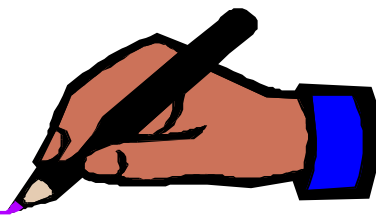


FROM THE PASTOR



MUSTARD SEED
CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 2018

For people living in the Northern parts of the United States, this time of year they are saying, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." As temperatures begin to drop, autumn's leaves are nearly shed as the ground will soon be blanketed with snow, if it's not already. All around the globe people are breaking out their holiday decorations, heating up their ovens, preparing menus for parties, and "getting into the spirit of Christmas." Already in early September, department stores were displaying Christmas trees, garland, and holiday lights. Television ads with Christmas themes have been aired for a couple months now, and even the *Hallmark Channel* is running Christmas movies repeatedly. Even my children have been sharing their various wishes for Christmas presents and my calendar is filling up rapidly with holiday school concerts, worship services, and other obligations related to the holiday season. It's difficult to hold in the excitement as days of good tidings and cheer loom on the horizon. We are so close to these wonderful days of Christmas. But...we aren't there yet...and for good reason.

The calendar of the Christian Church begins with the season of Advent (meaning "coming into") which is a four-week period of preparation for the season of Christmas. The season of Advent begins on the 4th Sunday prior to Christmas Day and typically falls somewhere around the 30th of November. Contrary to the commercialization of Christmas where decorations are already seen donning stores in September next to ghosts and goblins for Halloween and turkeys and cornucopias for Thanksgiving, the season of Christmas doesn't actually begin until the evening of December 24th and continues through the 12 days of Christmas. These 12 days of Christmas include celebrations of the Nativity of Jesus Christ on December 25th, the feast of St. Stephen being the first Martyr on December 26th, the Feast of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist on December 27th, the Feast of the Holy Innocents when King Herod had all baby boys put to death when he learned of Jesus' birth on December 28th, and the Festival of the Circumcision and Naming of Jesus on January 1st.

Because the season of Advent is a time of preparation, it is important that the Church exercises restraint as she keeps with the tone of repentance the season demands. To be sure, we all like the beautiful decorations and the inspiring carols we deeply love. But, we should also take time to prepare our hearts for this jubilant day. We should take this time to reflect the reason for the Savior's birth. I know that might burst some peoples' bubbles, but sin is the culprit here. Reflecting on and repenting of our sin serves to prepare

the heart for the angels' Good News, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!" A Savior? From what? From sin...my sin, your sin, the world's sin. That is why Jesus was born. To be our Savior. That's why taking the time to prepare our hearts before Christmas arrives is important.

As is the case in so many Christian churches today, Calvary Lutheran Church included, few people attend the Wednesday evening Advent services. When I was younger, I didn't understand why I "HAD" to go to church on Wednesday evenings. It was a great TV night. Many of my friends didn't go...why did I? As I have had time to reflect, and I'm sure being a Lutheran pastor has directed my thinking even more so, I have come to appreciate this time of penitential preparation called Advent. It's not about the potluck suppers before worship. It's not about the fellowship. Rather, it's about recognizing who I am as a sinner, but also knowing who I am in Christ because of Christ. This makes the season of Christmas so much more joyful for me. C.S. Lewis wrote in his book, *Mere Christianity*, "The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God." As your pastor, I want nothing more than for all of you to not only know who you are as sinners, but to know even more who you are in Christ because of Christ...that "He became a man so that all of you could become sons of God." This is what Advent is about. Won't you join me in preparing our hearts?

Penitent preparation for the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation in the fleshly person of Jesus Christ "IS" important. For this reason, the midweek Advent services will focus on the theme, "*What Child Is This?*" With the birth of a certain child 2,000 years ago in the small town of Bethlehem, a 19th century poet penned a very peculiar question: "What Child Is This?" This question has spawned countless conversations, sermons, and even a well-known hymn. Gathering together on the Wednesday evenings in December to ponder this question, the goal is to recognize and give thanks for the unparalleled blessings God gives us through this fleshly Savior who is Christ the Lord. Drawing upon the themes of Holy Scripture that show this child to be Zechariah's Hope, Mary's Great Son, John the Baptist's Joy, and our Lord, we will be taught to appreciate the full spectrum of blessings God gives through faith in this child who is God in the flesh. As our Lord confronts us with this reality, may we be comforted in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ who was born to die that we might live.

In Christ Jesus,
Pastor Kessler

Happy Birthday!

Idonna Deaver	12/03
Joseph Parker	12/07
Gladys Timoruski	12/17
Brian Rochester	12/18
Roxana Williams	12/18
Jennifer Kessler	12/19
William Stewart	12/21
Shannon Cady	12/24
Robert Barton	12/31
John Ehrlich Jr	12/31

The LWML meeting for December will be on Thursday evening the 6th. The children from Precious Treasures in Somerton will again be entertaining us. Last year we encouraged everyone to attend, not just those who attend LWML meetings. We had a wonderful turnout and I think everyone enjoyed hearing the children. It is a great way to kick off the Christmas season. Mark your calendar now for Thursday, December 6th in the Fellowship Hall. It will probably be at 6 PM, but announcement will be made when we hear for sure what time works for the students. **PLEASE JOIN US.**

The annual cookie sale will be Saturday, December 15th. This is a big fund raiser and for the past couple years we have been contributing part of the proceeds to the church treasury. There will also be vendors and opportunity baskets. We are asking any and everyone in church who is able to bake cookies for this. Please bring them to church on Friday the 14th between 4 and 5:30 PM. If you need to deliver at a different time, please let Connie Wubbena know and she will work with you.

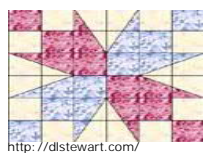


ALSO: we hope you will come to check out the vendors. There will be quite a variety and hopefully you can find things for your Christmas giving. **BEST WISHES TO EACH OF YOU FOR A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.**

BAPTISM

Megan Ehrlich	12/01
Jaiden Williams	12/02
Katherine Seeger	12/06
Tyler Green	12/12
Katie Strom	12/12
Lisa Elam	12/13
Joseph Parker	12/19
Ken Clark	12/23
Matthew Joynt	12/23
Alice Tansey	12/23
Jennifer Kessler	12/25
Robert Barton	12/31

"Have you ever wondered about the 'quilting' you see on the bulletin schedule as well as on the newsletter calendar? If you have been at church when the quilts are on the pews, you have seen what we produce. Some are pretty and some are plain. We make them from donated materials. The tops are sewn from large or small squares or sometimes even from a single piece of fabric. The 3 layers are then machine stitched at the edges and tied in the middle. They will eventually be sent to Lutheran World Relief for distribution anywhere needed, including the U.S. If you can cut with scissors, use straight pins, thread a needle and tie a knot, we welcome you to join us. Even if you cannot do these things, we will teach you. We meet Fridays at 9:00 AM, from January through May and October to Thanksgiving with some exceptions. If you are interested, call Johnnie Altstatt at 928-210-3686."



Happy Anniversary


Ron & Michele Hill	12/20
Ken & Diane Clark	12/23
Bruce & Maggie Fenske	12/29
Pat & Debbie Lamaestra	12/30
Benjamin & Penny Urness	12/31



Nominating Committee

No new volunteers for the boards.

2018 Officers have agreed to service in 2019.

 Recycle aluminum cans

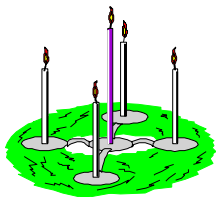
Please continue to bring your cans in.

As promised, the sock tree will be ready to receive your gifts of socks for Crossroads Mission. Starting the first Sunday after Thanksgiving through December 16th, you can donate socks for men, women, youth and children. Simply hang the socks on the tree and Santa's helpers will get them into the hands of those who will get them to those in need.



Caroling will go on Sunday, December 16th at 1:30. Bring your Santa hats and not-so-ugly sweaters and help bring some good cheer to those who aren't able to get out right now.

On another topic, there is a credible "Rumor" that a congregational picnic will be taking place on March 9th. We will have our potluck picnic and gather together to eat, visit and sing some of our favorite hymns. More details on time and location will be coming your way very soon.



What Child Is This? This is the theme for this year's Advent Midweek services. As the angel Gabriel answered this question by telling the shepherd's, "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" and the hymnist

wrote, "This, this is Christ the king," so it is that we, too, shall answer this important question leaving no doubt that this child is none other than the Son of God, sent to be the fulfillment of Scripture. Midweek services begin **December 5th at 7:00pm with a potluck dinner beginning at 6:00pm** in the parish hall. Won't you come and join us as we reflect on the Scriptures and this little child who became flesh so that we could be forgiven?

- * Advent I: Wednesday, Dec. 5, The Child Who Is Zechariah's Hope
- * Advent II: Wednesday, Dec. 12, The Child Who Is A Virgin's Great Son
- * Advent III: Wednesday, Dec. 19, The Child Who Is John's Joy

Christmas Poinsettias: The Altar Guild will be purchasing 10 Poinsettias for Christmas this year. If you are able to donate towards the purchase of a poinsettia, you may put the money in your offering envelope and mark the \$10 under special gift specified for altar guild poinsettias. Remember to take your plant home after Christmas Day Service.



**HELP WANTED!
COUNTERS NEEDED**

The counters yearly calendar is nearly bare. For more information to sign up to be a counter please ask Larry & Ann Lee, or Donna Fairchild.

Galvany Lutheran Church Council Reports

**Board Meetings & Council
Tuesday, December 11, 2018 @ 6PM**

If you have a complaint or concern please attend the board meetings so the boards can address the issue.

2018 Contributions	
11/04/2018	\$4,001.00
11/11/2018	\$2,725.00
11/18/2018	\$3,705.00
11/25/2018	\$2,177.00



Avg. \$ per week \$3,152.00
Contribution amount needed, per week is \$3,423.29 to meet current budget.

Year to date	\$139,716.02
Misc Income	4,108.27
Fund raiser	562.00
Avg. \$ per week (47weeks)	\$ 3,072.05
Short \$ per week	\$ 351.24






2018 Contributions & Expenses NOVEMBER (UNRECONCILED)	
GENERAL FUND	
Contributions	\$12,608.00
Misc Income	\$ 610.08
Expenses	<u>\$12,134.72</u>
Excess/Loss	\$ 1,083.36
YEAR TO DATE	
Contributions	\$139,716.02
Misc Income	\$ 4,670.27
Expenses	<u>\$151,276.68</u>
Excess/Loss	\$ -6,890.39

Parking Lot Fund	
Fund Total as of October 31	\$20,591.27
Contributions	\$10,000.00
Aluminum Cans	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Fund Total	\$30,591.27

Office Hours

Pastor Kessler will be in the office from 9:00am—12:30pm Tuesdays—Fridays. If you need to meet before or after those hours, please call the office and leave a message. For emergencies, call him on his mobile phone at (701)430-0109

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday School 10:30 AM-Voter's Assembly			5 05:00 PM-Confirmation 06:00 PM-Pot Luck Dinner 07:00 PM-Advent Service 	6 10:00 AM-Bible Study 06:00 PM-LWML Meeting	7	8 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro
9 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday School	10 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday School	11 06:00 PM-Board meetings 07:00 PM-Council	12 05:00 PM-Confirmation 06:00 PM-Pot Luck Dinner 07:00 PM-Advent Service 	13 10:00 AM-Bible Study	14 08:00 AM-LWML cookie walk setup	15 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro 07:00 AM-LWML Cookie Walk
16 09:00 AM-Matins Service 10:30 AM-Sunday School 10:30 AM-Voter's Assembly 01:30 PM-Caroling	17	18	19 05:00 PM-Confirmation 06:00 PM-Pot Luck Dinner 07:00 PM-Advent Service 	20 10:00 AM-Bible Study	21	22 07:00 AM-Bible Study/ Goldsborro
23 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday School	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 07:00 PM-Worship 	25 CHRISTMAS 10:00 AM - Worship 	26 NO CONFIRMATION	27 NO WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS	28	29 NO GOLDSBORO BAKERY BIBLE CLASS
30 09:00 AM-Communion Service 10:30 AM-Sunday School	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 