



OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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# Our Saviour's Good News

Volume XII, Issue XII

December 2017

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Our Saviour Lutheran Church welcomes all people to a safe place to grow in faith and serve the Lord Jesus Christ*

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## PASTOR'S VOICE

### "WHAT HAPPENED TO THANKSGIVING"

Ah, fall is in the air and it seems that the moment the weather turns from afternoons of heat and humidity to a chill in the morning, Christmas decorations instantly! I was in Home Depot a few weeks before Halloween and right next to the inflatable pumpkins and ghosts were Christmas trees. My first thought was, "What happened to Thanksgiving?" and it seems that many others have that same thought. Are we that anxious to get to Christmas? I mean, ok, we tolerated Hallmark selling Christmas ornaments in July but trees and lights and decorations in October? That is crazy!

I was driving through Pineville and noticed they had their Christmas street decorations up right after Halloween. What happened to Thanksgiving? And commercials on TV are promoting their Christmas wears and the pre-Black Friday sales. What happened to Thanksgiving? Lexus is already airing it's "Christmas to remember" car ads and again I have to ask, what happened to Thanksgiving? The only saving grace from this madness is that many of the sit-coms aired their Thanksgiving episodes this week. But are we becoming so numb to advertising that we need to start advertising Christmas in October?

Well, "Christmas Creep", as it is called in the advertising circles, is real. Supply and demand economics dictates that demand has to either be a genuine want by buyers or the advertising agencies have to create an artificial need. I would argue it is a genuine want. Now stick with me here, I am not buy

into the whole consumerism part of Christmas and saying that we should be stringing lights up in late September. Rather, I think there is a general feeling of hope, a looking forward for better times ahead. An ache for the arrival of good news, of a prolonged Advent if you will. There is a longing in people's hearts for redemption – for a Savior. Could it be that we have the wrong perspective on the pre-holiday season thinking it is only about buying presents and the Christ isn't in this season anymore? Perhaps He never left Christmas and we simply over looked Him? Could it be we have realize that we are missing Jesus and now looking for Him?

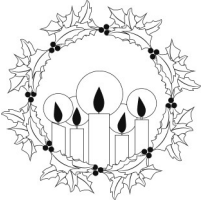
The flip side to all this is that in January we will all be taking down the decorations and lamenting how fast Christmas went by. But Jesus isn't gone and we as Christians know this (but sometimes need to be reminded)! I am praying that this faith and hope in Christ keeps you lifted through and beyond this season.

Grace + Peace!

*Pastor Pete*

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## Four Gifts for You This Advent

Jim Campbell

The four weeks of Advent are a time of spiritual preparation that begins with an awareness of our own longing and leads us to a deeper openness to the many gifts God wants to give us. This article offers a reflection on a different spiritual gift for each week of Advent. Take time each day to reflect on the week's theme. If you make time for inner preparation, carrying out all the other demands of the season is bound to be more enjoyable. May you have a blessed Advent.

### Gift 1: Time to Know Your Deepest Longings

*As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?"* Psalm 42:2-4

One day on a winter's walk in the woods I came face to face with a deer. Our town had been in the midst of a stretch of very cold weather, and the stream I was walking along was mostly frozen over. I had stopped at a place where the swift current of the stream broke through to the surface and swirled around in eddies before it disappeared back under the ice.

As I sat for a while watching and listening to the gurgling water, a deer quietly appeared. We stared at one another for a few moments and, sensing I was no threat, the deer moved to the edge of the water and drank deeply.

I recalled the words, "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God." I had been experiencing a kind of winter in my soul. There were few signs of life, and the Spirit of God seemed to have become frozen over within me. Somehow, I was drawn to this external image of my internal longing—flowing water finding a way to bubble up from beneath solid ice.

It was Advent and I was longing, even though I was barely aware of my discontent. Like everyone else I had been caught up in the busyness of Christmas preparations. Though we had lit the Advent candles at home and I had tried to pray, I needed more. I needed time to really allow my sense of longing to swirl up and become clear to me as it did on that winter's walk in the woods. I knew then that I needed a closer relationship to God and that I had to stop just going through the motions of my prayer life. My longing, once acknowledged, turned out to be an invitation to live with a deeper awareness of God's presence and care all around me.

What are you longing for? What is your heart trying to tell you? The gift God offers this first week of Advent is the invitation to explore your inner longings. The Church, through our Advent customs, and even the weather of the season itself support such inner work. During the first week of Advent, give yourself time and space to contemplate what you are truly longing for in life. Know that this is the season when your longings will lead you to the Christ Child, in whom the hopes and fears of all the years are known and responded to with generous love.

As individuals and as a community, we are longing for the presence of God. World events shatter our complacency; family difficulties shake our resolve. How can we say God is present when so much seems to be unstable?

### Theme: Our World Longs for God

#### Gift 2: God's Words of Comfort

*Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.*

A voice cries out: In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Isaiah 40:1-5

In early adulthood I began to find Christmas a great letdown. People talk about the magic of Christmas. At that time in my life, the magic seemed to have disappeared. Christmas began to seem like just any other day, only one with a lot of additional obligations and emotional demands.

Ironically, my sense of holiday malaise began to ease when I accepted that Christmas is, in one respect, just like any other day. That is, I can recognize the coming of Christ into my life and into my heart at any moment, on any and every day. Christ's coming wasn't limited to that one single day when "the magic" had to happen. In fact I came to realize that this wasn't about magic at all, but about reality. The true meaning of Christmas is grounded

**(Four Gifts cont'd from page 2)**

in the profound revelation that God so loves us that he chose to dwell among us both in Bethlehem and today right in our families. I came to see how, in Isaiah's words, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed" whenever I am willing to prepare the way of the Lord into my life. For me, making a straight path in the wasteland usually has to do with quieting my mind and opening my heart.

The gift for the second week of Advent is that God speaks a reassuring word of comfort in the midst of our discontent and longing. In this quiet season—a season we tend to fill up with a lot of noise and frantic activity—make time daily to listen for the comforting words of God in your life. Probably the quickest way to begin hearing those words is to create a daily gratitude list. Set aside five minutes each morning or evening and take a few deep breaths. When you are settled, start jotting down whatever comes to your mind that you are grateful for. With a heart full of gratitude, everything else in our lives will change. We will begin to see, even in the demands of our Christmas preparations, the real purpose of those efforts—celebrating the Lord's arrival in our life and the lives of those we love.

**Theme: God Speaks Words of Comfort**

The prophet Isaiah spoke God's words to the Jewish people in the midst of their exile in Babylon between 597 and 537 B.C. Their lives were shattered, the Temple had been destroyed and the memory of it was fading among their children. In the midst of a discouraging time came words of comfort. God speaks words of comfort to us today. We can only hear them if we are open to listening. They are not the words of false comfort that everything will somehow turn out for the best. They are words that come to us in the midst of our pain and confusion. They will lead us to an even greater sense of God's presence in our lives and in our families.

**Gift 3: God's Love Placed in Your Heart**

*The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will put my law within them, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Jeremiah 31:31-33

As a child, every year before Christmas I drew up a list of the toys and presents that I had my heart set on receiving. Usually there was that one special item that I just knew would gladden my heart and make me feel complete. This week in Advent we focus on hearts: glad hearts, sad hearts, hard hearts, broken hearts, longing hearts. In the Scriptures much is written about hearts because the heart represents the person's deepest identity. Our hearts reveal who we most truly are because they hold what we most deeply desire.

What's in your heart? We can give many answers to that question, and it's a good question to ponder during this week of Advent. But God has an answer for that question, too. "I will put my law within them, and write it on their hearts," says the Lord. So in addition to whatever else might be in your heart, you can also be sure that the law of the Lord is written—in permanent ink—on your heart. That law is love.

It's time to live out what's in your heart. I know that when I've gotten confused and lost in my faith there is one sure way to find my way back, and that is to love somebody. In my confusion, I look around to see who in my life could use a loving response. It might be my daughter, who's confused about a decision she faces and needs someone to listen—truly listen. Or it might be my wife, who is overwhelmed with responsibilities and could use a helpmate to shoulder some of those duties. Or it might be that my parish offers me the chance to help make Christmas happier for a family in need. The Advent gift this week is the love God places in our hearts.

**Theme: God Calls Us to Conversion of Heart**

The bottom line is that we have to take responsibility for ourselves. The seed of change in our families, in the community, and in the world begins with answering God's call to meet us and to change our heart. In the midst of a world going insane, it seems a small thing to do. But one heart in tune with God can resonate in our families and through our families and communities into the world.

**Gift 4: Hope That Lasts**

*Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.*

They shall be like a tree planted by water sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

**(Four Gifts cont'd on page 9)**

**Our Saviour Lutheran Church**  
**Bill Trudnak, President**  
**October 16, 2017 Council Minutes**



**Devotions:** Becky Messick

Meeting called to order by President Bill Trudnak.

**Members present:** Bud Penley, Bill Trudnak, Melinda White, Teri Trudnak, Shirlee Marazza, Alice Vlaservich, Becky Messick, and Steve Digh. **Members Absent:** Robbie Wooten

**Minutes** for September 18, 2017 were reviewed. Motion made by Shirlee Marazza to approve the minutes and a second was given by Teri Trudnak.

**Reception of Petitions and Communications:**

- a. The Salvation Army sent a petition for their Thanksgiving drive, to help those in need. The council voted to make a \$150 donation to the cause. Alice Vlaservich made a motion we accept and Steve Digh gave a second on the motion. We will continue to pray for all requests and information will be put in the bulletin for consideration.

**Report of the Pastor:** The Pastor's report was reviewed. Shirlee Marazza made a motion we accept and Bud Penley gave the second.

**Report of the Treasurer:** Motion by Steve Digh to accept the Treasurer Report and seconded by Melinda White.

**Report of the Ministries:**

- a. Property: Light bulbs in sanctuary to be replaced.
- b. Stewardship and Finance: Working on annual budget.
- c. Worship & Music: No report.
- d. Youth Team: No report.
- e. Witness: Cards and prayers continue to be sent out.
- f. Christian Education Team: Planned Fall Family Night, to be held 10/22/17 with Poor Man's Supper and Bingo. Confirmation classes are scheduled to start 10/22/17. Pastor Feige mailed letters to the parents with information about the Confirmation schedule.

**Report of Auxiliaries:**

- a. Rachel Circle: Met at home of Shirlee Marazza. Enjoyed bible study and refreshments.

**Old and/or Unfinished Business:**

- a. A new microphone for the Pastor is being considered for purchase. For the time being we will use a back-up mic that we have. A new purchase will cost approximately \$250 and will be considered as the need is more urgent.
- b. Discussion was given on the update of the hallway. Plan still in progress.
- c. Lutheran Support Group of Gaston Meeting (need rep)—Nick Vlaservich to obtain more information.

**New Business:**

- a. Use of Church parking lot during the work week (mid October-July) by Rogers' Construction Co. (construction work at Duke Energy) was discussed. The company will pay \$500/month to park work trucks during the week. NO large trucks will be used. They will work in conjunction with our church functions, i.e. funerals, etc. Alice Vlaservich made a motion we accept this offer and

Teri Trudnak gave the second.

- b. A Baptism request was made by Will Cole for the baptism of his new daughter on Reformation Sunday. Pastor Feige will perform the baptism. Steve Digh made a motion we accept this request and Alice Vlaservich gave a second.
- c. Reformation Sunday Service at Holy Trinity will be 10/29/17. A \$100 donation from each church was requested. Alice made a motion we give the donation and Shirlee Marazza seconded that motion.

**General Information:**

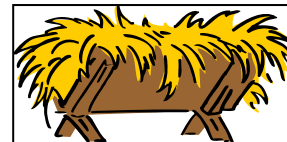
- a. Attendance
- b. Kids Alive Report
- c. Bulbs have been ordered to replace the existing ones in the Sanctuary.

Adjourned with Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting: November 20, 2017.

Devotions: Bud Penley

**The Original King-Sized Bed!!**



**Thank God for that bed and The Baby who slept there**

**18 Shoe Boxes**

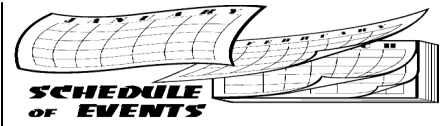


**Thank you for your  
generosity**

# December 2017



Sunday School: 9:45 am Sunday  
Church Service: 11:00 am Sunday



- Dec. 1—"Carols on the Square" (see below & p 8)
- Dec. 2-3—**Singing Christmas Tree** (see p 6)
- Dec. 3—1st Sunday of Advent—Communion  
\*Hanging of the Greens\*  
Nominating Officers for Board
- Dec. 4—Team Meetings:  
Youth: 6:30 pm  
Others: 7:00 pm
- Dec. 6—Christmas Jazz (see p 4)
- Dec. 7—Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (see p 7)
- Dec. 5—Gaston Together (see p 6)
- Dec. 8—Dallas Christmas Parade 4:00 pm  
Senior Christmas Party & Dance (see p 6)
- Dec. 9—1890's Heritage Village Christmas (see p 7)  
Christmas Celebration "behold a star" (see p 9)
- Dec. 10—2nd Sunday of Advent  
Congregational Meeting (Approving 2108 Budget and electing four officers to Board)
- Dec. 17—3rd Sunday of Advent
- Dec. 18—Board Meeting 7:00 pm
- Prayer Group will meet at Home of Shirlee Marazza at 1:00 pm
- Dec. 19—CLW/Rachel Group will meet at the home of Betty Clemmer at 12:30 pm—Christmas Luncheon
- Dec. 21—Winter begins
- Dec. 24—4th Sunday of Advent  
\*Christmas Eve Candle Light Service\*  
Communion
- Dec. 25—The Birth of Jesus Christ
- Dec. 31—First Sunday after Christmas  
New Year's Eve.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Food Collection					1  Let's Go Carolling	2
3  3	4 Team Mtg.	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance	8  Dallas Parade	9 behold a star
10  10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17  17	18 Bd. Mtg. Prayer Group	19 CLW/Rachel Group	20	21  21	22	23
24  24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



"Carols on the Square" Dec. 1, 6:30 pm  
Reading of the Christmas Story  
Christmas Choir  
Singing of Carols  
Visit The Gaston Co. Museum & enjoy refreshments after program

FOOD FOR THE MONTH: Green Peas, Corn, Canned



**Meat**

Choir practice each Wednesday at 5:00 pm unless otherwise announced in the bulletin

## FLOWERS

**Flower Schedule:**

- Dec. 3 Denise Traveri
- Dec. 10 Alice Vlaservich
- Dec. 17 Poinsettias\*
- Dec. 24 Poinsettias\*
- Dec. 31 Open

\*Wayne Ann Penley

Please sign up to place flowers on the altar in the glory of God and in honor or memory of your love ones for 2018



**Holy Communion Schedule:**

Dec. 3: 1st Sunday of Advent  
Dec. 24: Christmas Eve



**Worship Service Assistance:**

Altar Guild: Betty Clemmer  
Alice Vlaservich

Acolyte: Open  
Crucifer: Open  
Communion  
Asst: Nick Vlaservich  
Lay Reader: Bud Penley  
Worship Asst: Open  
Greeters: OSLC Members  
Ushers: OSLC Members

Collection: Melinda White

Board Devotions: Dec. 18. Becky Messick



Nursery Schedule

December 3 Emma Dease  
December 10 Teri Trudnak  
December 17 Yvonne

Finger



### Birthdays

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| 2 Pastor Pete    | Bryan Petzold |
| 3 Mary Feige     | Jerry Mullen  |
| 6 Kaitlyn Feige  | Katie White   |
| 6 Tiffany Cobb   | Robbie Wooten |
| 7 Jeff White     |               |
| 10 Bryan Petzold |               |
| 12 Doyle Clemmer |               |
| 25 Kathy Trudnak |               |
| 26 Julie Digh    |               |





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**OUTREACH MISSION**

**SHUT-INS**

**NURSING HOME RESIDENTS**

Please remember our church members who are shut-ins or reside in a nursing home\* and visit them.

**Marilyn Finger\***

1150 Meadow Way Dr., Dallas

**Ralph Summey\***

1612 Dallas-Cherryville Hwy., Dallas

**Jerri Presley\***

2604 Ole Home Trail, Dallas

(If others, please let the church office know)

(If others, please let the church office know)



The Stanley Community Choir presents:

***“Singing Christmas Tree”***

Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 3:00 pm  
Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 3:00 pm  
Receptions and refreshments following each performances

First Baptist Church  
409 Old Mt. Holly Rd., Stanley, NC

IT IS ALL FREE

**Gaston Parks and Recreation Center  
Senior Christmas Activities**

**December 8, 2017**

**Free Senior Christmas Party— 1:00 pm – 3:00pm  
Christmas Dance—7:00pm: Country Buck will preform**

**Events for:**

**Lutheridge -Lutherock-  
Lutherspring- Lutheranch**

Web site: [www.NovusWay.com](http://www.NovusWay.com)

**EVENTS for:**

**Agrape/Kure Beach**

**Contact Camp Agapé:**

Telephone: 919-552-9421

e-mail: [agape@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:agape@agapekurebeach.org)

**Contact Kure Beach Lutheran:**

Telephone 910-458-0783

e-mail: [kurebreach@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:kurebreach@agapekurebeach.org)

Web site: [www.agapekurebeach.org](http://www.agapekurebeach.org)

**Directions to Camp Agapé are on the web site.**

Please see calendars and other information on the bulletin board or go on-line

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*“Want to keep Christ in Christmas? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you.”*



**GO OUT ON A LIMB  
GET INVOLVED**

**BE A WORSHIP ASSISTANT**

A positions are still open. Participate in the service of the Lord and sign up.

Sign up sheets for the 2018 calendar year are on the wall in the Education wing.  
**THANK YOU!**

+++++

2018 Church Envelopes are

## A Stewardship Minute

Christmas has to do with God's unmatched gift to us in the person of Christ. The late pastor, The Rev. Paul Scherer, poetically put it this way: "God came walking down the stairs of heaven carrying a little baby in his arms." The "baby" was for the whole world and he brought light and love and salvation for anyone who accepted him.

The question for us is what shall we do with this precious gift from God, the one we call the Son of God? Shouldn't we receive Christ joy-

fully, love him faithfully, and serve him continually?

Christians should be proud to admit that we follow Christ. We should be happy to be a part of the Body of Christ; the Church. And we ought to be prompted to be good Christian stewards of all that is ours: Our bodies, minds, and spirits. Our time, talent, and possessions, including our money, property, and other worldly goods, which are gifts from God.

A fascinating article in this month's issue of Stewardship speaks

of how we Christians are all connected together with the joyous task of living, sharing, and serving together on behalf of the One who came from God to bless us all. What a glorious calling we have!

### Prayer:

Lord of us all, you stagger our souls when we consider the indescribable gift of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Grant us the will and the grace to be faithful and eager servants on his behalf until we find ourselves at home with you.

**Amen.**



## National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Proclamation

On a serene Sunday morning 76 years ago, the skies above Pearl Harbor were darkened by the bombs of Japanese forces in a surprise attack that tested the resilience of our Armed Forces and the will of our Nation. As explosions sounded and battleships burned, brave service members fought back fiercely with everything they could find. Unbeknownst to these selfless individuals, the sacrifices endured on that infamous day would galvanize America and come to symbolize the mettle of a generation.

In the wake of the bombing of our harbor and the crippling of our Pacific Fleet, there were those who declared the United States had been reduced to a third-class power. But rather than break the spirit of our Nation, the attack brought Americans together and fortified our resolve. Patriots across our country answered the call to defend our way of life at home and abroad. They crossed oceans and stormed beaches, freeing millions from the grip of tyranny and proving that our military is the greatest force for liberty and security the world has ever known. On the home front, dedicated civilians supported the war effort by repairing wrecked battleships, working in factories, and joining civilian defense organizations to help with salvage programs and plant Victory gardens. At this time of great strife, we reminded the world there is no challenge we cannot meet; there is no challenge we cannot overcome.

On National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, we honor the more than 3,500 Americans killed or wounded during that deadly attack and pay tribute to the heroes whose courage ensured our Nation would recover from this vicious blow. Their tenacity helped define the Greatest Generation and their valor fortified all who served during World War II. As a Nation, we look to December 7, 1941, to draw strength from the example set by these patriots and to honor all who have sacrificed for our freedoms. The Congress, by Public Law 103-308, as amended, has designated December 7 of each year as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day."

## 1890s Historic Christmas Village December 9, 2017 2:00-5:00pm

Gaston County Historical Preservation Commission and Gaston County Parks and Recreation present the 8th Annual 1890's Heritage Village Christmas, a celebration of what Christmas was like for the majority of Gaston County residents at the turn of the 20th Century. This free Christmas celebration will be held in the 1890's Heritage Village at Dallas Park (1303 Dallas - Cherryville 15, Dallas, NC 28034). On Saturday, December 9, 2017 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m., visitors can enjoy Christmas as it may have been during the 1890's and early 1900's here in Gaston County. At this event, visitors will discover what the blacksmith did during the winter, what kinds of mill songs were popular then, what a typical farm/mill house looked like during Christmas, and sing Christmas carols in the Chapel. Hot cider, hot chocolate and cookies will be served from the house kitchen. There will be a holiday craft for the kids, and carriage rides through the park (rides will be available for a fee). It just might be a white Christmas at the Heritage Village. Although simple, the holidays were meaningful. We hope to convey that to our visitors. For more information on the 8th Annual 1890's Heritage Village Christmas Celebration, please contact Josh Henderson at Gaston County Parks & Recreation at 704-922-2163





GASTON TOGETHER'S CLERGY & CITIZENS COALITION

December 5, 2016  
 8:30 to Noon  
 Clinton Room, Gaston Memorial Hospital  
 Breakfast before meeting, if you wish

**"Carols on the Square"**

Dec. 1, 6:30 pm

Reading the Christmas Story

Gentlemen Songster

Christmas Choir

Singing of Carols

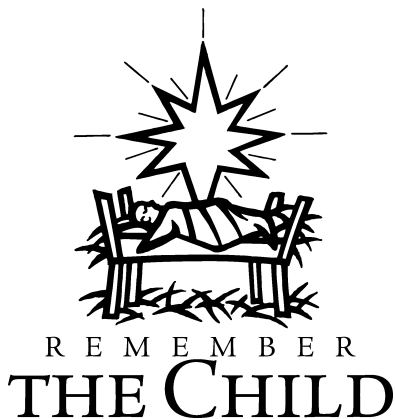
Santa

Refreshments



**DALLAS CHRISTMAS PARADE**

**DECEMBER 8  
 4:00 PM**



If you need a Pastor, please contact Pastor Pete Feige at 704-516-2805 or our office at 704-922-4648. Check out our website at [oslc-nc.org](http://oslc-nc.org) or email us at [oslcdallas@aol.com](mailto:oslcdallas@aol.com).



**CLWRACHEL GROUP**

will meet at the home of Betty Clemmer Dec. 18 at 12:30 pm

*"Christmas Luncheon"*

**LET US PRAY...** "Are any among you suffering? They should pray...The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up." (James 5:13-15)



MARGARET Addington (friends of the community), SUSAN Aderholt, SETH Alexander, AMANDA (friend of the Penley's), MARVIS Anderson, KELLY Ballard (friend of Shana Dease), ADDISON Blanton (friend of Dease's), KATHY Bohanan (cancer), KAREN Braddy, COLEEN Cloninger (friend of community), ANN Digh (Steve Digh's mother-colon cancer HUNTER Digh (Steve and Julie Digh's nephew -cancer), MARILYN Finger, LEVI Friday (Joan Scarborough's nephew) CHARLIE Fox (friend of the Ratchford's), DOUG Hoffman (friend of Bill Trudnak-unknown C(friend of the community), ELAINE Kanupp (friend of the Digh's—colon cancer), BOB Lewis (friend of Shana Dease), HALEY Mauney (brain blockage-daughter of Julie Digh;s co-worker), ROBERT L. McCanless, Jr. (failing health - Charles McCanless' father), GARY Neal, (friend of Caleb Dease), NANCY Parker (friend of Marie Lingle-ALS), EDITH Paysour, LAWRENCE Paysour (friend of Ratchford's), RIVER Peedin (Ursela Peedin's great-grandson— leukemia), SONDR A Phillips (friend of Melinda White) JERRIE Presley, BERNICE—Leon Rawlinson's mother, LEIGH Sellers (college friend's daughter of Libby Bickley), RALPH Summey, KIM Tucker (friend of Joann Scarborough-heart surgery) GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), SHERREE B Turner (mother of Jason Turner), KELLY Walters (mother of Brie Murray) ANNE White (niece of Betty Ratchford-breast cancer), LORI Wood (Steve Digh's cousin-colon cancer).



**Annual Report**

With the year end close in sight it will be here before we can say Happy New Year.



Please start working on your Annual Reports, Scheduled for Team Meeting dates, and Looking Ahead activities, such as: Group Meeting, VBS, Conventions, etc. Please submit by Jan. 15, 2018.



**(Four Gifts cont'd from page 3)**

One day while on retreat in New Mexico, I made a trek across a barren stretch and up a difficult slope to stand on top of a high mesa. As I walked, the whole area seemed desolate and empty. But once atop the mesa I got another view. From there, in the distance I could see the outline of a currently dry river bed. It was easily visible because all along its dry banks, life abounded. From high above, the river bed was like a ribbon of green and gold. In the brilliant sunshine, green and gold leaves fluttered on trees and shrubs, whose roots stretched out to be watered by the stream when the rains came. These roots must have gone deep to sustain such abundant life even during a long, dry season.

Advent is a time to sink our spiritual roots deep, to let them stretch out to God, the source of all life. Because we are thus connected with God, we too can be sources of life to others in the way we live our daily life. Christmas is not only the season of receiving gifts; it is even more so the season of taking delight in giving to others. We emulate what God has done for us and in that we find our deepest joy. Let us prepare, then, to be generous in offering our family, coworkers, and neighbors spiritual gifts such as patience, prudence, encouragement, counsel, faith, hope, and love.

There's a spiritual adage that says, "You can't give what you haven't got." The gift offered during this last week of Advent is the gift of hope. Let us drink deeply of the spiritual gift of hope that God offers us. Then we can cherish within us the spirit of Christmas and bring to others the blessings of the Christ Child every day of the year.

**Theme: Hope Helps Us Endure in Difficult Times**

We can easily become impatient with God and with one another. Living in hope means being willing to live courageously day to day. The signs of change in us will most likely be subtle. Living in hope means that while Jesus has already come, we are still in the process of letting him complete the journey into our hearts.

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THE GASTON CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENTS:

*behold a star*

A Celebration of Christmas

December 9th, 2017 at 7:30 pm  
at First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia

Free to the public

Daniel Wynkoop, director  
Christian Starnes, accompanist.

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*Candlelight  
Service*



*Sunday, December 24*

*at*

*7:00 pm*

## *Even the Inn Keeper?*

by Carrin Mahmood

All God's critters got a place in the choir is how the song goes. One can assume that must mean that we all have a place and a purpose in God's kingdom. However after weeks of anticipation, worshipping fully, spending less, giving more, and now loving all, we begin to look at the nativity story. I know I believe that we are to love all, but upon closer inspection, I can't quite believe that all these critters are suppose to be in the same choir. The Inn Keeper comes to mind. Really? Not a nook or a cranny for the pregnant girl? This "loving all" business is a tall order indeed! I guess now would be the perfect time to practice. ***And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'*** Luke 2: 7-13.

Infant holy, infant lowly  
For His bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing, little knowing  
Christ, the babe, is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging, angels singing,  
Noels ringing, tidings bringing:  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping  
Vigil till the morning new  
Saw the glory, heard the story,  
Tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,  
Praises voicing greet the morrow:  
Christ the babe was born for you.

*This Polish folk carol was published in December, 1925. Several sources indicate that the translation occurred in 1921. Ms. Reed was born in London, March 31, 1885. She was educated at Clifton High School, St. Leonard's School, St. Andrews and the Guildhall School of Music, London. An Associated at the Royal College of Organists, she assisted Percy Scholes in editorial work. During World War I, she edited The Music Student, Music and Youth, and Panpipes, and continued as editor of the latter two after the end of the war. She travelled widely, was devoted to athletics and outdoor life, wrote two Christmas mystery plans, and authored Story Lives of the Great Composers. She died in London, June 4, 1933.*

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## *A Celebration That Can't Be Denied*

By  
Carrin Mahmood

*Luke 1:57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.* In the first century family and friends would gather in the home of the laboring mother. When the child was born, if it was a girl, they would offer their congratulations and go home. If it was a boy however they would celebrate with cymbals and musical instruments, pouring out into the streets to let everyone know a baby boy was now part of the family. In a lowly stable a king was born. Not only was there no place for his head, the celebration that was his due, would be denied him. Yet at the moment of his birth the very skies split open and bursting forth were heavenly hosts, filling the countryside with singing and worship and Halleluiahs. A celebration the likes of which the world has never seen. This Advent let the anticipation of that moment build. Prepare yourself to worship fully, joining the angelic throng shouting praise and halleluiahs. ***And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'*** Luke 2:13-14.

### ***THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT***

This is worth reading all the way to the end. If you aren't laughing, you have never even SEEN a child!!

My husband and I had been happily married (most of the time) for five years but hadn't been blessed with a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promised God that if he would give us a child, I would be a perfect mother, love it with all my heart and raise it with His word as my guide.

God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son. The next year God blessed us with another son. The following year, He blessed us with yet another son. The year after that we were blessed with a daughter. My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty. We now had four children, and the oldest was only four years old.

I learned never to ask God for anything unless I meant it as a minister once told me, "If you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella."

I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they lay in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God had entrusted me with four children and I didn't want to disappoint Him. I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks. I tried to be understanding... when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs. When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humor rather than the mess.

In spite of changing over twenty-five thousand diapers, never eating a hot meal and never sleeping for more than thirty minutes at a time, I still thank God daily for my children.

While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother - I didn't even come close... I did keep my promise to raise them in the Word of God. I knew I was missing the mark just a little when I told my daughter we were going to church to worship God, and she wanted to bring a bar of soap along to "wash up" Jesus, too. Something was lost in the translation when I explained that God gave us everlasting life, and my son thought it was generous of God to give us his "last wife."

My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant. My daughter was playing Mary, two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man. This was their moment to shine.

My five-year-old shepherd had practiced his line, "We found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." But he was nervous and said, "The baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes." My four-year-old "Mary" said, "That's not 'wrinkled clothes,' silly. That's dirty, rotten clothes."

A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd and was stopped by an angel, who bent her halo and lost her left wing. I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll representing Baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, "Mama-mama." Mary grabbed the doll, wrapped it back up and held it tightly as the wise men arrived.

My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown, knelt at the manger and announced, "We are the three wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense and fur." The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation.

"I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one," laughed the pastor, wiping tears from his eyes. "For the rest of my life, I'll never hear the Christmas story without thinking gold, common sense and fur."

"My children are my pride and my joy and my greatest blessing," I said as I dug through my purse for an aspirin.

Jesus had no servants, yet they called Him Master.

Had no degree, yet they called Him Teacher.

Had no medicines, yet they called Him Healer.

Had no army, yet kings feared Him.

He won no military battles, yet He conquered the world.

He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him.

He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today.

***Feel honored to serve such a Leader who loves us.***



Our Saviour Lutheran Church  
 P.O. Box 457  
 725 Gastonia Technology Parkway  
 Dallas, NC 28034



## December 2017



# Christmas Worship Schedule

- Dec. 3.....1st Sunday of Advent.....11:00 am  
Holy Communion  
*"Hanging of the Greens"*
- Dec. 10..... 2nd Sunday of Advent... .11:00 am
- Dec. 17..... 3rd Sunday of Advent.....11:00 am
- Dec. 24..... 4th Sunday of Advent.....11:00 am  
Christmas Eve  
Candle Light Service.... 7:00 pm  
Holy Communion