation’s story
Now proclaim Messiah’s birth
Come and worship,
Come and worship,
Worship Christ the newborn King.**

**Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the Infant Light.
Come and worship,
Come and worship,
Worship Christ the newborn King.**

(As the hymn stanzas are sung, Darron, Val and Garrett Counselman will light the three candles on the Advent wreath at the 8:00 am service and Steve Hetes will light them at the 10:45 am service.)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, who came in the midst of Your people once and are among us even now, open the eyes of our hearts that we may see You among us, rejoice in Your salvation, and celebrate Your presence into eternity, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

(Please be seated.)

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING: Zephaniah 3:14–20 *(Rejoice; the Lord is in your midst. He will rejoice over you.)*

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. ¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. ¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. ¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰ At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the LORD.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE EPISTLE READING: Philippians 4:4-7 (*Rejoice in the Lord always.*)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE ALLELUIA VERSE:

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

THE HOLY GOSPEL IS ANNOUNCED:

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the seventh chapter.

Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 7:18–28 (*The promised Messiah has indeed come.*)

¹⁸ The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹ calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ²⁰ And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"

²¹ In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²² And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

²⁴ When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. ²⁶ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'" ²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C Praise to You, O Christ.

THE CHILDRENS MESSAGE

Vicar Tim Staffeld

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Hymn #341

THE MESSAGE

"Rejoice!"

Pastor David Brighton

THE APOSTLES' CREED:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE GATHERING OF THE TITHES AND OFFERINGS

++ The Stewardship Thought ++

Advent points us to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, the baby Jesus, Our Savior.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6)

THE OFFERTORY:

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

**Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.**

THE PRAYERS: After each petition, the Worship Leader will say, *"Lord in Your mercy,"* and the congregation will respond, ***"Hear our prayer."***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favor and give us peace.

Amen.

THE CLOSING HYMN:

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Hymn #357, st. 5-7

A MOMENT FOR SILENT PRAYER

THE POSTLUDE

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Final Midweek Advent service is this Wednesday at 7:00 pm. The theme will be: "The Song of the Church" which includes the "song" of reconciliation between our holy God and us sinful people made possible by the gift of His Son.

The Getty's in Concert! You can purchase your ticket online at: Gettymusic.com/tourChristmas. Look for the December 21 performance at the Fox Theater in Atlanta and select "ticket," then put LCEF2015 in the promo code box and you will save 15% off the price of your ticket. The concert begins at 7:30 pm and will feature a huge choir, great music, great Irish dancing, some sing-a-long Christmas carols, and their well-known hymn, "In Christ Alone."

Christmas Eve Worship – **The 5:00 pm service** is geared toward families with young children (though all are welcome!). The children will be invited to dress the part of one of the people or animals of that first Christmas and help Pastor tell the Christmas story. Special music will be provided by Levi and Haydn Crook on the violin and banjo. **The 7:00 pm service** will feature our Hand Bell Choir and the Festival Choir will sing, "The Glory of the Lord" from Handel's Messiah. The service will conclude with Candlelight and the singing of "Silent Night." **The 10:00 pm service** will include the celebration of Holy Communion and will also conclude with Candlelight and the singing of "Silent Night."

Lee Hopf, son of this congregation who is completing his final year at the Seminary in St. Louis before receiving his first call to a parish next Spring, will be our preacher at the services the weekend after Christmas, on December 26 and 27. What a joy for us to have our Vicar lead the liturgy and our Seminarian preach for us!

Our Altar Flowers were provided this week by Eugene & Lois O'Neal, in memory of Joel's birthday, and by Gene & Lucia Brantley, in honor of their 60th wedding anniversary.

Honduras Mission Trip Opportunity. Christ Lutheran Church in Perry welcomes you to join their 6th Annual Mission trip to Children of Love Lutheran Orphanage and Church in La Paz, Honduras on January 23-30, 2016. The trip cost is a round trip ticket to Tegucigalpa in Honduras (currently about \$400-\$600), plus \$200, and your passport. For additional information, see childrenoflove.org or contact John or Renee Lehenbauer at ph/txt (478) 397-5914 or christlutheranperry@gmail.com.

The Angel Tree is now set up in the entry lobby and quite a few of you have picked up Angels. This week, we received the requests from the Salvation Army and Lutheran Services. If you have not picked up an Angel, we encourage you to get one now. The deadlines for returning the Angel along with the gift are as follows: **Family Promise**, 12:00 pm Tuesday, **December 15th**. **Salvation Army**; 12:00 pm Wednesday, **December 16th**. **Rainbow House**, 12:00 pm Monday, **December 21st**. **IMPORTANT:** Please return the entire angel to MCLC with the unwrapped gift in a Christmas Bag under the tree (there will be a box for gift cards and each day we will move the gift cards to a safe location). If you have any questions, please contact one of the following Social Ministry board members: Jan Langston, Jan Clark, Cheryl Hernandez, Brenda Wessling or Liz Hunter

Ice Skating: Middle and High School Youth will be going Ice Skating on Monday, December 21st, from 11:30-4:30. The cost is \$10/person for admission & skate rental - Emergency Medical Forms are required. Youth are encouraged to eat lunch BEFORE they come since we will not be stopping for lunch and food at the centerplex is expensive. Sign up in the Annex so we can be sure to have enough drivers.

The Board of Outreach is distributing "Christmas Blessing Cards." We ask each member to take two or three cards and use them as you bless a member of our community. Perhaps you can pay for a person's meal at a fast food restaurant and give them a "Christmas Blessing Card" in the process. We want the community to feel blessed by Mount Calvary during this Christmas season.

Thanks for all of your prayers during these weeks of recuperating from surgery. Your phone calls, visits and cards were much appreciated – Dwight Miller.

Christmas Dinner Giveaways: There is a box at the church entrance for items to give away at the annual Helping Hands Dinner. These can be free things you get in the mail such as notepads and calendars or whatever you think may be wanted.

High School Christmas Party: The High School youth will celebrate Christmas this Sunday, December 13th, from 6:30–8:30 in the Annex. There is no cost, but youth are asked to bring their favorite Holiday goody to share and a gift for the exchange.

Christmas Cookies For Shut-Ins: The High School Youth will be gathering to bake and deliver cookies to our shut-ins next Saturday, December 19th, from 10 am – 2 pm. We hope that you can join us for this service project. Lunch will be provided.

High School TAG Night: The next TAG Night will be Sunday, December 20th, from 6:30-8:30 in the Annex. We will continue our study of "Life With Shrek" As we explore what the Bible has to say about appearances & layer. Whether it is an onion, parfait, or a person. We hope to see you there!

Macon Mayhem: There are still 12 tickets left for TAG's trip to the Macon Mayhem game on Friday, January 8th. Youth can either come on their own or families can make a night of it. Tickets are on a first-paid, first-seated basis. We are in the first few rows on center ice!

Senior Fellowship - Come join us for Senior Fellowship **Thursday, December 17th, at 11:00 am**, in the Fellowship Hall. There will be a brief Bible study, a game or two, recognition of birthdays and anniversaries, a great time, and a delicious pot luck lunch. If, for some reason you cannot make a dish, bring yourself, there is always plenty of really delicious food.

Daytime Callers share Christ's love and concern with shut-ins and others who need to know that we at Mt. Calvary care for them. We meet this **Monday, December 14th, in the church conference room at 11:00 am.**

Mount Calvary's Helping Hands Christmas Dinner! Christmas Day from 12-2 at First United Methodist Church (205 N. Davis Dr.) we will serve hundreds of people with a warm Christmas dinner. We will need help preparing the event, working in the kitchen, serving food, making deliveries, and much more! If you want to help in any way, big or small, please sign-up on the Helping Hands Christmas Dinner sign-up sheet at the information desk or outside Vicar's office.

Nursery volunteers – Please make sure to check the schedule in the nursery to see when you are scheduled to volunteer!! The schedule for December and January is on the wall in the nursery. A big THANK YOU to all of our nursery volunteers!! I appreciate your help and your willingness to serve Mount Calvary's smallest members!!! If you have any questions, please feel free to call or text Cynthia at (478)718-9340.



**The Flower Chart for 2016 is posted.
Now would be a good time to get the
weekend that you want reserved.**

PRAYER CONCERNS

Sonya Popken, who is hospitalized.

Jeannie Hawkins, who is recovering at home after hospitalization for fluid in her lungs.

Karen Harmon, who is asthmatic and has contracted whooping cough and pneumonia.

Marrissa Halsell, who is struggling with her multiple sclerosis.

Bob Yeager, who is recovering from rotator cuff surgery.

Josie Kong, Evvy Keyes' mom, who has been diagnosed with hydrocephalus (water on the brain) and a brain tumor.

Tony Kong, Evvy Keyes' dad, who is still in the ICU, and on a ventilator.

Keep In Your Prayers

Regina Ragan, Deaglan Lovett (Jennifer O'Donnell's infant son), Jan Clark, Chet Branscom, Ralph Wenrick, Jacque Bohm, Rosie Schulz, Diane McCall, Courage Trasmer, Paul Brown, Nancy Hoar, Monika Reynolds, Gary Webb, Yekabu Gedru and Karen Johnson.

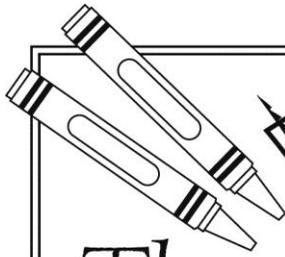
(NOTE: Those listed under "Keep in your prayers" are removed from the list after eight weeks. If there is someone you would like to keep on the list for another eight weeks, please contact the church office.)

Those Battling Cancer

Those battling cancer: Ken Reilly, Anne Harter (daughter of Dick & Susan Kesler), Margaret Frazier, Mary Jahnke (Joe's sister), Barry Rice (Becky McVay's brother), Norma Young (Melinda Hopf's aunt), Paula Babcock, Kathy Grube, Chet Branscom, Mary Schwope (Michele Durbin's aunt), Jeannette Poniske (Fred Tamer's mom), Bruce Oswalt (Krystal Ferguson's father), Gary Jennings (Margaret Jennings' son) and Elaine Mead (Jeannie Hawkins' aunt).

Those Serving our Country in Dangerous Areas

Jake Huffman, Chris Walker, Darrin Landis, Denver Yarbrough, Michael Welch, Jonathan Fetchik and Christian Corbitt, for safety and good health as they serve our country in dangerous areas.

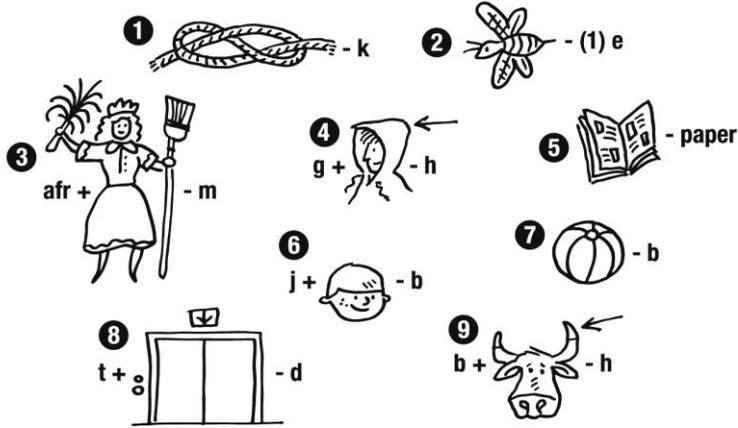


PUZZLE

The angel's message

On the first Christmas Eve, shepherds were watching over their flocks when an angel suddenly appeared.

Use the picture clues below to find out what the angels said to the terrified shepherds.



"Do _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3. I bring you _____ 4

_____ 5 of great _____ 6 that will be for _____ 7 the people.

Today in the _____ 8 of David a Savior has been _____ 9

to you; **he is Christ the Lord.**" Luke 2:10-11, NIV

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11, NIV

Answers: 1. knot-k=not; 2. bee-(1)e=be; 3. afr+maid-m=afraid; 4. g+hood-h=good; 5. newspaper-paper=news; 6. j+boy-b=joy; 7. ball-b=all; 8. t+down-d=town; 9. b+horn-h=born

SERVING US TODAY

PREACHER: Pastor David Brighton. **LITURGIST:** Vicar Tim Staffeld. **ELDERS:** Darron Counselman (8 am) and D. J. Nelson (10:45 am). **ACOLYTES:** Carolyn Harper (8 am) and Zoe Bowden (10:45 am). **USHERS:** Early – Brian Harper, David Rossman, Bob Yeager & Richard Uitto. Late – Mike Hopf, Bruce Bauman, Dave Harter, Ed Bodony & Earl Bogardus. **ALTAR GUILD:** Sue Glaser, Barb Mabee, Ginger Martin, Kathy Robinson & Sharon Suckow. **LAY READERS:** Laird Van Gorder (8 am) and Barbara Mabee (10:45 am). **SLIDE PREPARER:** Gary Webb. **PROJECTIONISTS:** Lyle Wurdeman (8 am) and Josh Johnson (10:45 am).

SERVING US NEXT WEEK

ELDERS: D. J. Nelson (Wed 7 pm), Tony McVay (Sat 6 pm), Laird Van Gorder (Sun 8 am) and John Hunter (Sun 10:45 am). **ACOLYTES:** Cody Halsell (Wed 7 pm) Maddy Hagemann (Sat 6 pm), Taitum Gossman (8 am) and Tyler Longbine (10:45 am). **ALTAR GUILD:** Sue Glaser, Barb Mabee, Ginger Martin, Kathy Robinson & Sharon Suckow. **LAY READERS:** Dave Harter (Wed 7 pm), Debi Cole (Sat 6 pm), Kathy Robinson (8 am) and John Hunter (Sun 10:45 am). **GREETERS:** Sallie Brinkley (Sun 8 am) and Bill & Arlene Zeuner (Sun 10:45 am).

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Micah 5:5-2a and Hebrews 10:5-10

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK

Saturday – 45 Early – 85 Late – 143 Total – 273

THIS WEEK AT MOUNT CALVARY

Today	6:30-8:30 pm	High School Christmas Party
Monday	11:00 am	Daytime Callers
	6:20 pm	Evangelism Callers
	6:30 pm	Women's Small Group
Tuesday	6:30 pm	Praise Team Rehearsal
	7:15 pm	Bell Choir
Wednesday	9:30 am	Craft & Chat
	6:00 pm	Dinner
	7:00 pm	Worship
	7:45 pm	Sanctuary Choir (after Worship)
Thursday	10:00 am	Ladies Bible Study
	11:00 am	Senior Fellowship
Saturday	8:30 am	Men's Breakfast
	10 am-2 pm	Cookies for Shut-Ins
Sunday	5:00 pm	Adult Bible Study
	6:30 pm	TAG Night