

The Star of Bethlehem



DECEMBER 2018

ADVENT: Past, Present and Future

Advent begins the church year because the church year begins where Jesus' earthly life began — in the Old Testament prophecies of his incarnation. After Advent comes Christmas, which is about his birth; then Epiphany, about his miracles and ministry; then Lent, about his Calvary-bound mission; then Easter, about his resurrection and the sending of the apostles; and then Ascension (40 days after Easter) and Pentecost, with the sending of the Holy Spirit.

That's "the church year in a nutshell," and it should help reveal how Advent fits into "the big picture." Advent specifically focuses on Christ's "*coming*," but Christ's coming manifests itself among us in three ways — past, present, and future.

The readings which highlight Christ's coming in the past focus on the Old Testament prophecies of his incarnation at Bethlehem. The readings, which highlight Christ's coming in the future, focus on his "second coming" on the Last Day at the end of time. And the readings that highlight Christ's coming in the present focus on his ministry among us through Word and Sacrament today.

The traditional use of Advent candles (sometimes held in a wreath) originated in eastern Germany even prior to the Reformation. As this tradition came down to us by the beginning of the 20th century, it involved three royal blue (or purple) candles and one pink candle. The blue candles match the paraments on the altar (royal blue or purple for the royalty of the coming King). The pink candle was the third candle to be lit (not the fourth) on the third Sunday of Advent because it was the joy candle (historically "Gaudete" Sunday which means "Rejoice!" in Latin) and is taken from Philippians 4:4 "*Rejoice! ... the Lord is near*". Some also included a white "Christ candle" in the middle to be lit on Christmas Eve and during the 12 days of Christmas (Dec. 25 to Jan. 5).

The concept of giving each candle a name is a relatively modern concept but can help us focus on those things which the coming Christ brings, namely: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love – always with Christ at the very center of each candle's meaning.

Our Advent worship this year will focus on the ways in which God is with us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Each week will focus on a different word picture of the coming Christ found in the poetic and prophetic words of Isaiah. Services will reveal how Christ continues to be present with us even now. The theme verse for the entire series is: "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which means, God with us*" (Matthew 1:23). **The following is our Advent worship schedule for this year:**

Midweek 1 (noon and 7 p.m.): Our Potter (Isaiah 64:8) – ***God is with us as our Potter, who shapes according to his will.***

Midweek 2: (noon and 7:00 p.m.): Our Shepherd (Isaiah 40:11): ***God is with us as our Shepherd, who carries us close to his heart.***

Midweek 3: (noon only.): Our Living Branch (Isaiah 11:1): ***God is with us as our Living Branch, who died and rose to give us eternal life.***

Midweek 3 (7:00 p.m. only) CANTATA. This service brings us the message of Advent and Christmas in song. A brief message will be preached and the Lord's Supper will be celebrated.

Sunday, Advent 4: Our Guide (Isaiah 2:3): ***God is with us as our Guide, who leads us according to his Word.*** Please join us this year for a very meaningful and inspiring Advent season. You will be blessed as you see Christ in your past, present and future.

Your servant,
Pastor Dana Allen Brones

Stewardship

	Oct 2017	Oct 2018
Monthly Totals:	\$59,618.33	\$54,893.88
Restricted:	2,894.00	7,120.76
YTD Totals:	\$535,162.93	\$546,021.46
Restricted:	\$51,037.46	\$34,948.15

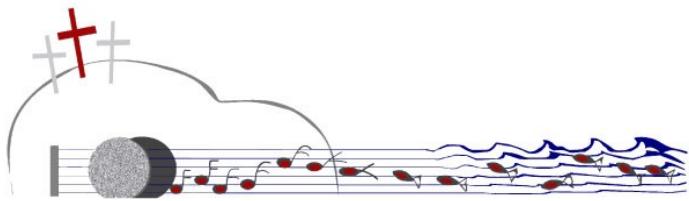
October Attendance

Date	8 am	9:30 am	11am	Total
Oct. 8, 2017	82	95	95	272
Oct. 7, 2018	77	106	86	269
Oct. 15, 2017	83	87	63	233
Oct 14, 2018	74	92	92	258
Oct. 22, 2017	89	81	98	258
Oct. 21, 2018	71	58	78	207
Oct. 29, 2017	83	70	76	229
Oct. 28, 2018	79	70	98	257



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As you read this we will be moving towards Arkansas, then on to eastern Texas. We will miss the colorful "Deck the Chairs" Christmas beach display and the wonderful gifts of teaching, music and belonging offered at Bethlehem. We are parked right now just outside of St. Louis, on the Illinois side of the river where it is too cold. It's hard to plan for the weather six months in advance.

Out our back window there are six horses and more just across the fence on the neighbor's property. Stay with me... they live in community. It is a large grazing field, but the horses all hang together and move peacefully around the field, unless they are reaffirming the pecking order, but that is quickly dealt with. When the neighbors across the fence come out of the barn, ALL the horses rush to the fence line to greet them. Community. We do miss that part of life. All of Jesus' work is bent toward building a community around Himself. We are meant to partake.

We have dear friends we have made and kept all over the country and we do not take that gift lightly. But it is hard to live without those day-to-day interactions and relationships with the same old people, warts and all. We are glad to take part in the life of each community we serve - especially the pot-luck dinners (for the fellowship, of course) - and people are so hospitable. But then we drive away. Don't take your people for granted. Rejoice in your people. It's nice to get away. It's also nice to stay.

Dave Horn



SENIOR GAME DAY

Monday, December 3rd

Disciples Hall at 9:30 am

Play cards at 9:30 am
Potluck luncheon to follow
With a gift exchange

Talk with MaryAnn Lawrence 708-9492

This year's Children's Christmas Program is called "Stable". The service will be held on December 24, 2018 at 6:00pm. The story takes us on a trip through modern time... while reminding us that while the world changes, Jesus and the miracle of Christmas always remain the same. Please watch for newsletters and emails regarding December rehearsals and other important information as we enter the wonderful Advent season.

Mission House

Request for all worshippers: We need Mission House help every 3rd Friday. 6:00 to 7:30 PM feeding the hungry and poor. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex. 800 Shetter Avenue, Jacksonville Beach.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Vera Fay Malmind	12/1	Helen Dunning	12/18
Braden Radtke	12/2	Marie Helberg	
Roy & Jean Shimp		Braden Hobbs	
Diane Wortelboer		William Huseman	12/19
Cameron Hardy	12/3	Mackenzie O'Reilly	
Kathy Lease		John Spreier II	
Carol Carroll	12/4	Michael Headley	12/20
Karen Bessemer	12/5	Raegan Seim	
Aubrey Costescu		Howard & Melissa Estervig	12/21
Joan Richards		Annabelle & H Usher	
Daniel Junk	12/6	Valerie Cardona	12/22
Jeffrey Swatkowski	12/7	Margaret Ford	12/23
Helen Gerhardt	12/9	Jacquelyn Thiemann	12/25
Chad Troester		Christian Dellinger	12/26
Leonard Lucas	12/10	Kegan Dellinger	
Kelly Sly		Bob & Marianne Johnson	
Nancy Brewer	12/12	George Parnaby	12/27
Rebecca Bicknase	12/13	Eunice Schauer	
Leonard Stafford		Brandi Harrison	12/28
John & Marie Helberg	12/15	Jake Pretzell	
Kathy Orr		Howard Estervig	12/29
Lois Ambrose	12/17	Wayne & Arlene Lorenz	
Marge Cirillo		Cindy Huber	12/30
Erik & Karen Wilhelm		Nathan Wilhelm	

Schedules for December

		Screens	Greeters	Altar		
<u>Dec. 2</u>	8 am	Pat	Val & Jackie	Tami	Susan	
	9:30 am	Brenda	Joan R		Barbara	
	11 am	Gina	Lee & Joan F		Beth	
<u>Dec. 5</u>	<u>Altar</u>					
	12 pm	Tami/Jen	7 pm Carol			
<u>Dec. 9</u>	8 am	Sam	Rob & Deb B	Jenn	Val	
	9:30 am	Tami	Joan R		Amy	
	11 am	Susan S	Julie T, Rita W		Carol	
<u>Dec. 12</u>	<u>Altar</u>					
	12 pm	Tami/Jen	7 pm Val			
<u>Dec. 16</u>	8 am	Val	Larry & Eleanor	Anna	Susan	
	9:30 am	Candice	Joan R		Joan	
	11 am	Toni	Bruce & Holly D		Holly	
<u>Dec. 19</u>	<u>Altar</u>					
	12 pm	Tami/Jen	7 pm Brenda			
<u>Dec. 23</u>	8 am	Angela	Angela & David B	Susan	Val	
	9:30 am	Romaine	Joan R		Tami	
	11 am	Susan S	Mary D & Jean S		Diana	
<u>Dec. 24</u>	6 pm			Brenda		
	8 pm	Susan S			Val	
	10 pm	Tami			Tami	
<u>Dec. 25</u>	<u>Altar</u>					
	10 am	Susan H				
<u>Dec. 30</u>	8 am	Susan H	Anna & Terri R	Carol	Susan	
	9:30 am	Romaine	Joan R		Nina	
	11 am	Carol	Jean S & Jean S		Kathy	
<u>Dec. 31</u>	8 am			Val	Val	

Thank you for your service

Operation Barnabas Life Group

Announcing the creation of a new Bethlehem Life Group beginning the first Thursday of the month starting January 3rd at 6:45 pm in the cottage!

A monthly study for everyone who has committed his or her life to Jesus and who seeks each day to learn, to follow, and to share Him with others in order to fulfill His Great Commission with the Message of the Cross!

Each week will have three new segments:

- 1) Bible Stories, People of the Bible, Martin Luther, Bible Basics
- 2) Music - Lots of Praising God with songs and music
- 3) A Biblical look at the history of our country. Come and share and enjoy, there is no continuous study, so if you miss a week, you can pick-up the next week!

What God Calls Men and Women to Do

MEN

Pray

Acknowledge what you cannot do. Entrust your calling to be a man to your heavenly Father.

Love

Love selflessly. Model the love Christ has for His creation-a sacrificial love.

Give

Exist for the good of those you have been entrusted to serve. Prioritize love, sacrifice, and relationships.

Fight

Be steadfast in your mission. Have grit in the face of distractions. Know what you're fighting for.

(Adapted from Man Up!)

WOMEN

Rejoice

Rejoice in your triumphs, in your friends' successes, in the forgiveness you have from Jesus.

Submit

Don't shy away from this word. It's a beautiful description of God and how He set up His creation.

Love

Love your friends. Your parents. Your husband and children if you have them. Do it all selflessly.

Serve

Whatever your vocation, God has called you to serve in specific areas and to serve specific people. He's using you.

(Adapted from LadyLike)

A Christmas Joy That Lasts

During a recent Children's Message I was attempting to make a point and I mentioned Christmas. A young man looked at me and exclaimed "Christmas? It's not even Thanksgiving yet!" That young man shares a common sentiment with many, myself included. I don't listen to Christmas music until after Thanksgiving. I scoff at the titles of Hallmark Christmas movies that come up on the T.V. Guide in early November. The stores have Christmas trees up already as soon as Halloween ends and I have gotten several emails regarding Christmas shopping and Holiday savings. Even as I write this, it is still mid-November and the thought of Christmas coming soon is alarming and almost surreal. It doesn't feel like Christmas outside. In fact it is likely going to be the first time in my life that I will be "dreaming of a White Christmas" instead of experiencing it. Still December 25th will be here and gone before we know it.

One of my favorite childhood Christmas movies is the animated Dr. Seuss classic "How the Grinch Stole Christmas". I see that they have created a new Grinch movie that is in theatres currently. At the end of the movie the Grinch, despite all of his efforts to keep Christmas from coming, fails from his mission. The Grinch then comes to an understanding that Christmas comes without presents, trees, ribbons, and even the roast beast. The Grinch finds that Christmas is something more.

Christmas is more than a date on the calendar. It is more than a season. It is more than family gathered around food and presents. It is even more than coming to Church. When we think about it, that first Christmas came and went without most people realizing it. There were no trees, ribbons, presents, or snow. The only thing that mattered was the baby in the manger in the little town of Bethlehem. The reality is that Jesus came to earth. In some ways, every day is a celebration of Christmas. Our church is named Bethlehem, that's a daily reminder of Christmas. In that aspect, it's never too early to talk about Christmas! I look forward to joining with you in preparing our hearts and minds for Christmas during this Advent season along with worshiping with you on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. I pray that this Christmas season will provide a joy that lasts throughout the next year.

Merry Christmas,
Vicar Jeremy

LWML

Listed below is the Mission Statement and The Vision Statement for the National LWML organization. Look for more information in upcoming newsletters. Or contact Becky Bicknase at 605-949-1608.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

Vision Statement

The LWML is the leading group for LCMS women where each woman is welcomed and encouraged to use her unique God-given gifts as she supports global missions and serves the Lord with gladness.



Midweek Advent Worship Services

with Holy Communion

December 5th, 12 noon & 7 pm

December 12th, 12 noon & 7 pm

December 19th, noon

December 19th, Cantata 7 pm

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Children's Christmas Program

December 24th, 6 pm

Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

December 24th, 8 pm and 10 pm

Christmas Day Worship Service

with Holy Communion

December 25th, 10 am

New Year's Eve Worship Service

with Holy Communion

December 31st, 7 pm

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photos and fun!**



What is the Angel Tree Program?

The Salvation Army **Angel Tree program** is a holiday **program** designed to raise in-kind gifts to assist families who are in crisis as a result of medical issues, unemployment, homelessness, medical issues or other difficult circumstances and who otherwise wouldn't have the resources to celebrate Christmas.

Thank you for your generosity!

Advent by Candlelight

Special Ladies Event

Advent by Candlelight will be held Sunday, December 9, 5-7 p.m. The theme of this inaugural event for women will be "The Advent of our Lord." Participants will learn the history of this sacred season, from the first documented observances in the early centuries of Christianity to the present day four-week time of preparation before Christmas. Scripture readings by ladies of Bethlehem, congregational singing, and special music will enhance the devotional service.

Worship will be followed by an elegant tea in Disciples' Hall featuring appetizers, fruit, desserts, and refreshments. A photo display of previous Advent by Candlelight events from other congregations is on display in Disciples' Hall.

To register for the wait list, or if you have any questions, please contact Bonnie Arndt, arndt.bonnie@gmail.com or 904-652-5401.

***Please remember to sign the Record of Fellowship
that is your pew and pass it to your neighbor.***

Sing We Now of Christmas, sing we all Noel!

Well, it is finally here and at the same time: it's here already? Time flies and sometimes time stands still. Be all that as it may, it is indeed time. Time for all the preparations: the gifts, the food shopping and preparations, the rehearsals, the cards, the parties, the guests and on and on. But as Elizabeth (my grand daughter) at age 5 said to a group of good folks in a nursing home as she took control of the microphone, "It's not about the presents, it's about Baby Jesus!" Quite a testimony to say the least. I'm quite sure I will never forget this, but in the midst of all the preparations we sometimes forget what it really is all about. Here at Bethlehem we have a number of events (a big number!) keeping the real meaning foremost in our lives. There is something for everyone reflecting this glorious message. I am also excited to notice that pretty much all of these events include music: "Sing We Now of Christmas". Millions of notes have been composed and performed about Christmas and its meaning for literally thousands of years. It is difficult to narrow down which ones to use. Here are some of the events in which the Christmas story, meaning and music will take place throughout this Christmas season here at Bethlehem.

December 5 – Our first Advent service – Noon & 7:00 PM

December 9 – 'Advent by Candlelight' - a chapel service for and by women followed by a fellowship Tea. 5:00 – 7:00 PM

December 12 – Second Advent service – Noon & 7:00 PM

December 19 – Third Advent service – Noon. Soup and Sandwich – 6:00 PM. Cantata with choir and Narration by Vicar and Holy Communion – 7:00 PM

December 24 – Christmas Eve Children's Pageant: "Stable" – 6:00 PM. Christmas Candlelight Services with Holy Communion – 8:00 & 10:00 PM

December 25 - Christmas Day Celebration with Holy Communion – 10:00 AM

December 26 – Sleep!

This list does not include our regular Sunday services (8, 9:30 & 11) which will take place as normal. There will be glorious music for each and every one of these events, many with surprises composed and performed to remind us that the real reason is not about presents, but about Happy Birthday, Jesus and the Hope that is freely given to us all – hope for today, tomorrow and for all eternity!

Sing we now of Christmas, sing we all Noel!

In His service and yours,

KATHLEEN OLIVE, MINISTER OF MUSIC

Bethlehem Lutheran, Bible Study, Children and Families, Ministry Meetings, Music Ministry, Official Acts, Outside Groups, Pastor/Staff, Preschool, Special Events, Youth and Young Adults, Christian Holidays

Dec 2018 (Eastern Time - New York)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25 Last S. of the Church Year Mites Sunday	26 6:30pm - "South of the Border" 8 am - Donut Sunday @ Disciples' 8 am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @	27 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Executive Council Meeting	28 Tami Out 9:30am - Chapel with the 11am - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 5:30pm - 7th & 8th Grade 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	29 9:11am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6pm - Preschool Board Mtg. @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @	30 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 9:30am - Confirmands Decorate 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @	1
2 First S. in Advent First Sunday of Advent	3 9:30am - Senior Game Day @ 6:45pm - Gideon's Meeting @ 8 am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary	4 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm - Small Group @ The	5 9:30am - Chapel with the 12pm - Midweek Advent Worship 1pm - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 5:30pm - 7th & 8th Grade 7pm - Midweek Advent Worship	6 9:11am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @	7 Feast of the Immaculate 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 9:30am - Christmas Pageant 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @	8
9 Bells Playing	10 6:30pm - "South of the Border" Second S. in Advent	11 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Elder's Meeting @	12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe 9:30am - Chapel with the 12pm - Midweek Advent Worship 1pm - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 5:30pm - 7th & 8th Grade 7pm - Midweek Advent Worship	13 9:11am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @ 6:45pm - Gideon Ladies Meeting	14 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 9:30am - Christmas Pageant 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @	15
16 Feed My Sheep Sunday @ Third S. in Advent	17 11am - Gideon Christmas Party 8 am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary	18 6pm - Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Call Committee Meeting @ 7pm - Executive Council Meeting	19 9:30am - Chapel with the 9:30am - Pablo Towers 12pm - Midweek Advent Worship 1pm - Staff Meeting @ Conf. Rm 5:30pm - 7th & 8th Grade 7pm - Midweek Advent Worship	20 9:11am - Circuit Pastor's 9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @	21 6pm - BLC Serves Supper at 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 9:30am - Christmas Pageant 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @	22
23 Fourth S. in Advent Mites Sunday	24 Bell's playing Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day 7am - Preschool Closed	26 9am - Church Office Closed 5:30pm - 7th & 8th Grade 9am - Church Office Closed 10am - Christmas Day Worship	27 9:11am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 6:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 6:45pm - AA Meeting @	28 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @	29
30 First S. a. Christmas	31 9am - Church Office Closed 8 am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 9:30am - Family: Contemporary	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 9:30am - Chapel with the 7am - Preschool Closed 9am - Church Office Closed 6:30pm - Small Group @ The	3 9:11am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Adult Bible Study @ 5:30pm - 7th & 8th Grade 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	4 8:45am - AA Meeting @ 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @	5