

# THE PATHFINDER

Website: [www.ctslutheran.net](http://www.ctslutheran.net)

E-Mail: [ctslutheranpf@gmail.com](mailto:ctslutheranpf@gmail.com)

Phone: (715) 762-4107

Publisher CTS

Volume 40 Issue 12 December 2024

## THE GIFT THAT IS YOU! 2024 Christmas Message



As I reflect on my time in Malawi back in early November, I had so many experiences that merit being shared. As I write this letter, perhaps the most important lesson I can offer was that of my new reality as a guest overseas.

Everywhere I turned, I truly felt like I was the most important person present. Yes, there were times where I was the honored guest as a bishop. I was granted the best seats in the church, in the van, on the stage. When I walked the grounds at the Lutheran Compound in my purple clerical, EVERYONE immediately stopped what they were doing to greet me, even if that was their first encounter with me. I was fed better than most and I never had to carry my own luggage. I had women pour water over my hands before certain meals (including communion) much like

Christ did during the Last Supper in washing the disciples' feet. And despite my innermost desires to remind them that I was just another guy, I simply could not insult them in that manner. The way in which they treated me was at the core of their faith practice.

Thankfully, Deacon Laura taught me a valuable insight that helped my understanding more clearly. They didn't treat only bishops that way, they treat all guests that way! Having been to Malawi five times before she took me, Laura has experienced that generous hospitality time and time again. And now that I'm a few weeks removed from their genuine welcome, I still firmly believe that their faith has taught them to love their neighbor and lift them up no matter how far away we may come.

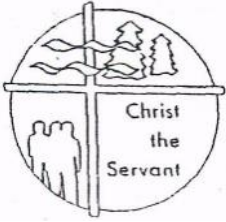
What if we all treated our neighbor as though they are the most important person present at that time? What if we lifted the spirits of the people God places in our lives each and every day? As we prepare for the Christmas story once again this year, we emphasize the gift that comes in the Christ child, God made flesh to live among us mortals. Just think about the lives that the Christ child touched! It started with Mary and Joseph, continued to the shepherds in the fields, and even gave the heavenly host something to praise!

Of course, Jesus went on to touch so many lives - people in need of healing, children in need of welcoming, outcasts in need of community, sinners in need of redeeming. Jesus became the gift who helped them all feel that they were the most important person present at the time, people worthy of his unconditional love, people whose spirits were uplifted.

As we march through the season of Advent toward the birth of God Emmanuel, Jesus the savior of the world, remember the gift of God's presence in your lives. Recognize that God is even present within you and that you are a gift as well! And much like my new friends in Malawi, be that gift for others. Reveal Christ's presence to others through your continued faithfulness and dedication to the God of love because that love can overcome division. You are a gift to this synod and to God's church when you let God's light shine in and through you! May this Christmas also reveal to you the light of Christ through others.

By: Bishop Martin

~Christians Serving God By Serving Others~



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## Pastor Gwen's December Office Hours:

Monday 1-4 PM

Wednesday 2-5 PM

No Office Hours – December 25th,  
30th and January 1st.

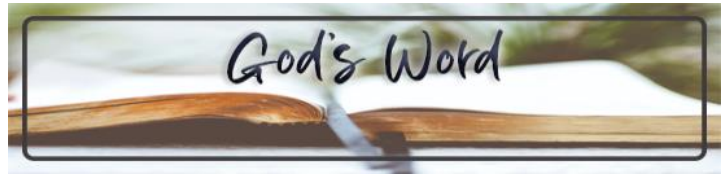


Woman's Group meets every  
Tuesday from 10AM -2PM.

Not Meeting December 24th or 30th



Men's Group will meet  
Saturday, December 7th at 8AM.



## December Bible Readings

### December 1, 2024 – 1st Sunday of Advent

Old Testament Reading	Exodus 16:1-17
Epistle Reading	Colossians 3:15-17
Gospel Reading	John 6:27-35

### December 8, 2024 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

Old Testament Reading	Leviticus 2:12-13
Epistle Reading	Colossians 4:5-6
Gospel Reading	Mark 9:50

### December 15, 2024 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Old Testament Reading	Isaiah 51:1-3
Epistle Reading	1 Corinthians 10:1-4
Gospel Reading	Matthew 7:24-26

### December 22, 2024 – 4th Sunday of Advent

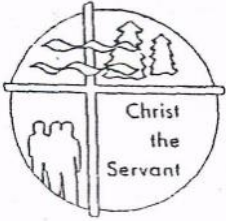
Old Testament Reading	Exodus 13:21-22
Epistle Reading	2 Corinthians 4:5-7
Gospel Reading	Matthew 5:14-16

### December 29, 2024 – 1st Sunday of Christmas

First Reading	Luke 2:1-7
Second Reading	Luke 2:8-16
Third Reading	Matthew 2:1-12
Fourth Reading	John 1:1-5, 14-28



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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we await the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we spend 4 weeks learning of the great miracle of Christmas. Jesus came to earth as a baby taking on human form—Fully human and fully God. Since His birth, the world has not been the same. We seek to understand who Jesus really is in our study for Advent of *The Word Made Flesh*. I invite you to join us as we look at Jesus as the Bread of Life, The Salt of the Earth, The Rock of Ages, and the Light of the World. For extra exploration, join us Sunday mornings after coffee hour while we study these texts.

I hope to see you also on Christmas Eve at 6:30 PM, when we will celebrate Jesus made flesh, with candles and carols. Bring your friends to share with them as we come together to hear the amazing story of the real 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas.

Rodney and I wish you a very special Christmas celebration.  
May the birth of our Savior refresh you with hope, peace and joy.

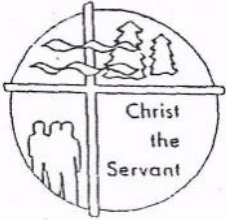
Merry Christmas!

Pastor Gwen



A THRILL OF HOPE, THE WEARY WORLD REJOICES

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CHARLIE BROWN IS FRUSTRATED BECAUSE HE CAN'T SEEM TO FIND OUT WHAT CHRISTMAS TIME IS REALLY ALL ABOUT (HINT: IT'S NOT SANTA CLAUS!)

**"I GUESS YOU WERE RIGHT, LINUS. I SHOULDN'T HAVE PICKED THIS LITTLE TREE."**

said Charlie Brown.

**"EVERYTHING I DO TURNS INTO A DISASTER.**

**I GUESS I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT.  
ISN'T THERE ANYONE WHO KNOWS WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT?"**

**"SURE, CHARLIE BROWN, I CAN TELL YOU WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT,"**

said Linus.

**"LIGHTS, PLEASE."**

AND THERE WERE IN THE SAME COUNTRY SHEPHERDS ABIDING IN THE FIELD, KEEPING WATCH OVER THEIR FLOCK BY NIGHT. AND, LO, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME UPON THEM, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM: AND THEY WERE SORE AFRAID.

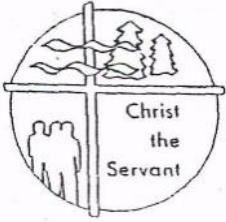
AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM, FEAR NOT: FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD.

AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO YOU; YE SHALL FIND THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER. AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS WITH THE ANGEL A MULTITUDE OF THE HEAVENLY HOST PRAISING GOD, AND SAYING, GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.



**"THAT'S WHAT CHRISTMAS  
IS ALL ABOUT,  
CHARLIE BROWN."**





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**PLEASE REMEMBER THESE PEOPLE AND REQUESTS IN YOUR PRAYERS.**

**Health/Concerns:** Olivia, Stephanie, Carrie, Meg, Nancy, Bob, Carol, Mary Jo, Debra, Autumn, Jere, Mary, Bill, Joe, Chuck, Joan, Kathy and Paul

**Military :** Anton, Autumn, Ryan, Josh and Natalie.

**Groups:** CTS Church Council, Quilting Ministry, Adult Bible Studies, CTS Youth, those who are struggling with hunger and injustice in the world and the Sleep in Heavenly Peace Ministry.

WHEN THE SONG OF THE ANGELS IS STILLED  
- and -  
THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN THE SKY IS DIMMED.

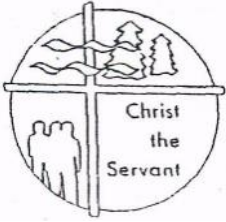
WHEN THE KINGS AND PRINCES RETURN HOME  
- and -  
THE SHEPHERDS ARE BACK WITH THEIR FLOCK

THE REAL WORK OF *Christmas* BEGINS

TO FIND THE LOST,  
TO HEAL THE BROKEN,  
TO FEED THE HUNGRY,  
TO GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY,  
TO CLOTHE THE NAKED,  
TO VISIT THE SICK,  
TO UNDERSTAND THE MISUNDERSTOOD  
TO INVITE A STRANGER,  
TO SHELTER THE HOMELESS,  
TO REBUILD THE NATIONS,  
TO BRING PEACE AMONG OTHERS,  
TO FILL THE HEART WITH MUSIC.  
AND ABOVE ALL

*Love your neighbor.*

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## Announcements



**Trim the Tree:** We will be gathering to decorate the church for Christmas on Wednesday, December 4th at 4 PM. After decorating is complete, we will share a potluck meal complete with wine. You may sign up on the sheet next to the office door. More hands make lighter work and surely more scrumptious dishes to pass.

**Bible Study:** Our new Advent bible study started on November 24th and will continue on December 1st, 8th, and 15th. We are following the special series, *The Word Made Flesh*. This goes with the series we are using during worship.

**Men's Group:** Men's group will be meeting on December 7th at 8 AM. The topic of study is Grace. All men are welcome to and encouraged to come! If you have the book, please read Chapter 8.

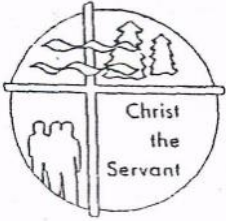
**Council Meeting:** The council meeting will be on Sunday, December 22nd following worship.

**Poinsettias:** Poinsettias will be available to purchase to decorate the church on Christmas. They will be \$10. Ushers will have the forms. Please fill it out, and return to the church office with your money. These need to be handed in by December 15th.

**Ornament Tree:** We have 14 people on our tree to buy gifts for this Christmas. Please consider taking an ornament, purchase a gift (or several smaller gifts) between \$30-40. Wrapped gifts should be brought to church by December 15th with the ornament attached. Any questions see Barb Schindhelm or Pastor.



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**Special Worship Service:** On Sunday, December 29th, we will have a special worship service with Holy Communion. After reading the Christmas story, we will read parts of Martin Luther's reaction to the Scripture text. It will be a fun morning with lots of singing, with fellowship and coffee hour to follow.

**Youth December Party:** If there is anyone interest in hosting a party for neighborhood kids in December to teach them the real story in Luke and why we celebrate Christmas, please see Pastor Gwen.

**Confirmation:** We can always use additional voices on Wednesdays during Confirmation. We gather from 4-5 PM if you would want to join us in our study of the New Testament.

**Altar Guild:** Please talk to Pastor Gwen if you are interested in training for the Altar Guild. I would like to set a day aside for training in January, so let me know what time and day works best.

**Plastic, Plastic, Plastic:** We are still collecting plastic bags and film. We did receive one bench which is outside next to the sidewalk. We would like to get a matching bench for the other side.

**Sleep In Heavenly Peace:** This ministry in Park Falls continues to need donations of pillows, beds in a bag, quilts, and sheet sets. They are all twin size beds for youth, age 4 through 17, in our community with no bed of their own. Any questions regarding the ministry, please see the Melvolds.

**The Lord's Cupboard:** The pantry could use more volunteers to work once a month on a Saturday morning from 8:30 – 11:00 AM. You must be able to lift 35 pounds and work on your weekend! See Pastor Gwen if you are interested.



*Thank you!*


As we near the end of 2024, thank you to everyone that makes our church family at Christ the Servant the absolute best.

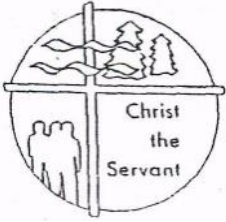
To those that volunteer during service, decorate, help with community projects, and all the many things we are involved in – thank you for sharing your talents.

Each of you are a wonderful blessing to our church and community.

Merry Christmas and may god bless you as we move into 2025.

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## Volunteer Schedule December 2024 and January 2025

Date	Assisting Minister	Altar Guild	Coffee Hour	Ushers
December 1st	Barb Schindhelm		Fred and Carol Matson	Fred and Carol Matson
December 8th	Kurt Wolff		Sarah Wolff	
December 15th	Jann Clark		Lynn Anderson, Mary Rusch and Joan Seifert	Herb and Joan Seifert
December 22nd	Liz Carpenter		Margaret McCulloch and Pastor Gwen	
December 24th 6:30 PM				
December 29th				
January 5th				
January 12th				
January 19th				
January 26th				

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