

As We Gather

As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation approaches, through the course of the year we will be singing the hymns of Martin Luther. For the Sundays in Advent we will sing a portion of his hymn, "Savior of the Nations, Come" as our opening hymn each week.

Someone has said that the best way to experience true joy in life is to keep things straight: J-O-Y, that's **J**esus first in your life, then **O**thers then **Y**ourself. That's not bad advice! During the Advent season our attention is completely drawn to the JOY we have in the coming Christ Child, joy that springs from the knowledge that this little baby, born in the manger, comes as the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace prophesied by Isaiah long ago. Jesus comes to forgive our every sin. He comes to claim us as His own. He comes to live and suffer and die and rise again, all so that we can be His children and heirs of everlasting life. Now that's cause for JOY today and every day!

PRELUDE**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING****OPENING HYMN:**

"Savior of the Nations, Come"

**Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.**

**God the Father was His source,
Back to God He ran His course.
Into hell His road went down,
Back then to His throne and crown.**

**Glory to the Father Sing,
Glory to the Son, our King,
Glory to the Spirit be
Now and through eternity.**

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

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

(Please kneel)

Almighty God,

We have been given life, but we often have not lived. We have enjoyed the wonder of your creation, but have too often failed to acknowledge You as Creator. We have sought the full pleasure that life has to offer, but we feel as though we have missed true joy. Father, we confess that we have separated ourselves from You by our thoughts, words and actions. We desire joy in life and we know that only You can provide the true and lasting joy that we seek! We ask You to forgive our sins and give us real joy in You. Amen.

“Oh sing to the Lord a new song . . . make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.” With great joy we sing praises to our God who sent His Son to free us from sin and death. 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.

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: THE JOY CANDLE

On this third Sunday in Advent we light a third candle and call it JOY.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of the coming Messiah and His coming means joy: “The people rejoice before You as with joy at the harvest.”

Jesus Himself said, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

We prepare for our Savior’s coming, knowing that in Him our joy is complete!

THE HYMN:

“Joy to the World”

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room and heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.**

(As the hymn stanzas are sung, Glen and Pat Thompson will light the candles on the Advent wreath at the 8:00 am service. Joan Steese will light the candles at the 10:45 am service.)

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our heart. Fill our hearts with joy for Your gracious visitation; 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: Psalm 98 *(All of creation sings a new song to the Lord!)*

¹ Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. ² The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. ³ He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. ⁴ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! ⁵ Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! ⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD! ⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! ⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together ⁹ before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE EPISTLE READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 *(Rejoice, pray, give thanks to the Lord in all circumstances.)*

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil. ²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE ALLELUIA VERSE:



THE HOLY GOSPEL IS ANNOUNCED:

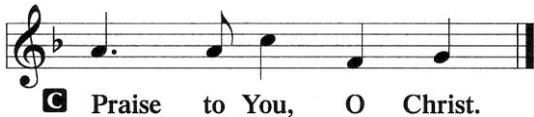
The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.



THE HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 13:44 (*A one-verse parable, but a very powerful point!*)

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

Vicar Aaron Sterling

THE HYMN OF THE DAY:

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

Hymn #803

THE MESSAGE:

"Joyful Noise"

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 brings the start of a brand new church year—a time of expectation and hope

As we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior! Think about the ways

You will prepare your heart this year to celebrate Jesus' birth!

"Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." (Matthew 3:3)

OFFERTORY HYMN:

"Arise, O Christian People"

**Arise, O Christian people! Prepare yourselves today;
Prepare to greet the Savior, Who takes your sins away.
To us by grace alone the truth and light was given;
The promised Lord from heaven to all the world is shown.**

**Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; Turn not from me aside,
And help me to receive You this blessed Adventide.
From stall and manger low come now to dwell within me;
I'll sing Your praises gladly and forth Your glory show.**

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:

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Hymn #341

A MOMENT FOR SILENT PRAYER

THE POSTLUDE

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Discipleship University Certificates! Congratulations to all who are receiving one or more certificates for completing core classes in our *Discipleship University* curriculum! There are five core classes: Fellowship, Discipleship, Stewardship, Worship and Outreach. Upon completion of all five core classes, participants receive a *Discipleship University* T-shirt. Receiving T-shirts today are: Barb Mabee, Regina Ragan, Marcia Brighton, Earl and Dot Bogardus, Brenda Wessling, Pat Stetzler, and Eileen Mittuch. Look for future offerings of our *Discipleship U* classes – it would be great for everyone to take these important Bible studies and earn their T-shirt!

Midweek Advent Service. This Wednesday our final Midweek Advent service will center on the song of the angels who announced with great joy the birth of the Savior to the shepherds out in the fields surrounding Bethlehem. Their song of great joy still echoes through our lives today as a melody of rejoicing! The service is at 7:00 pm, preceded by a fellowship meal at 6:00 pm.

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule:

- 5:00 pm = Service geared toward families with young children, who will be invited by Pastor Brighton to dress up in costumes to help tell the Christmas story!
- 7:00 pm = Candlelight service
- 10:00 pm = Candlelight service with Holy Communion

Christmas Day Worship Schedule: We will have one worship service on Christmas Day, which falls on Sunday this year. The worship service, with Holy Communion, will be at 10:00 am. There will be no Sunday School classes this weekend. Those helping with the Christmas Day Dinner will have time to worship and then go to First United Methodist on North David Drive to assist with the Christmas dinner.

Our New Year's worship schedule will follow the regular schedule with a New Year's Eve service on Saturday, December 31st at 6:00 pm and New Year's Day worship services on Sunday, January 1st at 8:00 and 10:45 am. There will be no Sunday School classes on New Year's weekend.

Our Altar Flowers were provided this week by Gary Hadley, in honor of Lexie's birthday, and by Marjorie Hogan, in memory of her husband John.

Mt. Calvary has received gifts in memory of Josie Kong, Evy Keyes' mom, from Darron & Valerie Counselman and Riley Hood.

Once again we will be collecting "Freebies" to give away at the Christmas Day dinner. There is a box under the table in the entryway to put items. These items could include calendars, notepads, pens, warm things like mittens or hats or whatever you think would be appropriate.

Thank you to everybody who has taken an Angel and brought the gift back to church. We just received notice of a real need in the Salvation Army's Safe House, so we have a few more Angels that have been placed on the tree and we are asking for your help to support other families. If you could help this organization that helps those in desperate need we would appreciate it. If you have any questions, please call Liz Hunter at 478-714-9506. Thank You!



The Flower Chart for 2017 is posted. Now would be a good time to get the weekend that you want reserved. Note: When you pay for flowers, please indicate this on your check or envelope.



Helping Hands Christmas Dinner: Our 12th annual Helping Hands Christmas Dinner is coming up! The dinner will take place on Christmas Day from 12 – 2 PM. We will need plenty of volunteers to help in the kitchen, serving, greeting, and delivering food during that time. We will also need a handful of people for a morning shift to help set up and prepare most of our food in the kitchen. Lastly we will need at least a small crew for take down and clean up after the meal is finished. However, if you cannot make it to help on Christmas there are many other things we need help with! We still need a lot of people willing to prepare a turkey or ham ahead of time (drop off times TBD on the 23rd & 24th or another time coordinated with me). Also I will need a crew of people willing to help me set up and decorate the gym at First Methodist on the afternoon of the 23rd. This dinner truly is a wonderful opportunity to serve our community and share the love of Christ, but I need all of you to make it a successful one! If you have any questions feel free to contact me anytime!

- In Christ, Vicar Aaron

Ushers Urgently Needed: Due to relocation and job commitments, we have two vacancies on one of the 8 am Usher Teams. If you can help fill one of the vacancies, please call Don Parrott at 922-6106 or email him at parrottd1@cox.net.

Please return the Rough Wood and Rusty Nails yard signs and stands to the Information Desk to be stored for future use. Thanks.

Due to Unfortunate Circumstances with El Bronco Restaurant, the PrimeTimer's Christmas Party has been cancelled.

Senior Fellowship - Come join us for Senior Fellowship **Thursday, December 15th, 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.

Don't forget "The Fish", our own Mount Calvary free classified ad page. Check out the current issue on the bulletin boards and the table by the front doors to see what's for sale and what services our members can help you with. If you have items you'd like to sell or have publicized, contact Susan Wallace at 227-1915 or e-mail her at mixedsilles02@gmail.com.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Opal Key, Dianne Damron's mother, who suffered a stroke.

Ruth Brighton, Pastor's mother, who has a pre-cancerous growth in her breast.

Alyce Quillin, who is rehabbing following hip surgery.

Laura Haas, who is in rehab, but struggling with pneumonia.

Keep In Your Prayers

Margaret Jennings, Cameron Mastenbrook, Rosie Schulz, Erika Swaim (Marcia Brighton's mother), John White, Barb Mabee, Pastor Brighton, Bev Ellgass, Doris Snow, Deloris Denzine 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: Barry Rice (Becky McVay's brother), Norma Young (Melinda Hopf's aunt), Kathy Grube, Mary Schwope (Michele Durbin's aunt), Jeannette Poniske (Fred Tamer's mom) and Bruce Oswald (Krystal Ferguson's father).

Those Serving our Country in Dangerous Areas

Aaron Gittner, Benjamin Brighton, Darrin Landis, Denver Yarbrough, Jonathan Fetchik and Christian Corbitt, for safety and good health as they serve our country in dangerous areas.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

The Small Groups Ministry at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church helps make our vision of
“Connecting People to Christ and to One Another to Serve the World”
become a very real part of our member’s lives.

Couples With Kids: Led by Adam & Larissa Beecher. Contact Adam 912-856-0240 or Larissa 912-713-4541 for info.

Ladies Not Finished Yet: Led by Judy Van Gorder (953-0759). They meet Mondays at 9:30 am at church in the cry room.

North Macon Fellowship: Led by Larry and Bev Ellgass (238-4125). Call for date and time.

Parents’ Small Group: Led by Tammy & Eric Jenkins. They meet as part of Wednesday Night Church at 6:00 in the one of the Fellowship Hall classrooms. Call 225-2089

Retired – Empty Nest Small Group: Led by Bruce and Barbara Bauman (922-3286). They meet the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 in the conference room.

Retirees: Led by Dale & Jeannie Hawkins (225-6445).

Retirees: Led by Champ & Pat Aldredge (988-8446). They meet every 2nd Thursday @ 7:00 pm at their home.

TAG Mom’s Group: Led by Sonja LeBorious (987-6983). This group meets every other Saturday.

Women’s Small Group: Led by Sue Glaser (328-1729). They meet every Monday at 6:30 pm at church.

Young Couples: Led by David & Mia Bohm (396-8885). Contact Mia for dates and times.

***If you are interested in joining a Small Group or starting one,
talk with Pete LeBorious (DCE) for details & support.***

SERVING US TODAY

PREACHER: Pastor David Brighton. **LITURGIST:** Vicar Aaron Sterling. **ELDERS:** Brian Harper (8 am) and Bob Gerstenberger (10:45 am). **ACOLYTES:** Abby Soisson (8 am) and Koda Cook (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:** Marcia Brighton, Valerie Counselman, Denise Forehand & Nancy Hoar. **LAY READERS:** Steve Kirchoff (8 am) and Carolyn Burnam (10:45 am). **SLIDE PREPARER:** Gary Webb. **PROJECTIONISTS:** Early – Nick Jenkins. Late – Caleb & D. J. Nelson.

SERVING US NEXT WEEK

ELDERS: D. J. Nelson (Wed 7 pm), Kenn Keyes (Sat 6 pm), Bob Yeager (Sun 8 am) and Mark Burnette. **ACOLYTES:** Zoe Babcock (Wed 7 pm), Caleb Durbin (Sat 6 pm), Sara Van Lannen (Sun 8 am) and Lynn Cook (Sun 10:45 am). **ALTAR GUILD:** Lois Harter, Melinda Hopf, Ruth Miller, Suzanne O'Daniel & Maureen Young. **LAY READERS:** Rhoda Reilly (Wed 7 pm), Becky McVay (Sat 6 pm), Debra Fingles (8 am) and Adam Beecher (Sun 10:45 am). **GREETERS:** Eileen Mittuch (Sun 8 am) and Earl & Dot Bogardus (Sun 10:45 am).

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Isaiah 52:7-10 and Colossians 1:15-20

KARENNI IN WORSHIP - 54

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK

Saturday – 40 Early – 95 Late – 166 Total – 301

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
Tuesday	6:30 pm	Women's Small Group
	4:00 pm	RG@MC Tutoring
Wednesday	7:00 pm	Council
	7:00 pm	Worship
Thursday	7:45 pm	Sanctuary Choir (after Worship)
	10:00 am	Ladies Bible Study
Saturday	11:00 am	Senior Fellowship
	9 am–3 pm	HS Cookies for Shut-Ins
	5:00 pm	Adult Bible Study
Next Sunday	5:00 pm	Praise Team Rehearsal
	9:30-10:30 am	Sunday School Christmas Party
	6:30 am	TAG Night