

# Cross Connections



*St. Paul's Lutheran Church*

*December 2019*

## Wednesday Meals in Advent

Dec 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 pm, we will have our typical Advent meals in Trinity Hall.

- ♦ On Dec 4<sup>th</sup> we will have soups and salad, plus desserts
- ♦ On Dec 11, the menu will be pizza and salad bar, plus desserts

We will begin the meals earlier to enable handbell players to get their supper before their rehearsal times.



## Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 15 at 5:00 will be our annual Christmas Pageant and lasagna supper. Everyone is invited to enjoy the children's interpretation of the birth of our Savior, ending with a fine fellowship meal. Rehearsals for the pageant will take place in Trinity Hall on Saturdays, December 7 and 14 at 10:00 am. All children and youth are encouraged to participate.

On Wed, Dec 18<sup>th</sup>, we will enjoy our annual Christmas celebration meal. Menu includes salmon and ham. There will be plenty of sides and desserts. Watch for a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the atrium as we get closer to the date. If you would like to help with this meal, please contact Martha Dahl.



The Rev. Scott M. Anderson, Pastor  
Susan Esposito, Parish Administrator & Editor  
Jacqueline Nappi, Minister of Music  
Amanda Stoen, Preschool Director  
Anna Carter, Vicar

Jackie Fryt, Bookkeeper

The Rev. Ali Tranvik, Associate Pastor, Duke Lutherans

The Rev. Dr. Charles R. Huggins, Pastor Emeritus

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Facebook: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELCA

## From the Pastor...

Christmas is coming – I won't say the goose is getting fat.

But soon and very soon we will be winding up Year C of the lectionary cycle and beginning year A, the year of Matthew. We will have our meeting to elect three new council members, say thank you to our outgoing council – Linda Foreman, Johnson Sheelam, and Jim Shoaf, and approve a budget for 2020.

So, December is the start of our new church year. Pastor Ali will guide us through the Advent season on Wednesday evenings and will continue the theme she has begun some years ago on images of God.

Our Sunday themes for the season will begin with thoughts around what can't wait. Hope, peace, joy, and love can't wait. We experience those now with Jesus present in our lives.

We continue to work on Planting Hope and the development of core values and goal setting. Special thanks to the Planting Hope team for their hard work. Connected loosely to Planting Hope has been the Nurturing Committee's work and the reminder that "Caring is always in Season." Please continue to add to the tree in the Atrium area and share how you care for one another in this place.

A new church year brings out new ideas for ministry. If you have something you would like to see us do contact one of the council or staff members. We are looking for Sunday School teachers, someone to head up the block party in May and people to help with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

May the new year bring you joy and peace.

Pastor Scott

## From the Vicar...

I learned a few years ago that one of my favorite Christmas hymns, "Joy to the World," is actually an Advent hymn. As I have been thinking about what I want my Advent to look like this year, this phrase from verse one, "Let every heart prepare him room," has come to mind multiple times.

I love Christmas and everything about it ... the music, decorating, baking, time with family and friends, and the list goes on. Sometimes I get so excited for Christmas and I get caught up in preparing for Christmas, that I let Advent fall by the wayside. And, if I am being completely honest, I really don't like waiting. I tend to think of waiting as a waste of time. However, when we wait upon God, nothing is wasted – not even time.

So, I want Advent this year to be a season of preparing room in my heart for Christ as I wait for Christmas to come. I think of the preparations I make when I have guests coming – I clean, I get my guest room ready, and I plan meals and stock my fridge. Or think about parents who are awaiting the birth of a child ... they nest and prepare their home and the baby's room for the babe's arrival. I want to spend Advent nesting in my heart, preparing my heart for Jesus. This might look like removing some clutter in my heart – things that are taking up space that I want Jesus to occupy. It might mean sweeping away some of the dust and debris that gathers. It might mean letting go of some things I have been holding on to that no longer serve me.

As you think about how you can prepare room in your heart for Jesus this Advent, we have several resources on a table behind the sofa in the fellowship area outside the sanctuary. Come to the adult Sunday school classes on December 15 and 22. I will be teaching and leading conversation on Advent topics.

The temptation is strong to skip over Advent and jump right into Christmas, but God invites us to slow down and wait. As we wait, "Let every heart prepare him room."

Waiting with you, Vicar Anna

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## Images of God: An Advent Exploration

*by Pastor Ali*

"The best metaphors always give both a shock and a shock of recognition," writes Sallie McFague, feminist Christian theologian. If this is true of the metaphors for God in scripture as well, then this Advent season, we may be in for some shock of both kinds.

During the midweek Advent services, Duke Lutherans and others will lead us in a continued exploration of some of the lesser-known metaphors and images for God in scripture. On the one hand, as McFague suggests, these images may surprise us. They may sound strange. The abundance of different (even contradictory) images of God in scripture will remind us just how big, how mysterious, how shocking God can be. A God who we can never quite seem to pin down.

And yet, we also have a God who seeks to be known by us, accessible to us. A God who longs to meet us right where we are, in the shockingly *ordinary* stuff of this world. This Advent, as we prepare for the coming of Christ – For God incarnate – we look for and celebrate the strange and surprising ways that

Emmanuel dwells with us already, here and now.

This year, in addition to the midweek services, there will also be an art exhibit displayed in the narthex that invites you to further explore these images not only on Wednesday nights but throughout the Advent season. Sponsored by a Philip N. Knutson Endowment for Lutheran Campus Ministry, the exhibit particularly lifts up artists from various marginalized communities whose divine image has far too rarely been recognized by and celebrated in the Church.

Finally, you are invited to take part in a conversation hosted by the Continuing Conversations Group that helps us more deeply engage one of this year's images: Jesus as an arrested man on death row. The lunch conversation will take place at 12:30 pm on Sunday, Dec. 8. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the criminal justice system in the U.S., and the racial injustice within it.

So join us in the coming weeks as we explore three new images, and as we open ourselves to encountering God anew.

### ***Advent Service Schedule***

- ▶ Wed, Dec 4 @ 7 pm: God as Hen
- ▶ Wed, Dec 11 @ 7 pm: God as Arrested Man on Death Row
- ▶ Wed, Dec 18 @ 7 pm: God as Darkness

## ***Thank You for Supporting Duke Lutherans!***

This fall, Duke Lutherans set out to raise \$25,000, which a very generous donor has matched. Not only did we meet the match – *we exceeded it*. Thanks to a few significant gifts that came in during the final days of the campaign, we are absolutely thrilled to share that we've raised a total of nearly \$30,500! This is truly something to celebrate. Your show of support and your deep care for this faith community are remarkable. 83 gifts were made – and 45 of you were *first-time donors*! This means that more people than ever are investing in this wonderful ministry we share.

Your generosity allows us to continue to provide a loving faith community for Lutherans at Duke, and to empower them to boldly live out their faith both on and off campus. Thank you for making this important and transformational work possible. We are grateful to share life together here with you at St. Paul's.

– The Duke Lutherans Committee

## **Music Notes**

*by Jackie Nappi*

### ***Advent:***

Wednesday evening choir and handbell rehearsals will change to the following times starting Dec 11: 6:15-6:50 pm Handbells, and 7:40-8:45 pm Choir.

Children's Choir and Youth Handbells will continue rehearsing every Sunday morning between services and will perform in church the last Sunday in Advent (Dec 22); Children's choir rehearses at 9:45-10:00 am, and Youth Handbells rehearses 10:15-10:30 am. On Sundays, December 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, Youth Handbells will rehearse from 10:15-10:45 am.

### ***Christmas Eve Music:***

- 4:00 pm – Children's Music
- 7:00 pm Choir and Handbells
- 10:00 pm – Special Soloists



### ***Rehearsals for Christmas Eve:***

If you would like to join the choir for Christmas Eve, please email Jackie at [music@stpaulsdurham.org](mailto:music@stpaulsdurham.org) for information on the choir anthem and rehearsals for Christmas Eve. Children's Choir will rehearse Christmas Eve music the last Sunday in Advent between services (Dec 22) – all ages welcome!

## **Caring is Always in Season**

Have you noticed the “tree” that has been “planted” on the wall in the narthex area? Created by members of St. Paul's Nurturing committee, the tree is designed to be a visible sign of the many ways the St. Paul's family uses the gifts of the Holy Spirit – connecting, serving, visiting, praying, learning, listening, comforting, encouraging, inviting, sharing, studying, and giving. Through reflection with Pastor and assistance from members of the Stewardship Committee, it is hoped that the 12 caring-act categories are all-encompassing.

As a way to make these thoughtful and caring acts visible, you are invited to fill out a tag, which is available, write a simple description of the act, put the date on the reverse side, and hang the tag on the tree. Each of the 12 categories are within the center of the colorful flowers at the base of the caring tree.

“Together in Jesus Christ we are free by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly, and serve joyfully” (The mission statement of the ELCA).

## From the council...

As Thanksgiving approaches, I am ever grateful for the community and family that is St. Paul's. As in any live and vibrant family, we sometimes need to have challenging conversations, ask hard questions and always can communicate more effectively. That we stay in respectful, active communication and community – stay at the table, literally and figuratively – is vital as we make key decisions and build for the future.

I am especially grateful for the opportunity to work with our Congregation Council: Tina Bessias, Tony Perrotte, Claire Cooney, Phil Hart, Ted Dominick, Lisa Lewis, Jim Shoaf and Johnson Sheelam and thank them for the dedication and care they have shown throughout this year.

*Linda Foreman*

## Sale of Damascus House

On Sunday, November 17, 2019, a congregational meeting was held with the purpose of voting on the proposed sale of Damascus House (2416 Pickett Road) property. The motion: "That St. Paul's Lutheran Church accept the offer from Wildflower Cottage to purchase the property at 2416 Pickett Road for \$485,000, no later than December 31, 2020" passed with 58 yes votes, 4 no votes, and 2 abstains.

## Preschool Pitter Patter



*by Amanda Stoen*

You may have heard the phrase, 'We operate on a shoe string budget.' This month we will highlight the financial part of the preschool program at St. Paul's. The preschool

receives its funding from tuition and fees that parents pay to send their child to preschool. Our school year runs September through May and parents pay a set tuition rate over these nine months. Children come between two and five days per week, depending on age and interest/need by the family. The monthly tuition rate varies depending on how many days a child comes to preschool. An annual registration fee is also charged when a child enrolls for the upcoming school year. Additionally, the preschool also offers summer camp during June, July, and early August which is a separate enrollment and rate, paid by the week for those that

attend.

You may wonder how the preschool spends its income. Eighty-five percent of our budget is spent on salaries for our staff of eleven teachers and support staff. The remaining fifteen percent is spent on classroom furniture and materials, professional development, music enrichment classes and bank fees. The preschool does not receive financial support from the church, aside from the use of the facilities rent-free. While the preschool, as a ministry of the church, does not pay rent, it supports the church by paying some of the banking fees as well as the preschool's cost of workers' compensation.

Finally, the preschool has fundraised and maintains the expenses of the playground. We have had Eagle Scout projects support the playground's needs and held a large fundraising campaign several years ago to purchase and install the large play structure and swings that our children enjoy daily. We appreciate the volunteers we have had over the last 10 years – parents and church members – to help keep costs down. Each year, we also have our Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser which is our largest fundraiser of the year. The proceeds from the dinner benefit our financial scholarship fund and the bake sale benefits our playground needs. The preschool appreciates all of the support we receive from our church members! Our parents speak highly of this outreach ministry and the inclusivity of so many different families we have at the preschool.

Each month we will continue to celebrate 10 years as a preschool at St. Paul's. Here is a little reflection from one of our current preschool families.

*My family attended St. Paul's Preschool for five years. I have two very different children and the staff has shown such care and understanding for each child's individual needs and learning styles. The school provides a small community atmosphere, which is exactly what they needed. Even after my oldest son graduated to kindergarten, the staff at St. Paul's was available to me for guidance and questions for his move to a new school.*

*– The Miles Family*

## Stephen Ministry

*by Nan Treul*

Our Stephen Ministry at St. Paul's will be expanding soon as at least six members are selected to begin their training in January. At the completion of their training in June, the new Stephen Ministers will be commissioned as Stephen Ministers. They will then

join the other active Stephen Ministers in providing one-to-one care to individuals experiencing difficulties in life.



“Stephen Ministry training combines sound theological principles with a foundation in therapeutic communication skills,” says Judy Kraska, who was one of the two original leaders of the Stephen Ministers at St. Paul’s. “The training is top-notch. The skills our

Stephen Ministers learn and practice prepare them to provide a very high level of Christian care giving. The training is intense because it explores some serious life issues, but it is also a growth-producing and spiritually enriching experience.”

The 50 hours of Stephen Ministry training is broken down into twenty-two and a half hour sessions. Among the training topics are:

- ◆ Feelings: Yours, Mine and Ours
- ◆ The Art of Listening
- ◆ Distinctively Christian Care Giving
- ◆ Assertiveness: Relating Gently and Firmly
- ◆ Maintaining Boundaries in Care Giving
- ◆ Confidentiality
- ◆ Ministering to Those Experiencing Grief
- ◆ Caring for People before, during, and after Hospitalization

“Before becoming a Stephen Leader, I went through the Stephen Minister training myself,” says Kim Hoke, another Stephen Leader. “I expected to learn a lot about care giving, but I didn’t anticipate the personal and spiritual growth I experienced. Looking back, perhaps what I enjoyed most was the close Christian community formed with everyone in our training class. Our trainees are in for a great experience.”

More than a half million people have been trained as Stephen Ministers in more than 10,000 churches world-wide since the ministry began in 1975.

“We’re definitely part of something big, says Pastor Scott Anderson. The impact of Stephen Ministry on our congregation has been tremendous. People whose needs might otherwise slip through the cracks are coming face to face with Jesus’ love through their Stephen Minister. Our new class will help us touch that many more lives with the Gospel.”

Please lift up the training class in your prayers over the coming months and watch for regular training class updates in Cross Connections and Sunday bulletins.

## Here – In God’s Garden

*by George Seiz*

God’s gardeners continued their dedicated church campus maintenance efforts during calendar year 2019. Church members contributed approximately 270 labor hours of weeding, raking, mulching, trimming, pruning, watering, digging, and planting, all of which are part of routine landscape maintenance around the church and the Damascus house. A new mowing contractor was utilized this past year providing noticeably



improved lawn care. Some highlights from 2019 include:

- ✱ Planting more drought resistant ornamental grasses at the front of the sanctuary
- ✱ Cutting up and removal of significant brush and limbs
- ✱ Initiated height reduction of the wax myrtle screening around the brick hot box
- ✱ Assisted with block party preparations and break down
- ✱ Yellow jacket and wasp abatement at various locations
- ✱ Continued watering and maintenance of interior plants
- ✱ Significant watering during dry periods
- ✱ Assisted with drainage improvements for new playground area
- ✱ Worked with Pre-school personnel improving playground area for toddlers at rear of church

Members helping with church campus maintenance this year include: Dick Clendaniel, Kevin and Ellen Lavery, Jim Shoaf, John Foreman, Tracey Dissel, Tom Kraska, Doug Whitfield, Dean Redman, Audrey Busch, Tim and Kim Hoke, Mark Petersen, Larry Grovenstein, Bill Dahl, Phil and Sally Hart, Robin Winfree, Ted Dominick, Steve Mzyk, and George Seiz. If I have left anyone out, I am truly sorry. Special thanks to Susan Esposito and Pastor Scott for their continued support of this ministry.

If anyone would like to be a steward of God’s Garden at St. Paul’s, please contact George Seiz or Susan Esposito. Work usually takes place on Saturday mornings from roughly 9 am till 11 am. You don’t need to be there every Saturday and hours are flexible.

## Alternative Gift Giving

What is Alternative Gift Giving? It is a non-traditional way of giving.

Here are a few ideas to help you out...

- **Bull City Fair Trade** – sales at Bull City Fair Trade provide a sustainable source of fair pay that helps ensure a living wage for thousands of people in developing areas.

811 9<sup>th</sup> Street #100

Durham NC

919-286-2457

- **Ten Thousand Villages** – Shop with intention for ethically-sourced wares and to share in the joy of empowering makers in ten thousand villages.

Shoppes of Kildaire

1357 Kildaire Farms Rd

Cary NC

919-377-2700

- **Thistle Farms** – Products (candles, lotions, and such) made by women healing from abuse, addiction and trafficking, prostitution, and addition.

Nashville, TN

615-382-1140

- **Good Gifts (ELCA & LWR)** – animals, clinic goods, scholarships. Check out their website or pick up a catalog available in the atrium – Good Gifts.

## Social Ministry and Continuing Conversation Group

We are so appreciative of our congregational efforts to support each other, the local community and our sisters and brothers in the wider world.

As an example, this congregation sent \$1,775 to ELCA Good Gifts to stock health care clinics, support whole families after a disaster and buy some animals for farmers.

If this Advent and Christmas season finds you wanting to support others afar and near, as always there will be the opportunity to do alternative giving through LWR and/or ELCA Good Gifts. There will be catalogs available in the atrium.

We are asking your continued support for Pastor Ali Tranvik's Advent services as the congregation explore the image of God as an incarcerated man.

Hopefully, the Sunday school lessons with Imam Waheeb will take place in January. Stay tuned and come learn with us.

We encourage the viewing of the movie **Just Mercy** and/or the reading of the book for a future

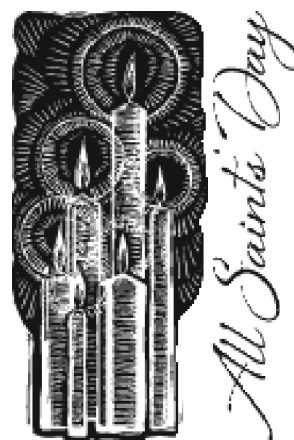
discussion. The film is based on the book of the same name by Bryan Stephenson, who founded the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama. The movie, to be released on December 25, relates Stephenson's pro bono work for inmates of death row. To quote from the trailer, "We all need justice; we all need mercy."

We ask for prayers for our brothers and sisters at Arbol de Vida who struggle in this world for comfort and peace.

## All Saints Sunday

During the Prayers on All Saints Sunday, November 3, we recognized the following persons who have died since last All Saints Sunday:

- ✚ Addie Sturgeon Felkel
- ✚ Marian Edwards Rhoads
- ✚ William Blair Anderson
- ✚ Patricia Irene Redfoot
- ✚ Nancy P. Clendaniel
- ✚ Hazel Dean Seabock Seagroves
- ✚ Jan Hooft
- ✚ Dorothy Kerns Costa
- ✚ James Bethel Richmond



At that service, we also dedicated the following memorial items:

- ✚ Memorials to the Capital Reserve Fund and Stephen Ministry in memory of Bill Anderson
- ✚ Memorials to purchase the White Paraments and complete stage lighting in Trinity Hall, in memory of Addie Felkel, Marian Rhoads, and Ruby Hooft
- ✚ Memorials to purchase Gold Paraments in memory of Nancy Clendaniel
- ✚ Memorials to install new sink and repair old sink in the education classroom area in memory of Dot Costa



*With Sincere Sympathy*

Our sympathy to the family and friends of Geoffrey Summers, who died on Wednesday, November 13, one day after his 79<sup>th</sup> birthday. A remembrance and service of committal will take place at the conclusion of the 8:30 am worship service on Sunday, December 1.



## Change of Address

Tom and Judy Kraska  
522 Cedar Berry Ln  
Chapel Hill NC 27517  
same phones and emails

## Memorials Received

We have received memorials from the following persons with the noted designation:

In Memory of Bill Anderson

Alice and Jim Richmond, Durham

In Memory of Nancy Clendaniel

Alice and Jim Richmond, Durham  
Barbara and Paul Russell, Essex, MA  
Tim and Kim Hoke, Chapel Hill

In Memory of Jan Hooft

Wanda and Terry Whichard, Leland, NC  
Charles and Jannis Whichard, Greensboro, NC

In Memory of Jan and Ruby Hooft

Mary Beth Campito, Loudonville, NY

In Memory of Dot Costa

Jesse and Mary Anne Croom, Edenton, NC  
Marlene Coulter, Roxboro NC  
Richard Costa, Westport, MA

In Memory of James Richmond

Matthew and Marianne Kersey, Raleigh  
Vicksan, Inc. Lone Cedar Café, Nags Head, NC  
Gus Holshouser, Durham  
Betsy Jones, Bath, ME  
Mr. and Mrs. John W. Garrett III, Pittsboro

## Christmas Giving Tree!

It is time for the Christmas giving tree again! Let's help make the holidays a little brighter for some of our Durham neighbors!

Women's Connection is collecting new items (hoodies, hats and gloves, socks and underwear) to donate to Urban Ministries.

In order to **donate a gift item**, please do the following:

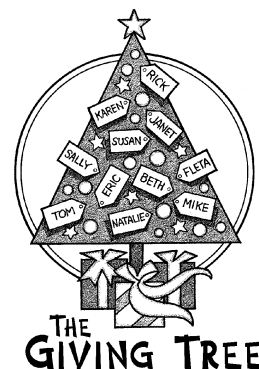
1. Choose a stocking(s) from the Christmas tree in the atrium that has the gift(s) you would like to give written on it; take the stocking(s) with you as a reminder of what to buy.

2. Purchase the item(s)
3. Return the unwrapped item(s) to church and place under the Christmas tree by SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8. That's it!

Holiday meal support for the food pantry at Urban Ministries would also be very much appreciated. Donations of these food items would be especially wonderful: flour, sugar, packaged baking mixes, stovetop stuffing, hamburger helper, boxed macaroni and cheese, instant mashed or scalloped potato mixes, packaged Christmas cookies.

Food items also need to be returned to church and under the Christmas tree by DECEMBER 8.

Thanks in advance for sharing the gifts of food and warmth this Christmas season!



## Light a Candle

Through the end of Advent, there are candles available in the Narthex to be lit for prayer intentions. To "light a candle for someone" indicates one's intention to say a prayer for another person, and the candle symbolizes that prayer.



The practice of lighting candles is an important tradition in Christian churches, communities and families. Its origins may be traced back in the Old Testament times where an oil lamp is lighted to "keep a flame burning perpetually" (Exodus 27:19-20), as "perpetual incense before the Lord from generation to generation" (Exodus 30:7-8) and as a "lamp stand in the Tent of Meeting .. set up before the Lord as He has commanded Moses" (Exodus 40:24-25).

The New Testament further highlights the sanctity of this light in Paul's Letter to the Hebrews. "A first tent was prepared with the lamp stand, the table and the bread of the presence; this is called the Holy Place" (Hebrews 9:2). In today's Christian tradition, this light has a very special place because it symbolizes Christ who said, "I am the Light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have light and life" (John 8:12).

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, ELCA  
1200 West Cornwallis Road  
Durham, NC 27705-5731

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## St. Paul's Readers

All are welcome to join in the discussion of *Becoming*, by Michelle Obama, on Thursday, December 19 at 3:00 pm in the library.

## CCG Hosts Conversation about Mass Incarceration

The Continuing Conversations Group (CCG) invites the St. Paul's community to a conversation about mass incarceration in the U.S. and the role that race plays within our criminal justice system. Join us at 12:30 pm on Sunday, December 8 in Trinity Hall. A light lunch will be provided. Our guest speaker is Emily Baxter, founder and executive director of *We Are All Criminals*, a non-profit and non-partisan organization that seeks to challenge perceptions of crime, criminality, privilege, and punishment through personal stories, statistics, and art. Emily is also the executive director of the North Carolina Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. This conversation is hosted in collaboration with "Images of God: An Advent Exploration," which will explore the image of God as an arrested man on death row during the midweek service on Wednesday, December 11. All are welcome!

## Young In Spirit

The December Trip for the Young In Spirit is to see the musical "Away in the Basement" at the Temple Theater in Sanford, NC. Date is **Friday, December 13**. The play begins at 7:30 pm and travel time is one hour. We leave the church at 4:45 pm, will stop for supper. Cost is \$24 per person.

The play is set in 1959 the day of the Sunday School Christmas Program. In the midst of holiday preparations, the ladies in their witty, down-to-earth

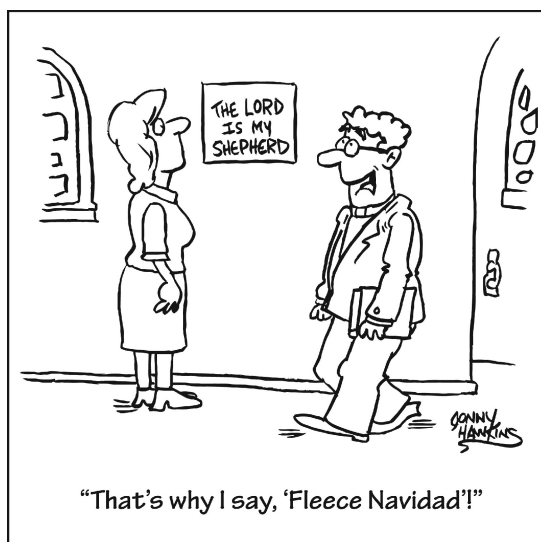
style are creating their own memories from Christmases past and present. Known for their hilarious antics and subtle charm, they are once again called upon to step in and save the day!

Sign up on the receptionist desk by Nov 20. There are 12 seats reserved. If you do not drive at night, put that on the sign up and arrangements will be made.

## Christmas Eve Services

On Tuesday, December 24, our services will be:

- ★ 4:00 pm Family service with Children's Music
- ★ 7:00 pm Holy Communion and Candlelight, with Choir and Handbells
- ★ 10:00 pm Holy Communion and Candlelight, with special soloists



"That's why I say, 'Fleece Navidad!'"