

Advent and Christmas

At

Mt. Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

November 30, 2023

Grace to you, and peace, from Him Who was, Who is, and Who is to come, even Christ the Lord! Amen.

Advent is here again – which means we are called once again to step back from the culture’s mad dash to Christmas, take a deep breath, and learn to wait....

One of the central themes to the Advent season isn’t about waiting for Christmas, but rather is about waiting for Jesus to return in glory. We know the Day is closer now than when we first believed, but we can get impatient. We look at the mess of the world – or the mess of our lives – and wonder: “Lord, could You hurry up?” Yet, we know that His patience in waiting for the Day is so that as many as can will come to faith and find new life. So, as He waits, we wait. And the conceit of the season is that we can learn how to wait – and how to prepare! – by remembering how Israel once waited for Jesus’ birth and the beginning of His public ministry.

So, again I invite you into the shelter of the season that offers you hope and consolation over against all the shrill voices of the culture at large.

So, here’s the plan for the season... We will offer our traditional mid-week prayer services, centered on the theme: “YHWH Remembers His People.” Each of the mid-week services will focus on the Old Testament reading for the week (all from Isaiah this year) and how they shed light on God’s promise to remember, and deliver, His people. The first week gives us Isaiah 64, with the promise that God meets the one who remembers Him, and the prayer that He not remember our iniquity. The second week gives us Isaiah 40 and the promise that God will come to gather His people. And the third week gives us Isaiah 61 with the promise that God will send His Anointed One to heal His people. As always, the rest of our regularly scheduled services will continue as well. Note the plan for the Women’s Christmas Brunch on Saturday, December 9th, at 9:30am, and the Sunday School’s “Birthday for Jesus” during the Sunday School hour on December 17th.

With the conclusion of Advent, we will enter the Christmas season proper – celebrating Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the First Sunday after Christmas, and the Epiphany of our Lord. As Pr. Long will be away, there will be no New Year’s Eve service this year. And note there will be only one morning service on both December 24th and 31st.

So, I urge you – come and participate in these special seasons of worship as is appropriate for you and your household, and let us all prepare to adore Him, let us learn to wait and live with His promises, and let us rejoice in His birth and celebrate what that means for us and the world - for in Christ, every promise of God is “yes and amen!” May God richly bless you through Christ, “Immanuel,” the Babe of Bethlehem.

Yours in His Name,

Rev. Barry A. Long, Pastor

Advent: “O Come, O Come, Immanuel.....”

Thursday, November 30 – *Feast of St. Andrew, the New Church Year begins!*
Spoken Divine Worship, 6:00pm

Sunday, December 3 - 1st Sunday of Advent
Sung Divine Worship, 9:00 a.m.
Spoken Divine Worship, 11:45 a.m.

Wednesday, December 6 - *1st Wednesday of Advent*
Mid-day Prayer, 11:15 a.m.
Sandwich and Salad lunch to follow
Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 7 – *1st Thursday of Advent*
Spoken Divine Worship, 6:00pm

Saturday, December 9
Women of Mt. Calvary Christmas Brunch, 9:30am

Sunday, December 10 - 2nd Sunday of Advent
Sung Matins, 9:00 a.m.
Spoken Divine Worship, 11:45 a.m.
Voters’ Meeting, 10:30 a.m. (in-person or via Zoom)

Wednesday, December 13 - *2nd Wednesday of Advent*
Mid-day Prayer, 11:15 a.m.
Soup and Salad lunch to follow
Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 14 – *2nd Thursday of Advent*
Spoken Divine Worship, 6:00pm

Sunday, December 17 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

Sung Divine Worship, 9:00 a.m.

"Birthday for Jesus" during Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

Spoken Divine Worship, 11:45 a.m.

More Church Decorating after the late service....

Wednesday, December 20 - *3rd Wednesday of Advent*

Mid-day Prayer, 11:15 a.m.

Soup and Sandwich lunch to follow

Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 21 - *3rd Thursday of Advent, St. Thomas the Apostle*

Spoken Divine Worship, 6:00pm

Sunday, December 24 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Single Service - Sung Matins, 9:00 a.m.

Christmas: "*Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth, peace.....*"

Sunday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

Spoken Communion Service at 3:00 p.m.

Family Candlelight Service with Holy Communion, at 7:00 p.m.

Pre-service music will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, December 25 - Christmas Day

Chorale Divine Service, 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 31 - *First Sunday after Christmas*

Sung Divine Worship, 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 6: The Epiphany of our Lord

Spoken Divine Worship, 11:15 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

May God richly bless our keeping of the season by making us to grow ever more sure in the knowledge of our Savior, and ever more open to sharing His works of grace!