

There's a Place for You at St. Paul's!



Pastor's Report

Hello, St. Paul's. I'm baaaack! My return to St. Paul's seven years after my original interim here is bittersweet. It's wonderful to renew old friendships and see faces I haven't seen in a very long time, but the sadness over the death of Pastor Mike makes the sweetness very bitter.

Pastor Mike and I have been friends for a long time, and if you're like me, the shock of his death shook me to my core, but how do we honor him? We grieve, then celebrate. We not only must celebrate Pastor Mike's life and contribution, but we must celebrate the fact that this world is not our home and that Pastor Mike is now at home with our Lord.

Pulling a U-Haul, I moved home from Aptos, California on September 29, my last Sunday there as interim for Christ Lutheran Church being September 24. My plan was not to do another interim, especially right away. But sometimes God just laughs at our plans. I believe Jesus was there with Pastor Mike in his illness holding him tight. God knew Pastor Mike was not going to get well and cried along with all those who loved him as he passed into his new life with God, and as Jesus carried him to God's heavenly banquet to celebrate his arrival to his new residence. At the same time, I feel the Holy Spirit was watching over St. Paul's, and as God sees the big picture, the Spirit knew that I was available to help carry you over the finish line of your call process. I pray you share that belief with me.

We grieve, but the church has work to do, and we honor Pastor Mike by continuing the good work he did here. And now Christmas is upon us, and it is time for us to focus our attention on preparing to celebrate Christ's birth with the world.

As we approach the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we need to remember who Christ is. Many people just love Christmas time, but they don't really know the child that was born that precious day and why it is so important to keep remembering the day Jesus was born over 2000 years ago.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

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Carson City, NV 89701

PO Box 20876
Carson City, NV 89721

Church Office Hours
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

stpaulcarson@gmail.com www.stpaulslutheranfamily.com 775 882-3020

It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.' (Revelation 22:16)

Christmas celebration is more than feasting and visiting loved ones. However, the reason for the season is often ignored, even by Christians.

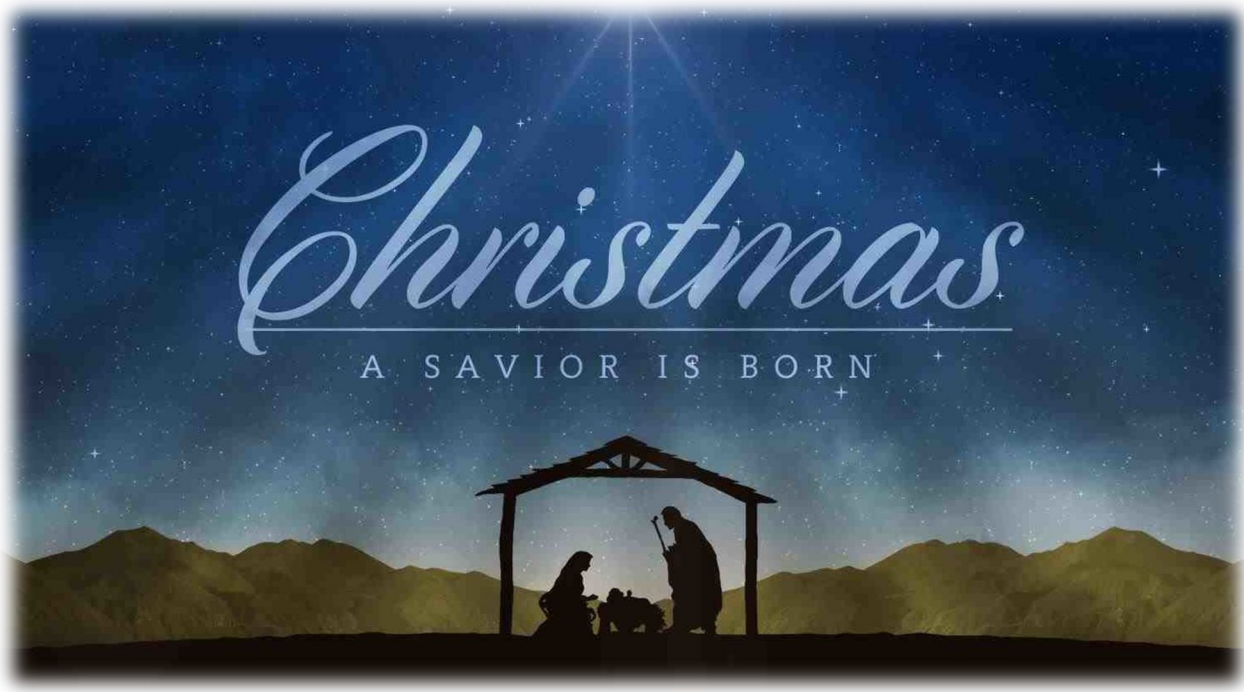
What is special about this particular baby? He came with a specified mission from God and the completion required his death on the cross. He was a child on a mission.

Who is this child, Jesus? He is called Wonderful, for He is full of wonders. His wonders have never ended. Even after death on the cross, Jesus's name is still doing wonders today. He is the great counselor, our mighty God, and the prince of peace, for He is the one who brings peace into our souls and between us and God.

The birth of baby Jesus was for the falling of our enemy and strongholds, and for our rising. It is a time to remind ourselves that our redeemer was born this day, and that we have been redeemed from the curse of the law and entitled to the freedoms our redemption gives us.

Truly, it is a time to rejoice and make merry, for over 2000 years ago, God's chosen vessel for redemption of humanity was born. Today, we are a free men and women in Christ. So, rejoice and be glad and remember to keep Christ in your Christmas celebrations. See you at church this Advent Season and Christmas Eve. Merry Christmas and many blessings in the exciting future ahead of you as St. Paul's welcomes a new pastor in the new year.

Pastor Mary Lou



Council Corner

**Louise Griffith,
President**



President's Report

This article is dedicated to communicating the actions, decisions, and future action items of the Church Council. This article is intended to give the congregation the highlights of the Church Council meeting.

BREATHE...

I was at the doctor's office for a routine exam and as part of the normal checkup, the doctor put her stethoscope to my chest to listen to my heart and then on my back to listen to my lungs. In...out and then again. In a small quiet prayer, I gave thanks to the One who gave me the breath of life.

Pastor Mike Patterson

As I reflect on just the short time Pastor Mike was with us, I have to marvel at his love and boundless energy for our church. He touched so many of us with this love and energy, was never afraid to tackle any issue head on, and wanted nothing but good things for us. He gave me so much good advice and support in decisions that needed to be made. I thank God for every moment we had with him and will miss him even as I know he now rests in the loving arms of Jesus.

Over the past few weeks, I have heard from Bishop Jeff Johnson, Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Manda Truchinske, our Conference Dean, Pastor Charlane Lines, and Pastor Kathy Morris at Holy Cross. Our Ecumenical friends in Carson City have been notified of Pastor Mike's passing. All are lifting us up in prayer. I also thank God for bringing us Pastor Mary Lou Petitjean and for all of her support and bringing us the Word of God each Sunday Morning.

Carson City School District-Appraisal of the property (2 acres)

There is still a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done by the school district. I have spoken with Superintendent A.J. Fueling. He is arranging for a survey of the lot line to be moved, which is the easiest procedure to do in this kind of situation. The cost of the survey will be approximately \$15,000, which the school district will pay. Next, an appraiser will be hired by the school district to determine the value of the property. Due to the appraiser's work load, it may be at least three or four months before the appraisal can be completed. If the school district determines that they want to continue to move forward, they will make us an offer based on the appraised value. This is a long process.

At this time, we need to stop and breathe. If (or when) the offer is received, I will call for a workshop of the congregation to meet, discuss in open forum all of the pros and cons of the offer and propose a plan. This plan will then be presented at a Congregational Meeting to be voted on. We are under no obligation to sell the property at this time. The school district must do all of their work before we can begin to make any plans or decisions.

Although the Council has had this item on its agenda for a long time, it has now been tabled until we get more information from the school district.

Interim Pastor Mary Lou Petitjean

At the meeting on November 16, 2023, the council approved a Contract of Service to be offered to Pastor Mary Lou to be our interim pastor, starting on December 4, 2023 and will end when we install a new pastor. The contract has been accepted by Pastor Mary Lou, and we will install her as our interim pastor at the worship service on December 3rd. We look forward to working with her. She was our interim pastor prior to the call to Pastor Chad Adamik and therefore knows our strengths and items we can work on while we continue the call process.

Council will not meet in December due to personal holiday schedules. We will meet again in January 2024 and look forward to a busy and blessed New Year.

As we enter this time of Advent and Christmas, I wish you all the happiest and blessed holiday. Even in the darkest winter nights, may you feel the love of God who sent us His only Son to save us and bring us new life.

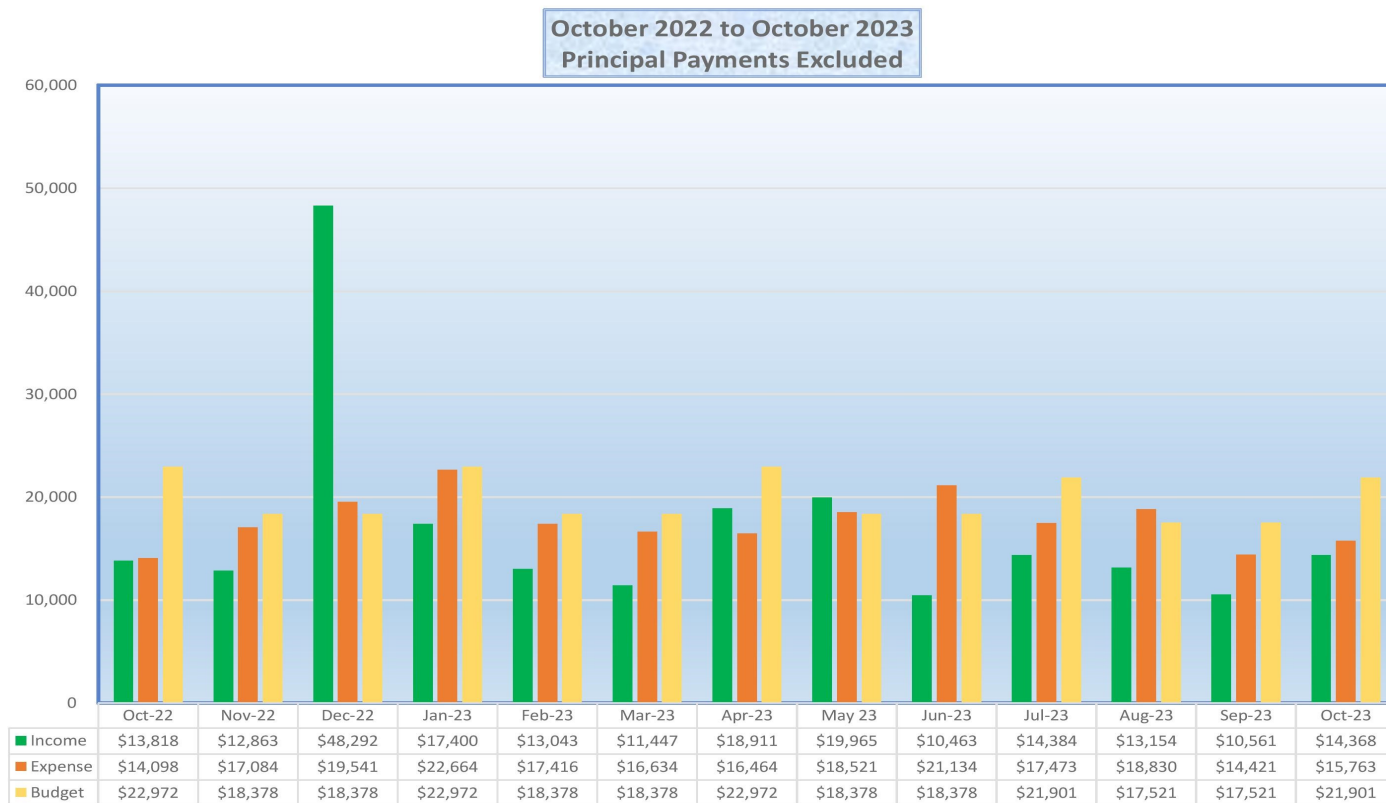
BREATHE...

In...out...and then again. Lord fill us with your breath of life. Amen

God's Peace!

Louise Griffith, President
 Phone: 775 232-7071 in the evenings
 Email: ladylouise@gmail.com
 Website: <https://www.stpaulslutheranfamily.com/>

Treasurer's Report: Income, Expenses and Budgets Chart



October 2023 Chart

11/14/2023; 11:06 AM





Altar Guild for December

Vicki Hamilton and Carol Arneson (First week)

Greeters

December 3 rd	Judy McPhail
December 10 th	Youth Group Members
December 17 th	Nikki Rohrs
December 24 th	Sharon Gesick 9:00 a.m. Ruth Fitzgerald 5:00 p.m.
December 31 st	Tim Hamilton

Readers

December 3 rd	Dorothea Phelan
December 10 th	Youth Group Pageant
December 17 th	Lessons and Carols
December 24 th	Louise Griffith, 9:00 a.m. Hope Chowanski, 5:00 p.m.
December 31 st	Ken Beaton

Live-streaming Team

Holly McPhail and Nick Cotsonis

Musicians

Dave Lingsjo, Principle Musician
Vicki Hamilton, Organist
Carol Arneson, Choir Director

Ministry Leaders

Altar Guild: Vicki Hamilton
Greeters: Ruth Fitzgerald
Readers: Judy McPhail
Counters: Mary DeFelice
Communion Assistants: Judy McPhail
Youth Acolytes: Traci Angel

Communion Assistants

December 3 rd	Holly McPhail
December 10 th	Youth Group Members
December 17 th	Jay Olshen
December 24 th	TBA, 9:00 a.m. Judy McPhail, 5:00 p.m.
December 31 st	Charlotte LaCombe

Counters

December 3 rd	Judy McPhail and Nikki Rohrs
December 10 th	Jay Olshen and Jeanne Russell
December 17 th	Judy McPhail and Deanna Fine
December 24 th	Jay Olshen and Nikki Rohrs, 9:00 a.m. Mary DeFelice and Jean Opperman, 5:00 p.m.
December 31 st	Mary DeFelice and Jean Opperman

Acolytes

Clay Woslum and Greg Griffith

Youth Acolytes – TBA

Ushers – TBA

Ministry Leaders' E-mail

Altar Guild: Vicki Hamilton
victoriahamilton9@gmail.com

Greeters: Ruth Fitzgerald
mrsrfitz17@gmail.com

Counters: Mary DeFelice
Marenang@hotmail.com

Readers: Judy McPhail
ROMAC1945@outlook.com

Ushers: Dave Harrell
davidharrell93@yahoo.com

Communion Assistants: Judy McPhail
stpaulcarson@gmail.com


Stewardship: Deanna Fine
deannajofine@gmail.com





Worship services are held each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

Our worship service is live-streamed via YouTube.

Directions for YouTube: 

Copy and paste this link into your web browser:

<https://www.youtube.com/@st.paulslutheranfamily7828>

The link will take you to St. Paul's YouTube channel where you can watch the live service.

To watch recorded services, click on "Playlist" and then choose the Sunday service/video you want to watch.

Thank You

to all those faithful stewards, especially the Executive Board and Council, who serve St. Paul's with love. Your joyful hearts and giving spirits are a true blessing!

Thank you to everyone who continues to tithe and give offerings.

A special thank you goes out to all the Call Committee members who have worked so tirelessly this past year. We appreciate your dedication.

Our family thrives because of you!



FIREFIGHTERS/PEACE OFFICERS

Andy Steyn, Brian Hillenbrand, Tina Sherman, Mark Dickens, John Gould, Michael Gould, and Jason Wildblood.

SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

Raelynn Norman (niece of Judy McPhail), Matthew Russell (nephew of Judy McPhail), Brandon Luterick, Heather Joyner (Johnson), Peter Elverum, Sarah McGee, Bryce Stimka, Olivia Lesperance, John Duffy (nephew of Sharon and Tom Gesick), and Justin Snowden.



To all our Sunday worship service volunteers...



Merry Christmas from Brette, Eddie, Rowdy Anne, Tallulah, & Neville!





December Birthdays

- 2 Marie Boone
- 3 Madeline Yoho
- 5 Levi Little
- 5 Liam Little
- 10 Cody Lopez
- 11 Gary Johnson
- 12 Bill Anderson
- 16 Amanda Chambers
- 16 Jan Enders
- 19 Joan Schultz
- 21 Bob Chambers
- 23 Karrie Alexander
- 24 Meghann Adams
- 24 Rosette Motlz
- 25 **Jesus**
- 26 Steven Overlock
- 30 Christopher Moltz



Cherish all your happy moments; they make a fine cushion for old age. Booth Tarkington

The great thing about getting older is that you don't lose all the other ages you've been.
Madeleine L'Engle

*Happy Birthday, Jesus,
I'm so glad it's Christmas.
All the tinsel and lights and
The presents are nice
But the real gift is You.*

*Happy Birthday, Jesus,
I'm so glad it's Christmas.
All the carols and bells make
The holidays swell
And it's all about You.*

Happy Birthday, Jesus; Jesus, I love You.

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Matthew 2: 1-2

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:9-10

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Luke 2:1-5

**BIBLE
STUDY**

WELCA Bible Study
 Join us on the first
 Tuesday of each month from
 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
 for a lively bible study
 Vicki Hamilton
 is the leader of
 this wonderful group.



STITCHERS meet in
 Friendship Hall the
 second and fourth
 Tuesday
 of each month from
 9:00 a.m. to noon.
**Stitchers will not
 meet in December.**

**So much has happened this year at
 St. Paul's, but remember...**



Ushers Are Still Needed!
 The Usher Ministry is in desperate need of
 ushers for Sunday services.
 If you are interested in volunteering for
 this important position, please call Dave Harrell
 at 775 315-4661 or email him at
davidharrell93@yahoo.com.

**Local charities that could use some
 Christmas help.**

Catmandu Cat Shelter
<https://www.catmanducc.org/>

Scaredy Cats Trap Neuter Release
<https://www.scaredycatstnr.com/>

Nevada Humane Society
<https://nevadahumanesociety.org/>

Advocates to End Domestic Violence
<https://www.aedv.org/>

FISH Friends in Service Helping
<https://www.nvfish.com/>

First Sunday of Advent, December 3rd
Second Sunday of Advent, December 10th
Youth and Children's Program
Third Sunday of Advent, December 17th
Lessons and Carols
Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 24th
**Christmas Eve, Two services 9:00 a.m. and
 5:00 p.m.**



**Please don't forget the people and animals
 of Ukraine this Christmas!**
<https://www.lutheranworld.org>
<https://rolda.org/breaking-news-ukraine>
<https://www.ifaw.org/>
<https://wck.org/>





If you would like to celebrate or remember a loved one or friend this Christmastide with a floral or memorial gift, please fill out the form below.

In memory or celebration of:

From:

*Please make cheques payable to
St. Paul's Altar Guild Poinsettia/Gift Fund
Thank you!*

*Poinsettias are \$6.99 each.
Please select reason for gift, i.e., IMO of or Celebration of.*



Christmas Angel Tree

We have adopted ten kids and five seniors in our community who are in need of Christmas.

We want to give each person Christmas gifts and a new outfit. The amazing quilting ladies are gifting each child a new quilt and the seniors a lap robe!
THANK YOU!



Angel Tree – You will find the tree and sign-up chart as you enter the church doors. Once you pick your angel, please put your name on the chart. That will allow us to keep track of who is getting each gift. The youth will go shopping for all gifts not taken off the tree and will be wrapping ALL the gifts!

Ways to Shop – If you would like the youth group to shop on your behalf, you can send a donation to the church. Please use the Post Office Box address. If you are going out and about to shop, please bring your **unwrapped** gift with the angel number attached to the gift to the church by **Sunday, December 10th**. You can place all gifts under the tree.

If you have any questions, please contact Traci Angel at 775 721-5495.

Thank you for helping with the true spirit of the season! ~ Traci



Special Christmas Youth Sunday & Coffee Hour

The youth and kids will be putting together our special Youth Sunday on December 10th! They will be hosting a special coffee hour right after the Christmas Program.

Please join us for a fabulous brunch during coffee hour. We will be decorating ornaments and our tree in the sanctuary. We would love everyone to stay and help decorate our SPECIAL Tree!
Thanks! ~ Traci



THE YOUTH GROUP WOULD LIKE TO WISH
OUR CHURCH FAMILY A WONDERFUL
AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS!

North Pole

The Youth Group will be at the North Pole for six nights helping Santa during the Polar Express Train event! <https://vtrailway.com/train-rides/polar-express/>

The Youth Group elves decorated the Angel Tree with a little help!



Trunk-or-Treat

The youth group hosted the **Trunk-or-Treat** event on Sunday, October 29th. We had a great turn out with lots of fun with many trunks all decorated – even some with games! The little superheroes, zombies, and princesses had a blast! Each got to stop at all the cars, and they all filled their buckets and bags with lots of candy. They also got to jump on the bounce house and have snacks!

Thank you to all those who came out and decorated your trunks for us! **You** helped make this event a huge success! **THANK YOU!** — Traci





Goodies galore!





ADVENT is a season observed in most Christian denominations as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Christ at Christmas and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year in Western Christianity. The name was adopted from Latin *adventus* "coming; arrival", translating Greek *parousia* from the New Testament, originally referring to the Second Coming.

The season of Advent in the Christian calendar anticipates the "coming of Christ" from three different perspectives: the physical nativity in Bethlehem, the reception of Christ in the heart of the believer, and the eschatological Second Coming.

Practices associated with Advent include Advent calendars, lighting an Advent wreath, praying an Advent daily devotional, erecting a Christmas tree or a Chrismon tree, lighting a Christingle, as well as other ways of preparing for Christmas, such as setting up Christmas decorations, a custom that is sometimes done liturgically through a hanging of the greens ceremony.

The analogue of Advent in Eastern Christianity is called the Nativity Fast, but it differs in meaning, length, and observances, and does not begin the liturgical church year as it does in the West. The Eastern Nativity Fast does not use the term *parousia* in its preparatory services.

In the Western Rite of the Orthodox Church, and in the Anglican, Lutheran, Moravian, Presbyterian, and Methodist calendars, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (always falling between 27 November and 3 December), and ends on Christmas Eve on 24 December.

In the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, Advent begins with First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of the Sunday that falls on or closest to November 30 and it ends before First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of Christmas. The first day of Advent also begins a new liturgical year. In the Ambrosian Rite and the Mozarabic Rite of the Catholic Church, Advent begins on the sixth Sunday before Christmas, the Sunday after St. Martin's Day (11 November).

For Western Christians of the Catholic and Lutheran traditions, Advent signifies preparation for a threefold coming of Christ: firstly in the Incarnation at Bethlehem, then in a perpetual sacramental presence in the Eucharist, and thirdly at his Second Coming and final judgment.

It is not known when the period of preparation for Christmas that is now called Advent began, though it was certainly in existence from about 480; the novelty introduced by the Council of Tours of 567 was to order monks to fast every day in the month of December until Christmas. According to J. Neil Alexander, it is "impossible to claim with confidence a credible explanation of the origin of Advent".

A representation of Saint Perpetuus

Associated with Advent as a time of penitence was a period of fasting, known also as St Martin's Lent or the Nativity Fast. According to Saint Gregory of Tours, the celebration of Advent began in the fifth century when the Bishop Perpetuus directed that starting with the St. Martin's Day on 11 November until Christmas, one fasts three times per week; this is why Advent was sometimes also named "Lent of St. Martin". This practice remained limited to the diocese of Tours until the sixth century.

The Council of Macon held in 581 adopted the practice in Tours. Soon all France observed three days of fasting a week from the feast of Saint Martin until Christmas. The most devout worshipers in some countries exceeded the requirements adopted by the council, and fasted every day of Advent. The first clear references in the Western Church to Advent occur in the Gelasian Sacramentary, which provides Advent Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for the five Sundays preceding Christmas and for the corresponding Wednesdays and Fridays. The homilies of Gregory the Great in the late sixth century showed four weeks to the liturgical season of Advent, but without the observance of a fast. Under Charlemagne in the ninth century, writings claim that the fast was still widely observed. In the thirteenth century, the fast of Advent was not commonly practiced although according to

Durand of Mende, fasting was still generally observed. As quoted in the bull of canonization of St. Louis, the zeal with which he observed this fast was no longer a custom observed by Christians of great piety. It was then limited to the period from the feast of Saint Andrew until Christmas Day, since the solemnity of this apostle was more universal than that of St. Martin.

When Pope Urban V ascended the papal seat in 1362, he imposed abstinence on the papal court, but there was no mention of fasting. It was then customary in Rome to observe five weeks of Advent before Christmas. The Ambrosian Rite has six. The Greeks showed no more real consistency. Advent was an optional fast that some begin on 15 November, while others begin on 6 December or only a few days before Christmas.

The liturgy of Advent remained unchanged until the Second Vatican Council introduced minor changes, differentiating the spirit of Lent from that of Advent, emphasizing Advent as a season of hope for Christ's coming now as a promise of his Second Coming.

The keeping of an Advent wreath is a common practice in homes or churches. The concept of the Advent wreath originated among German Lutherans in the 16th century. However, it was not until three centuries later that the modern Advent wreath took shape. The modern Advent wreath, with its candles representing the Sundays of Advent, originated from an 1839 initiative by Johann Hinrich Wichern, a Protestant pastor in Germany and a pioneer in urban mission work among the poor. In view of the impatience of the children he taught as they awaited Christmas, he made a ring of wood, with nineteen small red tapers and four large white candles. Every morning a small candle was lit, and every Sunday a large candle. Custom has retained only the large candles.

The wreath crown is traditionally made of fir tree branches knotted with a red ribbon and decorated with pine cones, holly, laurel, and sometimes mistletoe. It is also an ancient symbol signifying several things; first of all, the crown symbolizes victory, in addition to its round form evoking the sun and its return each year. The number four represents the four Sundays of Advent, and the green twigs are a sign of life and hope.

The fir tree is a symbol of strength and laurel a symbol of victory over sin and suffering. The latter two, with the holly, do not lose their leaves, and thus represent the eternity of God. The flames of candles are the representation of the Christmas light approaching and bringing hope and peace, as well as the symbol of the struggle against darkness. For Christians, this crown is also the symbol of Christ the King, the holly recalling the crown of thorns resting on the head of Christ.

The Advent wreath is adorned with candles, usually three violet or purple and one pink, the pink candle being lit on the Third Sunday of Advent, called Gaudete Sunday after the opening word, *Gaudete*, meaning "Rejoice", of the entrance antiphon at Mass. Some add a fifth candle (white), known as the Christ Candle, in the middle of the wreath, to be lit on Christmas Eve or Day.

The candles symbolize, in one interpretation, the great stages of salvation before the coming of the Messiah; the first is the symbol of the forgiveness granted to Adam and Eve, the second is the symbol of the faith of Abraham and of the patriarchs who believe in the gift of the Promised Land, the third is the symbol of the joy of David whose lineage does not stop and also testifies to his covenant with God, and the fourth and last candle is the symbol of the teaching of the prophets who announce a reign of justice and peace. Or they symbolize the four stages of human history; creation, the Incarnation, the redemption of sins, and the Last Judgment.

In Orthodox churches there are sometimes wreaths with six candles, in line with the six-week duration of the Nativity Fast/Advent.

In Sweden, white candles, symbol of festivity and purity, are used in celebrating Saint Lucia's Day, 13 December, which always falls within Advent.

KEEPING CHRISTMAS GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING!

The lights are dimmed, the candles are lit, and not a creature is stirring, except perhaps for a few sweet, squirmy toddlers. The sermon is ready, the choir is poised, and the organ welcomes all as the prelude begins. Whether you're sitting in the pews, singing in the choir, playing in the brass group or bell choir or even standing in the pulpit, the sights and sounds of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services easily flood our minds as we think back over years and decades of participation on these festive occasions, our memories and our present realities mingling powerfully together.

Perhaps these experiences help explain why, as Christmas approaches, or even long before Christmas approaches, we hear exhortations to "Keep Christ in Christmas." Perhaps you have seen the billboards, yard signs, or newspaper ads. Yet have you ever stopped to ask yourselves just what this might mean or imply? Have you ever pondered that, if Christ is not in Christmas, it is actually not technically even *Christ-mas*?

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines Christmas as "the annual Christian festival celebrating Christ's birth." The etymology, which is always the most fun part of dictionary entries, tells us that Christmas comes from the Old English *Crīstes mæsse* and then encourages the curious to look up the words "Christ" and "Mass." Since we are the curious sort, we will follow this etymology trail. Christ, of course, is the title given to Jesus, and it means "anointed" or "Messiah" depending on whether you are coming at it from Greek or Hebrew. Mass is "the Christian Eucharist or Holy Communion." While many Lutherans do not typically refer to the Mass, this word is not unknown to us. Historically, in fact, this is a very Lutheran word.

What does it mean for us, then, to keep both "Christ" and "Mass" in Christmas?

Think back on the silent nights of Christmas Eve and the never-ending gladness of Christmas Day. How often is Holy Communion celebrated (or rather, not celebrated) on these festive occasions? As Lutherans, we understand as the Bible teaches, that Jesus is present for us in, with, and under the bread and wine in His Holy Supper. In partaking of Jesus' body and blood, we experience heaven on earth. Talk about peace on earth and goodwill toward men! Jesus *was* there for you in the manger, and Jesus *is* there for you in His Supper. The carnal reality of the incarnation, which we celebrate most deliberately at Christmas, is made manifest in our mouths. Jesus' birth was not the pinnacle of His time on earth. God became man to take our sin to the cross and make full atonement. Receiving the Lord's Supper on Christmas is a potent reminder that Christ's birth and his death are inextricably joined.

Our lectionaries typically guide us to Luke 2 on Christmas Eve and John 1 on Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve, as we ponder the little town of Bethlehem, which means "House of Bread," it only makes sense to partake of the Living Bread from Heaven that was laid in a manger. How fitting, also, that upon receiving Christ's body and blood, we rejoice as did Simeon as he received Jesus: "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32 ESV).

When we return to church on Christmas Day, we hear from John 1 that the Word, Jesus, became flesh and dwelt, or tabernacled, among us. When the time had fully come, God took on flesh and dwelt with us. In these days, that same flesh dwells with us in, with, and under the bread and wine. How beautifully the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Gospel readings encourage our participation in the Mass of Christ on these festive occasions!

Let us keep Christmas, dear Christians, in all its fullness. Let us keep Christ in Christmas by keeping the Mass in Christmas. Go to church. Receive the Gifts Christ freely gives. Rejoice, one and all! Christ, your Savior, is here for you, in flesh and blood. – Jocelyn Benson

What are the Twelve Days of Christmas?

Christmas, according to the liturgical calendar, isn't just a day, but a season. Many Christians know the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" or recall that Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is about the last night of Christmas. But what defines the Christmas season?

The twelve days of Christmas are a reversal of the season of Advent. Traditionally, Christians have fasted during Advent as we await the celebration of the birth of our Savior. The period from Christmas Day to the day before Epiphany (the celebration of the Magi visiting Jesus, the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of his earthly ministry) is a period of daily feasting. This is surprising, given the reason for celebrating several of the days.

The first day of Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity, is obvious enough as a reason to celebrate. The Messiah has been born into the world! The next day, however, is the feast of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who was killed under the authority of Saul of Tarsus/Paul (Acts 8:1). The emotional whiplash of celebrating the birth of the Savior and then the next day celebrating the life and martyrdom of the first person to die for Christ is stunning. However, tradition calls for a joyful feast to celebrate the faithfulness of Stephen, even unto death.

These twelve days help Christians remember that the life of faith is full of challenges and hardships but also contains plenty of reasons to celebrate as we remember the heroes and heroines of the church, and most importantly, our Lord and Savior.

The next day, the third of the twelve, celebrates the life of St. John the Apostle. He was, traditionally, the only disciple who wasn't martyred. Tradition holds that John took care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, made disciples, grew old, and finally died a natural death in Ephesus.

The fourth day of Christmas is the most shocking. The Feast of the Holy Innocents commemorates the death of all boys in Bethlehem, aged two and under, at the hands of Herod the Great's soldiers (Matthew 2:16-18). Again, we feel the emotional rollercoaster, as we're reminded that the Christian life isn't simply one of sweetness and joy, but also of pain, hardship, and injustice. Nevertheless, the fourth day of Christmas is the *Feast of the Holy Innocents*, rather than a fast, because we celebrate the One who has conquered sin and death and doesn't surrender these precious little ones, or any others, to the grave forever.

The following days celebrate Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket's resistance to injustice; the holy family; Pope Sylvester, who resisted the Donatist and Arian controversies (in many Germanic speaking countries, New Year's Eve is still called "Sylvester"); the circumcision of Jesus; St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, who defended the doctrine of the Trinity; Jesus's presentation and naming in the Jerusalem temple; the hermitage of St. Simon on the pillar; and even two American saints: Elizabeth Ann Seton and John Neumann.

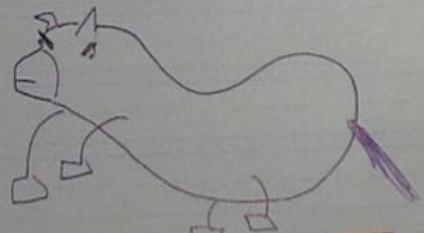
These twelve days help Christians remember that the life of faith is full of challenges and hardships but also contains plenty of reasons to celebrate as we remember the heroes and heroines of the church, and most importantly, our Lord and Savior. ~ Cory Driver





Dear Santa,
 You better bring
 my pony this year.

Or there
 will be
 consequences.




Dear, Santa
 My name is mia
 and I am trying
 my best to be
 good but I can't
 Because it is too
 Hard can you give
 me advice.

Dear Santa,
 I don't want all
 the other nine (9) things
 on the list I sent to
 my father (dad). I only
 want the puppy.

Dear Santa,
 I hope you had a good year.
 I have been a good girl. I'm
 sure I'm on the good list.
 I would really like an
 American Girl doll. Her name is
 McKenna. She is so so pretty.
 Please give a kiss to your reindeer.
 after christmas can you watch my
 elf buddy for me? I love you Santa!

Love,
 Haley-Ann
 Peru NY, 7



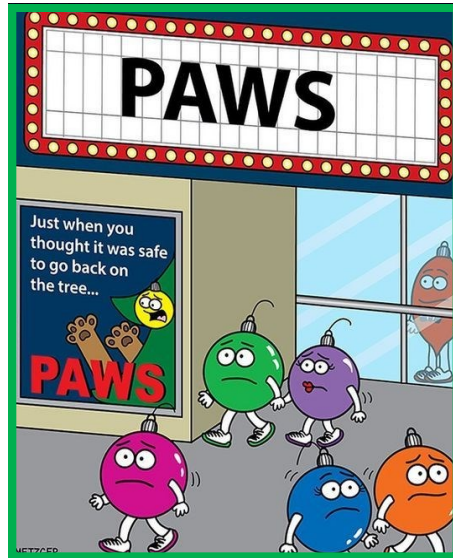
Buddy

Merry christmas!

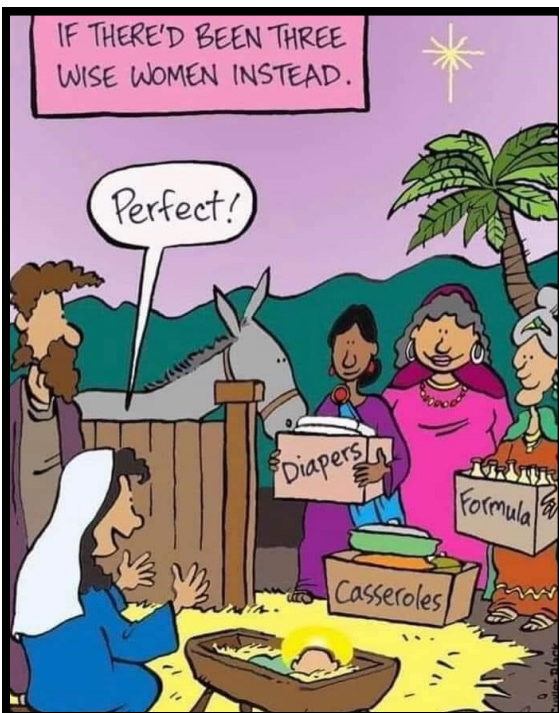
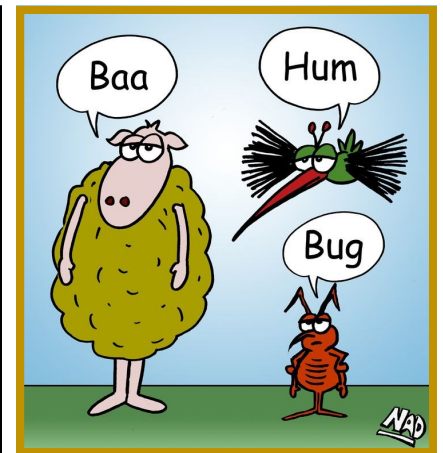
Dear Santa
 I have a grate idea.
 On Christmas when you
 are in every ones house
 you could take all of
 the guns and put them
 in your sack and hide them
 at the North pole and
 then no one could kill
 anyone anymore in the
 world. thank you.



THE GIFTS OF THE THREE WISE CATS



BEST CHRISTMAS EVER





Sundays
NA 7:00 p.m.

Sundays of Advent

When is the first Sunday of Advent?

The first Sunday of Advent is **December 3rd**.
The first Sunday of Advent is also the beginning of the new liturgical year when we transition into a new liturgical cycle. On the first Sunday of Advent in 2023, we'll transition from Cycle A to Cycle B.

When is the second Sunday of Advent?

The second Sunday of Advent is **December 10th**.

When is the third Sunday of Advent?

The third Sunday of Advent is **December 17th**.
Called "Gaudete Sunday," meaning rejoice, a pink candle on the Advent wreath represents this Sunday. At church, you'll often see the clergy and deacons in pink vestments, leading us to joyfully await the birth of Jesus.

When is the fourth Sunday of Advent?

The fourth Sunday of Advent is **December 24th** – Christmas Eve, the day before Christmas.

Monday, December 25th

Church Office is closed in observance of Christmas.

Tuesday, December 5th

WELCA Bible Study
9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Please submit any directory changes to the office by Tuesday, December 5th. Thanks!

Wednesdays

Choir practice, 6:00 p.m.

Thursdays (During school sessions)

Strings 3:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m., Friendship Hall

Thursday, December 14th

Executive Meeting, 6:00 p.m.

No Council Meeting in December!



Worship services are held every Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

This Month's Worship Schedule:

December 3rd, December 10th,
December 17th, December 24th,
and December 31st.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

THE CELEBRATION OF LIFE SERVICE
FOR PASTOR MIKE
WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 2, 2023,
AT 11:00 A.M.

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1135 12TH STREET
SPARKS, NEVADA



Our office assistant is in the church office **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday** from **9:00 a.m. to noon.**

She will be out on vacation Friday, December 1st, Monday, December 4th, and Friday, December 22nd.
Another day yet to be selected will be added to the December calendar.

Happy New Year 2024



this year

*Break a Bad Habit
Learn a New Skill
Do a Good Deed
Visit a New Place
Read a Difficult Book
Write and Send a Letter
Try a New Food
Take a Risk*

Tomorrow is
the first blank
page of a
365 page
book. Write a
good one!

Brad Paisley

Let our New Year's
resolution be this: We
will be there for one
another as fellow
members of humanity,
in the finest sense of
the word.

Approach the new year
with resolve to find the
opportunities hidden
in each new day."

Michael Josephson

"Year's end
is neither
an end nor
a beginning
but a going on,
with all the
wisdom that
experience
can instill in us."

HAL BORLAND

We have to continually
be jumping off cliffs
and developing our wings
on the way down.

—KURT VONNEGUT,
AUTHOR

Wishing you a Happy New
Year with the hope that you
will have many blessings in
the year to come!

Write it on your
heart that every
day is the best day
in the year.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

You are never too
old to set another
goal or to dream a
new dream.

C.S. Lewis

Cheers to a new
year and another
chance for us to
get it right.

Oprah Winfrey

New year is the
glittering light to
brighten the dream-lined
pathway of future.

MUNIA KHAN