Pastor Wayne Dubnansky				
Minister of Music Dr. Brad Hunnicutt				
Office ManagerLaura Raun				
Web MasterGray Anthony				
Congregational Council				
Alecia HarrisonPresident				
Linda GaroutteVice President				
Julie BogleSecretary				
Ken Fillingim Treasurer				
Tess Andrews Deputy Treasurer				
Terry BarnesFinancial Secretary				
Sarah Watkins, Steven Brantley, Lindsay				
Crocker, Dave Hash, and Dan Hayes				

#### December 2020



Lord of Life Lutheran Church 2100 Buffaloe Road Garner, NC 27529

Email: LordofLife2100@gmail.com Pastor's Email: wdubnansky@gmail.com Website: www.lordoflifechurchgarnernc.org Office (919) 772-9044



10:00 am Sundays In-Person Worship & Virtual Worship Livestream via Facebook Live





# Life-Lines

December 2020

#### WONDERMENTS FROM PASTOR WAYNE'S WORLD

I am going to go out on a limb and say next year about this time we will be seeing a movie with a title something like this: "Christmas in the Time of a Pandemic". So let's do a first draft for future filmmakers. Advent, the season before Christmas, began, Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. For those who wish to worship in person, we ask for reservations each Sunday in Advent and Christmas. It is hoped that each Sunday during Advent those who wish will worship by livestream from the sanctuary at home. It can be your time to do some reflecting and meditating as you worship at home. During the week take a closer look at the hymns and the scripture lessons from the Sunday before; three hymns, three lessons, one each Monday through Saturday. Take advantage of your time alone to strengthen your relationship with God.

Some of the biblical characters associated with Christmas were isolated. Elizabeth was a distance from her cousin, Mary. When Mary did visit, they would have had significant quality time together, not just catching up on each other's lives since it may have been quite some time since they last talked to each other, but sharing the joy of being "players" in God's plan. Each Wednesday evening during Advent, Elizabeth, Anna and Mary will be featured respectively, embedded in Responsive Prayer - *Suffrages*.

All the above you can join in isolation "together" with fellow members of Lord of Life Lutheran Church and with Elizabeth, Anna, and Mary. "Good company" even in isolation.

Additionally, you have hymnals at home, find an Advent hymn or even a Christmas hymn (it's allowed in Advent) and sing in anticipation of Jesus' coming as well as His Incarnation. By so doing, know that, in Christ, we are never alone even when isolated, as members of Lord of Life community of faith we are together even when apart.

If state guidelines remain the same, any "in person" worships will be limited to 10 people; therefore, in order to accommodate all wishing to worship Christmas Eve, we anticipate having three worships; 5:30 pm, 7 pm, and 11 pm. Reservations will need to be made by Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> in order to be certain three worships are necessary. The 5:30 worship will be livestreamed.

~ Pastor Wayne

Mary may have felt isolated after receiving the news that she would be the mother of God's Son. What would Joseph think, what would my parents think, should I even tell them? What about the townspeople, what would they think?

The prophetess, Anna, the gospel of Luke tells us she did not "depart from the temple with fasting and prayer day and night". That must have been a lonely life.





"The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor" Proverbs 22:9, NIV

The Social Concerns committee continues to search for ways to meet the needs of our community around us. We continue to gather non-perishable items in the narthex. We have consistently donated more than 100 pounds of food each month. THANK YOU everyone!!!

Consider purchasing items that will complete a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, but honestly the food needs are GREAT for our community. MANY people are hurting as a result of the Coronavirus. Prayerfully consider what you can do for those in need. And remember, your prayers are powerful! Pray for your neighbors in need daily!

Our Holiday Cheer family lives in Garner. They are grandparents that are raising their 3 grandsons. We acquired the names from Wake County Social Services. This family found itself in an unexpected situation recently and the grandparents are excited about our help to make Christmas extra special for the boys!

The Mary Jo Albert Christmas Concert will be virtual this year. Look for more details in the next few weeks. Thank you Dr. Brad and Ray Green for making this concert possible!

Rotary breakfasts are continuing to go well. They are limited to 10 participants, must make reservations, wear masks and take temperatures upon arrival. The fellowship hall only has 3 chairs per table and are spaced at least 6 feet apart.

Social Concerns voted to distribute funds to many worthy organizations this month. We donated \$330 in ELCA Good Gifts, \$250 to Lutheran Disaster Relief for hurricane victims, and \$300 to the Food Bank of Eastern and Central North Carolina. We also voted to send \$250 to a friend of Pastor Wayne that has a family member working to help victims of hurricane devastation in Honduras. (See blurb elsewhere in the newsletter.) We continue to collect food for the Garner Area Ministries Food Pantry. Thank you for the turkeys that have appeared in the freezer! GAM is grateful to fulfill the food needs of the people in our community. Thank you for ALL that have donated even a box of cereal. This provides a much needed meal for your neighbor who is hungry!

We wish you a very Merry Christmas! Stay safe! And we cannot wait until we can gather freely again!

> Blessings, Alecia Harrison and Gale Isaacs Social Concerns, Co-Chairs



Yes! The Angel Tree is back, well sort of. The Charlie Brown tree remains in the box and we have a beautiful table set up in the narthex with gift tags. Please choose your tag, rip off the back paper copy, write your name on the back, put the paper in the basket and bring your UNWRAPPED gift by Sunday, December 6th.

This year we are sponsoring one family... grandparents that are raising their three grandsons. This family lives in Garner and are very excited that we are helping them with making this Christmas very special for the boys.

And during the pandemic, we understand that it is often difficult for you to physically shop safely. If you prefer, the Social Concerns committee will be glad to shop for you. Just let one of the committee members know!

Thank you for your continued community support!!!

Social Concerns Committee



## From the Desk of Your Council President

Your Church Council continues to work for you and ensure proper management of our facility and care of our congregation. Once again, I want to thank you for your prayers and financial contributions. We have had decreased giving during the pandemic but we also have had reduced costs for electricity, etc. since fewer people are inside the building. If you have been distracted and forgot to send in your offering, it is not too late! Overall, we are SO grateful for your faithful presence, either physical or by prayer or both!

We are currently working on the 2021 Budget. We will vote on the budget at our next Congregational meeting, whenever that will be....date TBD. We also will have an official online giving program through our current ParishSoft program used for our church financial records. We also discussed staff raises, if possible, and increase in Mission Support to the NC Synod.

We continue to collect money for the Kitchen Renovations. The amount is GROWING! but not quite the needed amount for the actual work. We have started a new line item for sanctuary streaming equipment updates and are currently having the Church Charter and Purpose Statement cleaned and restored.

The ELCA will have a new hymnal available soon. The Council decided to defer to Dr. Brad to determine how many new hymnals we might use.

We continue to have the 10 am sanctuary worship service. We are limited to 10 people in the sanctuary so reservations are required as are masks and temperature checks. We continue to meet in the Outdoor Worship Space as long as the weather cooperates (stays above 50 degrees) at 11 am. In the case of rain, we will meet in the pavilion. We will livestream Wednesday night Advent services and we will potentially have 3 services in the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve (see Pastor Wayne's Wonderments for details). If you have not been in the sanctuary, the pews are marked off so that we are physically distant from each other. And there is a card that notes the area has been cleaned or needs to be cleaned as you leave. This will make sense when you see it.

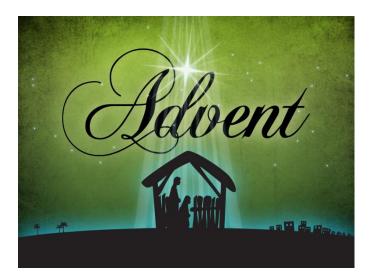
The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." John 4:25, NIV

> Blessings, Alecia Harrison



"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." Luke 1:26-33, NIV





Advent is a season of waiting and preparing for the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Advent is fortunately NOT a single day, but a whole season of preparation that includes four Sundays. Preparation takes time. We get four weeks to practice slowing down and all need to practice the ancient art of watching and waiting! We are guilty of not preparing properly because we get distracted by life. We have to think ahead. But Advent is the time to prepare for the JOY that comes into my heart when I think of everything that Jesus has done for me and you!

Are you patiently waiting during the season of Advent or are you frantically dashing from one event to another? My friends know that I am solidly in the frantic camp, BUT with Coronavirus, I have slowed down a bit (another silver lining given by the pandemic). Our isolation, distancing and mask wearing has given me time with myself; time to get to know myself better. Things I didn't really WANT to know about myself! We have been given a sanctioned time to slow down and pay attention to the world around us. But on the downside, we see our flaws with glaring clarity. And think about this question... what am I preparing for that's good? Does it have anything to do with praising God for including you in His family as an heir to the Kingdom? To be honest, it is not what first came to my mind. Again, shows my true self! And I don't always like it. Advent gives us a chance to reset and be more focused on the glory of our Savior and the amazing gift that He has given us!



This year we will NOT have the Annual Christmas party and White Elephant gift exchange....one of my favorite events of the year! It is a time of fellowship and laughter that I will truly miss! We also will not have O Holy Night at Camp Agape. IF you possibly are NOT into Christmas, this walk through the camp for a live Nativity Scene will definitely get you in the mood! We will not have the Children's Christmas Pageant followed by hot chocolate and Christmas cookies. Caroling will probably not happen.

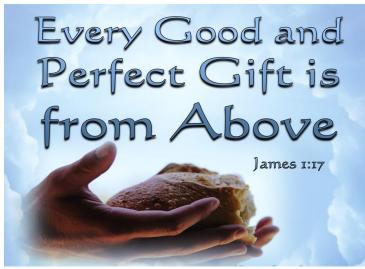
You CAN continue to do your Christmas charitable giving, bake Christmas treats for the neighbors, and send Christmas cards or other hand-written notes. I cannot tell you how IMPORTANT hand-written notes are this year. The Social Concerns Committee decided to sponsor one Garner family this year. Thank you for your generous gifting to this family!

Pope Julius I declared December 25 to be celebrated as the birthday of Jesus in A.D. 353. Professor Charles Follen lit candles on the first Christmas tree in America in 1832. Our commercial world has transformed a solemn birthday celebration into a monthlong media blitz and shopping extravaganza.

I am speaking mostly to myself, but TRY to resist the worldly view of Christmas!



Getting a special gift that you really wanted is nice. But, remember to be thankful for the giver, not just the gift. This means to always be grateful for the gift and the thoughtfulness the giver put into the gift. Again, speaking to myself! But I hope these words of wisdom will help you too!



God our Father, has given us the most PERFECT gift ever! Emphasis on perfect! Jesus Christ, God's only Son, agreed to become human and live among

us. He experienced all the emotions that we experience, including frustration, hunger, anger, disappointment. Jesus KNEW what would happen when he came to live among us, i.e., He knew the end of the story. Jesus came anyway! Fortunately for us, Jesus also knows love, patience, generosity and mercy. Jesus is LOVE! An evergreen wreath reminds us of God's never ending love for us. Once He claims us as HIS child, we can never be lost! Even when we mess up, we go tell our Father what we did and we get to try again! What a Dad!

When Christ was born, shepherds came to honor Him, wise men from the East brought Him gifts, and the earth rejoiced at His birth. These people who came to worship Him had no idea what Christ would accomplish as an adult. But they were right in traveling to worship the King because His birth was the most remarkable event in human history. Wise men and women today worship the Child of Bethlehem.

As we approach the holiday season again, we are faced with yet another opportunity to pause in the midst of all the excitement, decorations, and commercialization, to consider again the origin of Christmas--the One whose birth we celebrate. Let's not forget the true meaning of why we celebrate during this time of year. Celebrate the baby Jesus and trust Him as Savior today.

May this Advent season be filled with hope and joy, peace and new energy for all of us. Help us to trust in your gracious will, to serve your kingdom here on earth and to depend on your ultimate power. Will you accept God's invitation to give joyfully? It doesn't always have to be money. Our time and talents are more valuable gifts than our money!

## Let us pray:

All-Creating God, we thank you for the gift of traditions and festivities that help us remember the deeper meanings of the holy season of Advent. We pray that you replace our anxieties with the calm and the strength of your Holy Spirit. Fill us with energy, O Spirit, to do those things which you would have us do, and teach us to watch well, O Father God, for the One whose second coming we await, Jesus Christ our Lord,



Blessings, Alecia Harrison



You probably are aware that TWO hurricanes hit Central America basically in the same area about a week apart. The destruction was devastating!

Pastor Wayne knows a physician working in Honduras helping people severally affected by the hurricanes. The Social Concerns committee voted to send \$250 to the doctor's sister that lives in the US who is trying to raise money and goods to send to people who lost everything!



## Prepare the Royal Highway

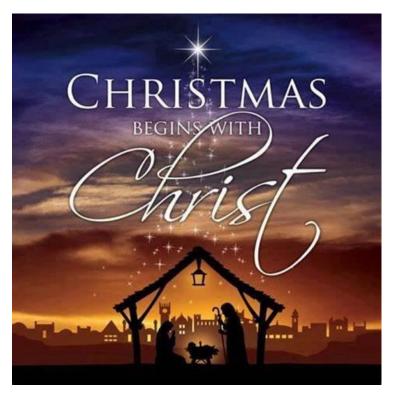
There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. Psalm 132:17

John the Baptist is this lamp in our psalm. He is a light shining for God's anointed one, Jesus Christ. "John bore witness about him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks before me, becaue he was before me"" (John 1:15) Here's the point: Jesus is greater than John the Baptist.

Here's the bigger point: Jesus is greater than the entire Old Testament - with it's prophets, priests and kings, tabernacle, temples and tachings. There's no one stronger or more loving than Jesus.

Our hymn, composed by Frans Mikael Franzén (1772-1847) – just like John the Baptist – urges us to shine the light on Jesus. "Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!" We make ready in our hearts a place for Jesus, who lived the life we could not and died our death so we need not. Now that's comeone to prepare for!

"Hosanna to the Lord. For he fulfills God's Word!" Amen



### The MOST Meaningful Time of the Year

The meaning of Christmas has always been Jesus, No other story will do, His birth is what we all celebrate, God's gift for me and you. --- M.S. Lowndes

Well, one thing for sure that hasn't changed this year is jumping the gun on Christmas. Christmas songs (per usual) were being played on the radio before the arrival of Thanksgiving Day. As a matter of fact, here we are a few days after Thanksgiving and my favorite FM Station is now all Christmas, all the time, and though it's in our DNA to check out the next big door-buster deal, let's stop a second and ponder the greatest deal in all of this... the birth of Jesus. So, in this new reality, do you think that the world of COVID-19 is slowing us down? Really? Us? Ding-ding, you are correct! It has slowed us down and it has caused us to alter the way we do things but it has NOT caused us to forget this most meaningful recognition as we happily join with millions of Christians around the world in remembering the birth of our Savior. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!" And because he was born in Bethlehem, "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." It truly is the most wonderful time of the year and while we try to keep things light-hearted at Christmas time, we aren't ignoring that many of us have had a difficult year with illness, loss, uncertain employment, and isolation.

Remember the childhood perplexity of trying to figure out how on earth Santa could be in a zillion places at one time? I mean, he visited all children regardless of where they lived. He delivered toys to every boy and girl in the world, in just one night, and he got it done even if they didn't have a chimney! It was really quite mind-boggling, especially since we embraced whatever "logical" reasoning our parents offered in explanation; that was our child's view. When we think about the real meaning of Christmas however, we do have to consider the world's anticipation of the coming of the Messiah... the birth of Jesus! There was no assurance that anyone would actually lay eyes on Him and that added to the aspect of what made Christmas so astonishing ... it remains extraordinary.

Oddly enough there really are some people who think about Jesus mainly at Christmas time. With all the sincerity they can muster, each year they resolve to know him personally but, those little things get in the way... the moment passes. In comes the New Year and with it comes life's little ups & downs and ins & outs that lead away from the manger story. The thing about this scenario is that one can't keep riding on this perpetual merry-go-round and not make a spiritual commitment. Yeah, I know... given the commotion of the Christmas season, it's easy to forget what we're celebrating. We try in earnest to find the perfect gift for a loved one, whereas the perfect gift of eternal love that we already possess is dwarfed in comparison.

One way to center ourselves again is to return to the origin of the true Christmas story... the Bible. We can re-read about the prophesies of the coming of the Christ child... the events leading up to His birth... the celebrations from angels on high, to shepherds in the fields, to the Three Wise men! What a celebration that was! Jesus's arrival... Wow! It must have been SOMETHING! They could have sung, as the song goes, "Christmas Just Ain't Christmas without the One You Love." Be blessed and have a Merry Christmas.

Gale J. Isaacs

Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas...perhaps... means a little bit more!





#### PLEDGES:

Amid our unusual, crazy circumstances of a global pandemic virus, Lord of Life still has to function as a church. Part of the annual practice of LOL Parish Committee is to request financial pledges for the upcoming year. This helps us to function better as a church with our finances AND helps us to enact financial planning in preparing our budget for 2021. PLEASE refer to the Pledge card to the right and submit in the offering plate OR my mailbox OR email me completed Pledge card OR retrieve Pledge card placed in YOUR mailbox.

#### **GIFTS:**

It's also the time of year for the collection of gifts for our LOL staff (primarily Pastor Wayne, Dr. Brad and Laura). It's a great opportunity to express our thanks in the Christmas season through our giving of gifts. During this unusual year of the Corona Virus, our church services have not missed a beat and have continued with NOT 1, but 2 services! We've had the great opportunity to worship "virtually" online via facebook and not risk exposure to others OR worship at outdoor service weather permitting. IF you feel inclined to contribute a financial donation to our great staff, PLEASE leave in offering plate marked "GIFT FOR STAFF" OR leave donation in my mailbox.

Hope you all have a great Christmas and hope we all have a blessed year in 2021

God Bless you all,

Yours in Christ, Terry Barnes/Parish Chair/Financial Secretary

Lord of Life Lutheran Church	Lord of Life Lutheran Church
2021 Weekly Pledge	2021 Weekly Pledge
or	or
2021 Monthly Pledge	2021 Monthly Pledge
Name (s):	Name (s):
Address	Address
Put this portion of the card in the offering plate	Keep this portion of the card for your records



#### A Most Beautiful Thing: A Review

Mary Mazzio, a former Olympic rower prior to directing the documentary, is what she says "a recovering attorney". "A Most Beautiful Thing" tells the story of the first all-black high school rowing team. It is based on a book by one of the rowers, Arshay Cooper. All four of them, Arshay, Alvin, Malcolm, and Preston grew up in the west side of Chicago, where violence and gunshots are frequent occurrences.

One day they went into their high school (Manley) cafeteria and found a boat and free pizza for anyone interested in joining the rowing team. They were gradually introduced to the previously unknown sport of rowing. They had broken an invisible ceiling. They were the first all-black high school rowing team. Most important, they were really introduced to a new way of life. It gave them an alternative to the violence and gunshots of the streets. They took trips to colleges to be introduced to the "other, more meaningful world." Preparation for life was always the goal of the coaches and the young entrepreneur who funded the program. They too became entrepreneurs and became lifelong friends. The men involved all say in interviews that rowing became their saving grace. Out on the water they were away from the neighborhood's barrage of gunshots and sirens. This all happened in the 1990's.

The beautiful thing in this film is they did not become winners who dominated the sport. They were above average, however. The beautiful thing is how their lives were changed forever. Twenty years later, after their Manley years, they reunited as middle age men and did come in second in the Chicago Sprints. They did it to show the generation following them, their sons included, that they could be successful in their own ways just as they were. During their training in their "second season" they connected with Chicago policemen whom they trained with and informally competed with.

Two side notes, Arshay's mother sought out and overcame her addiction to drugs through supportive rehabilitation and became a loving mother and practicing Christian modeling her faith in the neighborhood. For the young people or those young at heart, Common, narrated the film. For you sports fans, Dwayne Wade and Grant Hill were avid supporters of telling this truly amazing story.

If you want a feel good true Christmas story, this is it. I highly recommend it. It will be on a future Spiritual Life cinema list.

~ Pastor Wayne





We pray for our world and those in it with hope for our future.

Family of Page Gough, passed away 11/4; Family of Martha Albert, Harry Albert's mother, passed away 10/23; Family of Dan Stamm, passed away 10/11; Dave

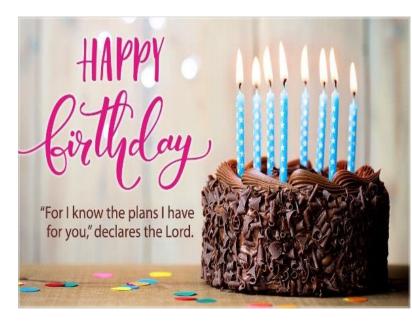
Hash; Bud Holderman; Sylvia Lambert's nephew, David Wise, complications from surgery; Sarah Watkins, as she looks for a new career opportunity; Dennis King, prayer of thanks for improvement; Dennis King's sister, Beverly, several serious health issues; Shirley Poole; Ken Fillingim; Peg Stamp, myeloma & back surgery; Eric Roeser, rotator cuff surgery; Julie Roeser, eye surgery; Alice Austin's friend, Kathy Koonce, brain tumor; Julia Lochra's cousin, Les Salmon, 3<sup>rd</sup> spinal surgery; Tess Andrews brother, David Van Benschoten, multiple myeloma; Karen Rodgers, stage 4 cancer; Karen Post's friends: Blanca Hernandez, ovarian mass; Dr. Steve Rushton, lymphoma; and Sandy Murphy; Karen Post's cousin, Mike Harris – recurring prostate cancer; Lindsay Crocker's Nephew, Daniel Harman, health and healing; Karen Wright's mother, Carol Goodford, heart issues; Steve Klawiter's mother, Marylou, heart failure; Pam Klawiter's co-worker, Carolyn Harbertson, breast

cancer; Larry Watson, Joan Stewart's son-in-law, ICV Stroke; Holly Hans' sister, Heather House and her family; Holly Hans' mother, Carol Hardy; Shannon Thomsen's niece, Kylie Gardner, tumors and Turner Syndrome; Paul & Kerri Blanchard's son, Jason, mental



disability; Chuck Wallace, Don Wallace's nephew, health problems; Mary Langworthy's son Kyle's Father in Law, Jim Jackson, Multiple Myeloma; Mary Langworthy's nephew, Blake Evans, Chron's disease, surgery for severe fistulas and going through a bad divorce/child custody battle; Christine Brennecke -Corticobasal Syndrome; Susie, Benjamin and Bryce Lowe.

**PLEASE** review the Prayer List & the Birthday List and let Laura or Pastor Wayne know of any updates, deletions, or additions.



## **December**

December 5	Rebecca Swanson		
December 7	Amanda Babel		
	Jim Rebbeor		
December 8	Lisa Grayson		
December 9	Neil Brennecke		
December 14	John Nalepa		
December 17	Laura Raun		
December 26	Becky Babel		
	Drew Cook		
December 28	Karen Wright		

## <u>January</u>

January 3	Dave Hash
January 6	Holly Hans
January 7	Becky Roof
January 8	Grace Barnes
January 9	Anne Marie Dubnansky
January 14	Jamie Bredell
	Becky Von St. Paul
January 15	Rita Clark
January 18	Gere Savolainen
January 21	Ryan MaCurdy
January 24	Barbara Kyles
January 25	Pastor Wayne Dubnansky

## Hello December Make my wishes come true

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
11 am – Outdoor Wor	hip w/reservation Virtual Worship ship - PERMITTING	1	2 7 pm Evening Advent Worship	3	4 National Cookie Day	5
6 10 am Virtual Worship 11 am Outdoor WORSHIP	7	8	9 7 pm Evening Advent Worship	10	11	12
13 10 am Virtual Worship 11 am OULOOF WORSHIP 11:45 am Council Mtg	14	15	16 7 pm Evening Advent Worship	17 SOCIAL CONCERNS	18	19
20 10 am Virtual Worship 11 am outdoor WORSHIP	WINTER starts today!		23	24 Christmas EVE WORSHIP 5:30, 7:00 & 11 pm	25 MERRY 00 2020 CHRISTMAS	26
27 10 am Virtual Worship 11 am Outdoor WORSHIP	28	29	30	31 Good Riddäncë 2020	HAP HAP New y ₹202	eogg



- 1. Jeremiah 33:14 2. Micah 5:2 3. Isaiah 11:1-2 4. Malachi 3:1 5. Mark 1:1-3 6. John 1:1-5 7. Isaiah 7:14 8. Luke 1:26-28 9. Luke 1:29-33 10. Luke 1:34-38 11. Luke 1:46-55 12. Matthew 1:18-19 13. Matthew 1:20-21 14. Matthew 1:22-25 15. Luke 2:1-3 16. Luke 2:4-7
- 17. Luke 2:8-9
- 18. Luke 2:10-12
  - 19. Luke 2:13-14
- 20. Luke 2:15-16
- 21. Luke 2:17-20
- 22. Matthew 2:1-2
- 23. Matthew 2:3-8
- 24. Matthew 2:9-12
- 25. Isaiah 9:6
- 26. Galatians 4:4-5
- 27. James 1:17
- 28. 2 Corinthians 9:15
- 29. Luke 2:30-32
- 30. Romans 15:4
- 31. 1 Peter 1:13

