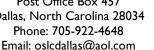


OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH 725 Gastonia Technology Parkway Post Office Box 457

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Website: oslc-nc.org







Our Saviour's Good News

Volume XX, Issue XII December 2025

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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Christmas 2025/ The Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord

When Is Christmas 2025?

Christmas 2025 falls on Thursday, December 25. The Christmas season begins with Christmas Eve Vigil Masses on December 24 and concludes on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, with the celebration of the Epiphany of the Lord.

The Significance of Christmas 2025

Christmas is a season of joy celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it's also a time when many questions arise about its origins, meaning, and traditions. These range from practical inquiries like "What day is Christmas 2025?" to deeper ones like "Why is Christmas celebrated?" or "Is Christmas a Christian holiday?" These questions reveal a curiosity about the faith and history behind this solemnity. People wonder about traditions like Santa Claus ("Where does Santa come from?") and historical debates ("Is Christmas a pagan holiday?").

Is Christmas a Pagan Holiday?

While some fundamentalists insist Christmas is just a Christian mask for pagan celebrations, the evidence, and clear reasoning, says otherwise. Apologist, Joe Heschmeyer, dismantles this claim by showing how December 25 was chosen by Christians based on theological symbolism, not pagan tradition. Early Church documents, like the Chronograph of 354 from AD 336, record Christmas on December 25 long before pagan solstice festivals emerged. Furthermore, Christmas stands firmly on a Christian theological foundation.

Why Is Christmas Celebrated, and Why on December 25?

Celebrating Christmas is a profound expression of our faith, as it marks the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. This event is central to Christianity because it signifies God's immense love for humanity, as expressed in John 3:16:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."

Christmas also reminds us of the Incarnation, when God became man to redeem us. This highlights the mystery of Christ's humble birth. By celebrating Christmas, we commemorate the roots of our salvation and reflect on the virtues of humility, love, and hope. It's a time to renew our faith and share the joy of Christ's coming with others.

Was Jesus Really Born on December 25?

Apologist, Jimmy Akin, explains why we celebrate Christmas on December 25. In fact, December 25th has more to do with Jewish tradition than anything like, say, the winter solstice. Jimmy Akin's Daily Defense podcast answers the question "Is Christmas Pagan?" in just three minutes!

Celebrating Christmas 2025: The Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord

Christmas is a time of joy and reflection, celebrated with special traditions and decorations that make the season unique. From the Nativity scene or "Crèche" at our churches and in our homes, to a sparkling Christmas tree with vibrant Christmas ornaments and heartfelt Christmas cards shared with loved ones, each element of the holiday reflects centuries of history and devotion. A traditional Christmas emphasizes the birth of Christ which we prepare

(Christmas 2025 cont'd on page 2)

(Christmas 2025 cont'd from page 1)

for during the season of Advent. Many other Christians and non-Christians also celebrate Christmas in one way or another, and yet may also wonder whether the annual holiday has pagan origins, whether the actual date is historically based, and—for non-Christians—whether Jesus is truly the Savior of the world.

Honoring Family Traditions

In addition, many families cherish their own family Christmas traditions, from decorating the tree together to hosting festive meals. Christmas dinner often features special holiday dishes passed down through generations. Other traditions might include attending a Christmas parade 2025, caroling with loved ones at a retirement center, serving hot meals at a local homeless shelter, or planning activities for Christmas Eve 2025.

The Origins of Christmas Traditions

Understanding the origins of Christmas traditions can enrich your celebration. Contrary to popular claims, Christmas traditions, including evergreen decorations, are not rooted in paganism but reflect the Christian faith as a symbol of hope in celebration of Christ's birth. For those who follow the Julian calendar, Orthodox Christmas 2025 will be celebrated on December 25, 2025, offering another opportunity to reflect on the Nativity story.

Gift-Giving Made Easy

Giving gifts at Christmas is a beautiful way to acknowledge God's infinite generosity in giving us His Son. By exchanging gifts, we reflect God's love and share a part of ourselves with others, embodying the true spirit of Christmas as a season of self-giving and gratitude. Of course, finding the perfect gift is part of the fun, but the best Christmas gifts are personal and thoughtful.

Where Does Santa Come from?

St. Nicholas was a fourth-century bishop of Myra (modern-day Turkey), and he was known for his generosity and love for children. His acts of charity, such as secretly providing dowries for impoverished girls, inspired the legend of Santa Claus. Over time, cultural adaptations transformed St. Nicholas into the jolly figure of Santa Claus, especially through Dutch traditions and American popular culture. While Santa Claus is an honored figure associated with Christmas gift-giving, St. Nicholas remains a revered saint in the Catholic Church. His feast day is celebrated on Saturday, December 6, reminding us of his selfless spirit. It's important to remember that the legend of Santa Claus, while rooted in the story of St. Nicholas, is distinct from the historical and religious significance of the saint himself.

LEGEND OF HOLLY



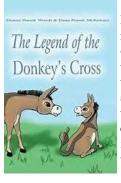
The bright red and green of holly make it a natural symbol of rebirth. Legends regarding this plant abound. According to one legend holly branches bearing white berries were woven into Christ's crown of thorns. Since the blood of Christ

stained the berries, they grow red on the holly branch to this day. Holly has also come to stand for peace and joy.

SYMBOL OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE CROSS



The Christmas Tree celebrates the promise of Jesus. His Birth is symbolized by the Christ tree and yet upon another tree, the cross came His death with the promise of eternal life. The five stones are for the wounds He bore.



Legend tells us that the donkey that carried Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday followed Him to Calvary. Appalled by the sight of Jesus on the cross, the donkey turned away but could not leave. It is said that the shadow of the cross fell upon the shoulders and back of the donkey. A cross marking many donkeys today remains a testimony of the love and devotion of a humble, little donkey.



ADVENT

Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year begins. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving; and yet, the world as we know it spins madly on. In many ways, pregnant Mary was surrounded by endings—large and small, personal and political. But Mary proclaimed hope in a God who was and is making all things new. Christ's birth offered a beautiful new beginning for shepherds and Magi alike—all the while, King Herod tried to bring Christ's story to an end. When we ourselves navigate seasons filled with endings and beginnings, we need reminders. We need words that can feel like steady ground, like a path for our feet to f ind as we step forward into the unknown.

December 2025



Church Service: 10:00 am Sunday

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Food Collection	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Women's Group	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Prayer Group (TBA)	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	Candlelight Service	25 NO SERVICE	26	27 Winter is here,
28 1st Sun after Christmas	29	30	31 Looking Toward an New Year			



Birthdays

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



Bryan Petzold Katie W. Sanderson Robbie Wooten Sutton Rickles Josie Sanderson

Holy Communion Schedule:

All Sundays and Dec. 24: Christmas Eve

Worship Service Assistance:

Lay Reader: OSLC Member
Worship Asst: OSLC Member
Greeters: OSLC Members
Ushers: OSLC Members

Collection: Anna Lowery

Board Devotions: Anna Lowery (Jan)



- **Dec. 5**—Carols n the Square (see below)
- **Dec. 7—**Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (see p 9)
- Dec 7—2nd Sunday of Advent
- Dec. 9— Women's Group will meet at the home of Betty Clemmer at 12:30 pm— Christmas Luncheon & Program
- Dec. 14—3rd Sunday of Advent
- **Dec. 16—**Prayer Group will meet at Home of Shirlee Marazza at 2:00 pm (TBA)
- Dec. 21—Winter begins
- Dec. 21—Congregational Meeting to approve 2025 Proposed Budget
- Dec. 21—4th Sunday of Advent
- **Dec. 24**—Christmas Eve Candle Light Service 7 pm
- **Dec. 25—**The Birth of Jesus Christ NO SERVICE
- Dec. 28—Ist Sunday after Christmas
- Dec. 31—New Year's Eve.

FOOD FOR THE MONTH:

Green Peas, Crackers, Peanut But

"Carols on the Square"

Dec. 6 6:30 pm

Reading of the Christmas Story

Christmas Choir Singing of Carol



DALLAS CHRISTMAS PARADE DECEMBER 8 AT 3:00

PLOWERS

Flower Schedule:

Dec. 7 Poinsettias Dec. 14 Poinsettias Dec. 21 Poinsettias

Dec. 24 Poinsettias (Take home)

Dec. 25 NO SERVICE

Dec. 28 Open

Sign up to place flowers on the altar in the glory of God and

in honor or memory of your love ones for 2026

\$35.00





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OUTREACH MISSION

<u>SHUT-INS</u> NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

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

Wayne Ann Penley 119 Polie Ln, Dallas, NC 28034

<u>Jean Huffstetler</u> 713 Erskin Dr. #7 Kings Mountain, NC 28086

(If others, please let the church office know)





"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."

Steve Maraboli



That's Not My JOB!"

This is a story about four people named **Everybody**, **Somebody**, **Anybody** and **Nobody**. There was an important job to be done and **Everybody** was sure that **Somebody** would do it. **Anybody** could have done it, but **Nobody** did it. **Somebody** got angry about that, because it was **Everybody's** job. Everyone thought **Anybody** could do it, but **Nobody** realized that **Everybody** wouldn't do it. It ended up that **Everybody** blamed **Somebody** when **Nobody** did what **Anybody** could have.

Author Unknown.



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 2023 calendar year are on the wall in the Education wing.

2026 Church Envelops are

On table in hallway.

DECEMBER QUOTE

I heard the bells on Christmas Day Their old, familiar carols play, And wild and sweet The words repeat Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A Stewardship Minute

What is Christmas all about? It is about God's special gift to the whole earth: our Lord, Jesus Christ ... and about our response to that gift!

The Christmas issue *Steward-ship* reminds us of how we ought to respond to God's love, as shown in the person and actions of Christ on our behalf. Our response to God's gift of Jesus should be showing our love for God by being committed stewards of our entire lives. Here is a statement from *Stewardship* that deserves thinking about seriously: "I'm just

managing what God has entrusted to me, but I'm doing it in his best interest."

The prophet Isaiah had a challenge while worshiping in the temple one day. The whole account of his experience is found in the Isaiah 6. Here is what Isaiah describes happened to him: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" It is interesting to notice that right after the words, "send me!" there is an exclamation symbol. "Send me!" Isaiah was willing to give his all. And right then and there.

Christmas offers us the challenge to decide what we might do in response to God's loving gift to us. Shouldn't each of us think seriously about our commitment to Christ!

Prayer: Dear Lord, you gave us the gift of our Savior. Help us to give you the gift of ourselves and our sincere stewardship. **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."

Jesus is Better than Santa

- Santa lives at the North Pole. JESUS is everywhere.
- Santa rides in a sleigh JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water
- Santa comes but once a year JESUS is an ever present help.
- Santa fills your stockings with goodies JESUS supplies all your needs.
- Santa comes down your chimney uninvited JESUS stands at your door and knocks.. And then enters your heart
- You have to stand in line to see Santa JESUS is as close as the mention of His name.
- Santa lets you sit on his lap JESUS lets you rest in His arms.
- Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi
 little boy or girl, What's your name?" JESUS knew our
 name before we did. Not only does He know our name,
 He knows our address too. He knows our history and
 future and He even knows how many hairs are on our
 heads. Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly JESUS has a heart full of love
- All Santa can offer is HO HO HO JESUS offers health, help and hope.
- Santa says "You better not cry" JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you
- Santa's little helpers make toys JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts, repairs broken homes and builds mansions.
- Santa may make you chuckle but JESUS gives you joy that is your strength.
- While Santa puts gifts under your tree JESUS became our gift and died on the tree.

It's obvious there is really no comparison. We need to remember WHO Christmas is all about. We need to put Christ back in Christmas.





"Carols on the Square"

Dec. 5, 6:30 pm

Reading the Christmas Story

Gentlemen Songster

Christmas Choir

Singing of Carols

Santa

Refreshments



DALLAS CHRISTMAS PARADE

DECEMBER 14 3:00 PM

Holiday Open House at the Gaston Museum form 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm after the Dallas Parade. Sugar Cookie and hot cider will be served.





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** or email us at oslcdallas@aol.com.

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CLW/Women's GROUP

will meet at the home of Betty Clemmer Dec. 9 at 12:30 pm "Christmas Luncheon"



PRAYER GROUP

Will meet in the home of Shirlee Marazza

Dec 16 at 2:00 pm (TBA)



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, SETH Alexander, WHITNEY Auten (breast cancer), MIKE Coffey (Robbie Wooten's uncle), SHIRLEY CONNER (friend of Digh's - recovering from car wreck), ROB Curley (cancer), STEVE Digh (cancer), JULIE Digh (Thyroid), OLIVIA Ann Drummond (newly born daughter of Bailey & Jon -left eye) GLEEN Fraizer (friend of Steve & Julie Digh cancer), JASON Hames (friend of the White's), GRACE Harbin (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), LESA Huges (friend of Robbie Wooten-throat cancer), JEFF Line-DANA Kirshman (friend of Robbie Wootencancer), JACK Lonon (Kasey Digh's step-father-cancer), CARL Martin (friend of Pattons-multiple myeloma plus chemo), FRANCIS McAllister (broken hip), JASON, ALLISON & LEX Murray, ELIZABETH Mustin (rare breast cancer), SEPHIRA Patton (daughter of John and Marsha-that she put on weight),, SONDRA Phillips (friend of Melinda White), BRADY Ratchford, PERRY Rawlinson (community friend – lose weight to have knee operation), RONNIE Shiles (Brady Ratchford's friend – heart attach), JAN Splawn (friend of Robbie Wootencancer), TERI Trudnak, GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), JEFF White, KENT Wilborn (friend of Robbie Wooten-heart surgery), NANCY Wilson.

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

December 2025

ecause I was three years old, Mother held my hand as we entered the department store. It was December 1973. She had ten dollar bills for me ... one for each of the Christmas gifts I'd soon purchase. Hand in hand, we explored the aisles filled with numerous possibilities.

After choosing nine gifts, it was time to buy Mother's. Reluctantly, but with careful instructions, she allowed me to leave her, and cross to the next aisle ... alone!

The hairpin counter reached my chin. I pointed to a small package. Showing the clerk one dollar bill, I asked, "Do I have enough money to buy these?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, "That package is only a fifty cents. Do you want them?"

"Yes, please," I replied.

She put them in a small paper bag and gave me two quarters in change. I bounded back to Mother and handed her the change. She was puzzled.

"You got my gift?" she asked. I nodded with a smile. I didn't know much about arithmetic or shopping, but I knew about

Christmas secrets. I told nobody what I had purchased.

She savored the love

Years later, Mother said she was more curious about that Christmas gift than any she ever received. She kept those hairpins unopened for many years. The truth was that I'd bought the wrong kind! But that didn't matter. She savored the thoughtfulness and love behind this gift. And when she added her own thoughtfulness and love to those dollar hairpins, the wrong gift became a very wonderful one.

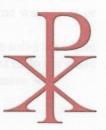
This is similar to the way God receives our gifts. God lovingly accepts and blesses our offerings.

Are the majority

of Christians in
the world today really
aware of the simple
and sometimes difficult needs of others,
as Jesus had been?

Opportunities to
serve are all around
us. In our churches,
volunteers can commit to being a disciple
of Christ by willingly
giving of their time
and talent.





Tow appreciated it

L makes the Lord

gifts to make this world

a little better! Wherever

unteer our time and tal-

ents, we are essentially

thanking the Lord for

such wonderful gifts.

We are showing him

that we appreciate our

blessings. Find a way to

use your gifts at church

and in the community.

far more than you ever

The rewards will be

expected.

and whenever we vol-

feel when we use his

Spiritual Investing Values

or all their differences, Christianity, Judaism and Islam share many beliefs on at least one subject: the management of money.

In all three religions, those who seek to apply their spiritual values to personal investing will find scriptural guidance. Common among the faiths is a conviction that the money a person has ... no matter how little or how much ... comes from God, and that individuals must be good stewards of what's been given to them.

When you get to the Pearly Gates, the Lord isn't going to say, "What rate of return did you get?" God is going to ask. "What did you do with what I have given you?"

God intends each person to be a prudent money manager. The idea of stewardship means that you need to be careful and responsible with the use of your money. That encourages people to budget and to live within their means and not to be so focused on materialism that they lose sight of the higher values in life. People must understand that their financial resources don't really belong to them. Part of it is to manage money in a way that acknowledges that God is the owner.

A steward is one who's in charge of managing the possessions of another in the best interest of the owners. The other person is God. I'm just managing what God has entrusted to me, but I'm doing it in his best interest.



Not Everything, ...but Something

here was a cartoon in the New Yorker magazine a past Christmas that pictured a well-to-do businessman leaning back at his desk with his hands resting on his head and a broad smile on his face. The caption read, "During the holiday season, Mr. Arthur Jefferson takes a little time out of each day to think of those who are less fortunate."



Are we like this? Do we look at the enormity of the problem and ask ourselves, "What could I possibly do about world poverty. Even if I won the top prize on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, or some such program, that wouldn't even be a drop in the bucket compared to the magnitude of the problem.

The answer is "something." Do something. Each one of us has to do what we can with what we have. Whether it's supporting a mission fund, or volunteering at a soup kitchen, or assisting with any of dozens of other programs, including those within our own church community, we can help alleviate the problem in some way, great or small.

God doesn't ask us to solve the whole problem of poverty, just to do our share to help those less fortunate.



y dad kindly left his snowblower behind when he sold me the family home several years ago. It certainly makes winter easier to deal with, now that I don't have to shovel.

Recently I heard a sermon at church that dealt with Christmas being "light to the world." Our pastor said that more often it's actions, not words, that convey the "good news." He said that helping our neighbor or sharing our goods is a *stewardship of thanksgiving*.

After snow-blowing the driveway the other day, I began to put the machine away when I happened to look over and saw my next-door neighbor slaving away at his driveway with a shovel. There was a ton of snow! I was tired and just wanted a cup of coffee and the morning paper, but I headed next door instead. I had his driveway cleared in thirty minutes. He would have been shoveling for hours. As I finished, he came up to me and said, "You don't know how much I appreciate this!"

I simply responded, "My pleasure." As I headed back home and prepared my coffee, it felt good to know that I had been able to share not just my possessions (given as a gift from my dad), but my strength and health and time as well. The coffee seemed extra tasty that morning.

Stewards of Christmas

of Christmas. Susie Sister is impressed by that air of good feeling in the crowds which exists briefly at Christmas time. Don Deacon says it differently. He says, "There has to be something right in an occasion which forces millions of people to think about someone other than themselves."

The event is holy; the tradition wholesome. Every year we hear the complaints that Christmas has become too commercialized; that we need to put Christ back in Christmas. Some carry on campaigns to remove all religious symbols from public decorations. Most communities have become reconciled to that commercialization, because it satisfies certain segments of our society.

We need to be good stewards of Christmas in our own homes, in our own families, and in our own churches. We need to be good stewards by reaching out to bring Christmas to the unfortunate, the needy and aged. In all the hustle and bustle of the season, we need to take time to meditate on the significance of the holy day. We need to make sure that we are exchanging love more than exchanging gifts. We need to give love where love will not be returned.

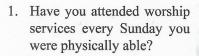
We need to prove to the Susie Sisters and to the Don Deacons that the air of good feeling in the crowds is created by something deeper than the jazzed-up carols blasted from sound systems.

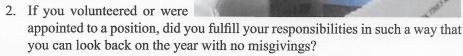
We can do it by being good stewards of our personal Christmas and that of our own church.

Giving a meaningful percentage of our income makes an important sacrifice that says how seriously we take our faith. At the same time it demonstrates that we care about other people, the needs of our church, and that we will go to significant sacrifices on their behalf.

A Test

ust suppose, for a moment, that when you opened your morning paper, right on the front page, replacing the usual headline stories, there was a self-analysis test. Now some of us are intrigued by these and others can't stand them. However, the one this morning is called *Test Your Christian Stewardship for the Past Year*. Sample questions are:





- 3. Have you offered your services when you knew they were needed?
- 4. Have you fulfilled your financial promises?
- 5. Have you assumed that since you are a member of your church that its success or failure reflected upon you?

And so on and on the questions go, filling the page. Some of us will feel the pinch of conscience and, without ever finishing the test, turn to the sports, social page or comics.

Others will finish and find that if most of the questions are answered *yes*, they could surely feel that they had been good and faithful servants.

How alive was our faith this year?

How alive do we plan to make it next year?

Our stewardship is an individual thing. Our thinking about the questions should be personal, not comparisons with others.

How'd we do?



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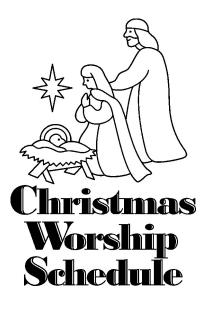




"The child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God."



December 2025



Dec. 8 2nd Sunday of Advent11:00 am
Dec. 15 3rd Sunday of Advent11:00 am
Dec. 22 4th Sunday of Advent11:00 am
Dec. 24Christmas Eve Candle Light Service 7:00 pm Holy Communion

Dec. 25.....Christmas DayMevry Christmas