

# THE PATHFINDER

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

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Phone: (715) 762-4107

Publisher CTS

Volume 39 Issue 12 December 2023



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Elizabeth Bartsch, Pastor Sara Bishop, Rev. Diane House, Deacon Lidix Montoya, Rev. Randy Olson, and Deacon Laura Ramlow.

## Mary the Brave: Mary the God Bearer

As a young pastor and working mom, I struggled with the challenges of balancing work and home life, often while carrying a child in my womb, arms, on my hip, in a front or back baby pack, or car seat. Now my children are adults, and I have the joy of watching them carry my grandchildren. They do it differently than I

did, their car seats are much nicer than the ones we had, but like us, they carry their children with much love. I still carry my adult children and grandchildren and will always carry them, in my heart with much love.<sup>1</sup> This Advent and Christmas season I'm reflecting on Mary, the God bearer. (In Greek it's Theotokos.<sup>2</sup>) Mary carried Jesus. Like all parents she carried her child with love, but she is also the God bearer. It was a brave thing Mary did to bear God into the world.

To love is a brave thing. It is a brave thing to become a parent. Mothers put their own lives at risk bearing a child in their womb and giving birth. It requires a measure of bravery for parents to bring a child into this world filled with the bad news of climate disasters, gun violence, war, political upheaval, racism, food/water insecurity, and escalating health and higher education costs.

History has painted Mary to be quiet, meek and mild, submissive to God's will, but a closer read shows us that Mary was brave. Mary was neither meek nor superhuman.<sup>3</sup> She had grit. She was faithful, courageous, strong and brave. Most of all, she was human. Her encounter with the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God made her brave. She knew that her pregnancy was dangerous and she could die giving birth. She also knew that as an unmarried teenaged mother it would cause upheaval in her family and community. She would give birth to Jesus during Roman occupation, a time of political unrest. Mary was *brave*. Her encounter with the living God made her brave.

Her encounter with God gave her bravery and the faith to see that if God was calling her God would also protect her. It revealed to her that God chooses the people on the margins, those overlooked and underestimated. Bearing God in the world was to bring good news and hope to those oppressed. May Mary, the God Bearer, inspire us all to be brave!

This Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to be Theotokos, God Bearers. I invite you to carry the good news of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection to all those we meet on this journey of life and the love of Jesus in your hearts always.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

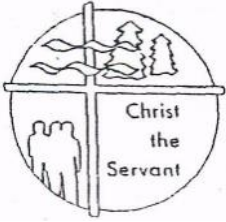
*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God, For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.*

**Luke 1: 26-38**

<sup>1</sup> Robert Munsch, *I'll Love You Forever*, Firefly Books (September 1, 1995)

<sup>2</sup> Since the 3rd century, Christians had referred to Mary as theotokos, "God-bearer." The first documented usage of the term is in the writings of Origen of Alexandria in AD 230. Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God | Catholic

<sup>3</sup> Mary the Brave: Neither Meek nor Superhuman - CBE International



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## Pastor Gwen's December Office Hours:

Monday 1-4 PM

Wednesday 2-4 PM

No Office Hours on December 25th,  
December 27th, and January 1st.  
Pastor will be on vacation.



Woman's Group meets every Tuesday  
from 10AM -2PM.  
No meeting on December 26th.



Men's Group will meet  
Saturday, December 9th at 8AM.



## December Bible Readings

### December 3, 2023 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

Old Testament Reading	Isaiah 9:1-7
Epistle Reading	Colossians 1:13-20
Gospel Reading	John 14:25-27

### December 10, 2023 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

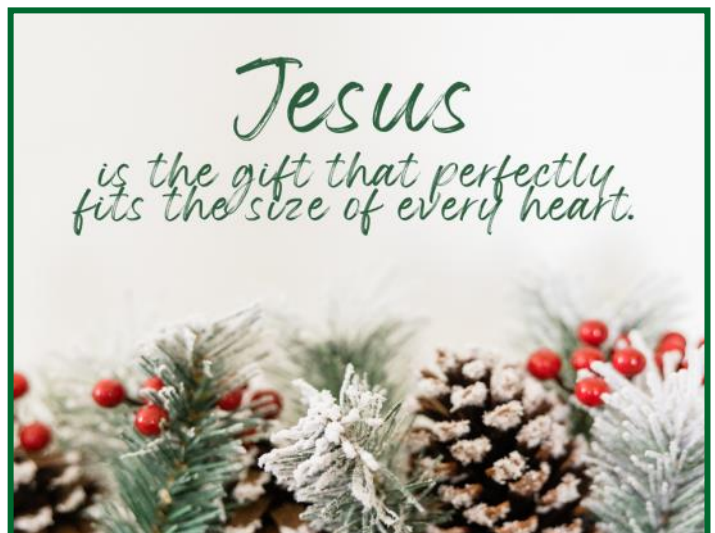
Old Testament Reading	Isaiah 35:1-10
Epistle Reading	Philippians 4:4-7
Gospel Reading	Luke 1:39-45

### December 17, 2023 – 4th Sunday of Advent

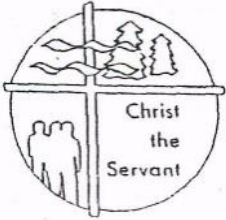
Old Testament Reading	Isaiah 54:7-10
Epistle Reading	Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel Reading	Luke 1:46-55

### December 24, 2023 – The Nativity of Our Lord

Old Testament Reading	Isaiah 7:10-14
Epistle Reading	2 Corinthians 4:5-6
Gospel Reading	Luke 2:1-20



~Christians Serving God By Serving Others~



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*Please remember these people and requests in your prayers.*

**Health/Concerns:** Olivia, Stephanie, Carrie, Meg, Allen, Ruth, Liam, Joyce, and Sheldon.

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

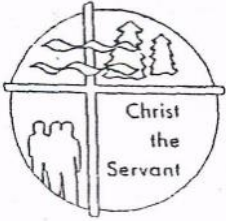
CTS Church Council, WELCA, Quilting Ministry, Adult Bible Studies, CTS Youth, AIDS orphans in Malawi, Hunger and poverty in the world, and the Ukrainian people.



**A THRILL OF HOPE**  
*the weary world rejoices.*

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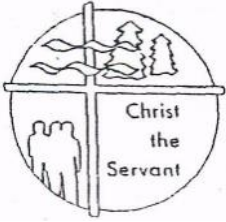
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IF THE SAVIOR WERE AMONG US TODAY,  
WE WOULD FIND HIM WHERE HE ALWAYS WAS --  
MINISTERING TO THE MEEK, THE DOWNCAST,  
THE HUMBLE, THE DISTRESSED AND THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

DURING THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON AND ALWAYS,  
MAY WE GIVE TO HIM BY LOVING AS HE LOVES.  
MAY WE REMEMBER THE HUMBLE DIGNITY OF  
HIS BIRTH, GIFTS AND LIFE.  
AND MAY WE, THROUGH SIMPLE ACTS OF  
KINDNESS, CHARITY AND COMPASSION,  
FILL THE WORLD WITH THE LIGHT OF  
HIS LOVE AND HEALING POWER.



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## Announcements



**Bible Study:** For the remaining three Sundays of Advent, we will be using the Bible Study that goes with our Advent Series of "The Light of Grace". Please come join us as we prepare ourselves for Jesus birth.

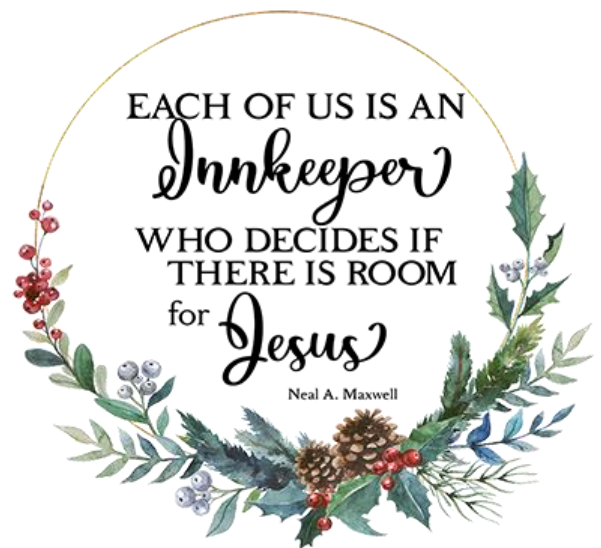
**Men's Group:** Men's group will be meeting Saturday, December 9th at 8:00 AM. See Pastor or Scott Carpenter for a study guide. All men are welcome to and encouraged to come!

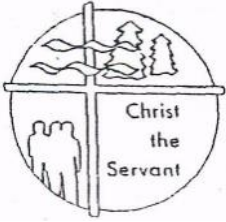
**Musician:** We need your help to find another Sunday morning musician beginning in January. Kris Rankin, who has served us for many years, sadly will be retiring on December 17th. I am sure she will not be a stranger thereafter, but please join me in wishing her well. If you know someone who plays piano, give pastor their name and number or have them call the church. Pastor is willing to work with anyone who has interest in being a church musician.

**Sleep In Heavenly Peace:** They will be making beds for youths in our community that do not have one of their own. A wonderful new ministry for Price County. If you want to get involved see the Melvolds. Donations of bed pillows, bed-in-a-bag, sheets, quilts and mattress pads are needed. Please make sure that these are in a twin size. The applications keep being submitted and we are needed of these items to provide our beds.

**Decorating:** We will be decorating the tree and the church on Wednesday, December 6th at 4:00 pm. Many hands make light work. After decorating, we will be having a pot luck meal that once again will be accompanied by wine!!! Visiting and games to follow if you are interested. Hope to see you there.

**Ornaments -** Our Giving Tree is ready with ornaments. We have adopted two families for Christmas. Please take one or two of the ornaments and buy gifts. Suggested price is \$35.00. These gifts will need to be wrapped and returned by December 17th. Also, you will find SHP ornaments (ornament with red ribbon) with what is needed on them. No need to wrap the SHP gifts. If you have questions, see Pastor Gwen.





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## Volunteer Schedule December 2023 & January 2024

Date	Assisting Minister	Altar Guild	Coffee Hour	Ushers
December 3rd	Kurt Wolff		Sarah Wolff	
December 10th	Mary Rusch			
December 17th	Jann Clark		Mary Rusch David Shaw	Mary Rusch David Shaw
December 24th Christmas Eve Service	Assisting: Mary Rusch  Reader:		<b>None</b>	
December 31st				
January 7th				
January 14th				
January 21st				
January 28th				

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