

The Changing Seasons: Advent And Christmas

In most sections of the country, there are distinct changes in the seasons of the year. For example, the barren branches and slippery snow of winter eventually give way to the budding leaves and bright flowers of spring. While it's not uncommon to hear complaints in January about the bitter cold and similar protests in July about the unbearable heat, many people say that they'd have it no other way - they like the seasonal changes.

Over the centuries, the Christian Church has recognized its own changing seasons - the "church year" or "liturgical calendar." Most people could name a few of these seasons, such as Christmas, Lent, and Easter. But what is the purpose of observing these different seasons? And what is the benefit of maintaining the distinctiveness of the seasons even as fewer and fewer people are aware of them?

To answer these questions, we'll consider two seasons that will soon be upon us: Advent and Christmas. Advent comprises the three to four weeks that precede Christmas Day. Its purpose is not to celebrate the birth of Jesus - that will come at Christmas - but to humble ourselves before the coming King.

- It's during Advent that we're reminded how ancient Israel waited for the promised Saviour.
- This is the season in which we hear the preaching of John the Baptist who points us to Jesus.
- Advent is a time of patient waiting as we pause to ponder the great gift whose birth we will celebrate on Christmas.

The world, of course, has no idea as to what the season of Advent is even about. Long before December rolls around, the trappings of Christmas can be found everywhere. The reasoning is quite simple: if lights and tinsel and seasonal signs can get you into the Christmas spirit, you'll be more generous with your purchases. But once December 25 passes, don't expect to find many reminders of Christmas.

How different it is in the Church. By keeping Advent as a distinct season, we give ourselves the opportunity to savour the beauty of God's plan of salvation. Then, when Christmas finally arrives, our celebration knows the joy of the shepherds as we join in the song of the angels.

Our observance of Advent might be compared to children who wait for weeks to open the presents that temptingly rest under the Christmas tree. The excitement builds and builds until finally the day arrives and the gifts are opened. By sharing in the anticipation of Advent, we arrive at Christmas -- including the 12 days after it which lead up to Epiphany on January 6 - with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the great gift that God has given by sending His Son in the flesh to save this world from sin and death.

Holiday Office Hours



With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, please make sure someone will be here if you need to access the church.

December 26 Office Closed
December 27 9:00 am-Noon (Reduced Staff)
December 28 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
December 29 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
January 1 Office Closed

There are **Advent Devotion booklets** (in regular and large print) available on the Welcome Desk. Please help yourself for your own use and also to give away to friends, family, and neighbours.

Winter Tune-up Special

- 1 ADJUST your lights so that others may see your good works.
- 2 SET your timing so as to be in church on time.
- 3 ADJUST the brakes on your tongue; it is a slippery place.
- 4 TUNE-UP your heart and have the peace that passes understanding.
- 5 ALIGN your direction that you may be able to steer yourself UP the straight and narrow road to LIFE without a wreck.
- 6 TUNE your mind so as to think on pure, holy, noble things.
- 7 FOR A QUICK START and a SURE VICTORY, be ready always to do the Lord's will and then DO IT.
- 8 ANIT-FREEZE your heart; be fervent in spirit serving God.
- 9 LUBRICATE your spirit with the oil of gladness, rejoice always, giving thanks in everything.
- 10 RETIRE with full assurance of eternal life.

Offering Envelopes for 2018 Available

The new offering envelopes for 2018 will be available after December 12th. When these are distributed, please do not use them until January. At that time, we also ask that you discard any old envelopes from 2017. Each year some numbers are changed to maintain a continuous sequence of numbers, and we cannot assure proper credit if old envelopes are used in the new year - or if new envelopes are used early. If you do not receive your envelopes, please notify the church office.

FOOTHILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2017

Advent & Christmas Communique



Pastor's Notes

And so it is Christmas...

That is the song lyric that surrounds a commercial that often is shown this time of year. The commercial tugs at our heart strings, showing orphaned children or the children of war who are often destitute, hungry, and without support. Typically the ads ask people to sponsor or "adopt" a child for a minimal amount each month. That amount, when compared to the care and upkeep of a child here in Canada is one of the greatest bargains in the world. And our care can make the difference in a child's life.

The Christmas message is even more powerful than that. Paul says: ***But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*** (Galatians 4:4-5 - ESV) God comes to us in Jesus Christ, to bring us into His family. He comes to bring the help we need for our lives. He rescues us from the devastation that sin has brought into our world and into our lives. He rescues us from the hopelessness that our sinfulness sets before us—that hopeless, empty existence of eternal death in hell. He has come to feed our hungry souls with good things. He comes to be with us to care for us in love.

Rejoice this Christmas that God, in His love and grace, has brought you into His family through faith in Jesus Christ. Rejoice in that Child who comes so that you might be a beloved child of God! Rejoice that Christ has come to take you out of misery of sin and to bless you with the riches of His grace and love.

In this holy season of joy, my family and I extend to you our prayers for peace, hope and joy – those precious gifts which are ours, as we cling to Jesus Christ, born to save us.

In His love and service,

Pastor Bode

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Noteworthy

Children's Choir

Join us Thursday, December 14th at 6:45 pm for a peek into our children's choir and to hear some of the songs we have been working on. Rehearsals resume on Thursday, January 11th.

Moms and Tots

December 7th and 21st. We meet at 10:00 am to continue our study on "The Beauty of Balance".



Carolling to our homebound members: Time to bring music cheer to our homebound members on Friday, **December 15th**. Meet at the church at 6:15 p.m. to form our carolling groups and pick up the plates of goodies to

take to those you visit. After carolling, quench your throats and palates with fellowship and goodies at Pastor Bode's house. Look for the sign up sheet in the Narthex in December.

LYF in Christ (Lutheran Youth at Foothills)

December 15: Carolling

January 12: Family Games Activity

January 26: Curling

Watch the bulletin and your email for more details.

Preschool Christmas Concerts

December 19 - 7:00 pm Morning Classes

December 20 - 2:30 pm Afternoon Classes

Preschool Classes resume on January 8, 2018.

Ladies' Bible Study

We meet at 7:30 pm on December 5th, 19th and January 2nd at Deaconess Miriam's home. Contact her for more information. We are nearly finished our study on *The Fruit of the Spirit*; feel free to jump in!

LWML Epiphany Lunch

The LWML is hosting a congregational lunch on Epiphany Sunday, January 7th. Contributions of "finger food" (hot and cold appetizers, sandwiches, cheese, veggies, fruit, cookies ...) would be appreciated. Watch the bulletin for more information.

Used Eyeglasses & Postage Stamps: Operation Eyesight sends used eyeglasses to countries around the world to help people with vision problems. Canadian Bible Society sells postage stamps to stamp collectors. Proceeds are used to purchase Bibles for inmates in Canadian prisons. (Please leave 1/4" border around the stamps.) These are ongoing mission projects. Please place your donations in the designated bins in the church foyer.

Coffee Teams

Dec 03 Lucy Oberhammer; Kellen & Kristy Rosenau; Lorne & Pat Rosenau

Dec 10 Tom & Joan Copeland; Lloyd & Carol Sandau

Dec 17 Shirley & Carl Berdahl; Ellen Wagner; Cheryl Lemke

Dec 24 No Fellowship Hour

Dec 31 No Fellowship Hosted

Jan 07 Anni & Brad Adams; Elfrieda Stewart; Jan Geggie; Marilyn Harrison

Jan 14 Heather Sommers; Warren Kee; Matt Pfaff

Jan 21 Mark Kihn; Alice Churney; Ron & Diane Voss; Liane Voss-Roper

Jan 28 Voter's Meeting

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Elders: December 5; January 9

Voter's Meeting: January 28

Parish Planning Council: December 18; January 15

LWML-C: January 22

There is some sort of Christian education opportunity at Foothills nearly every day of the week; if you're looking to learn, the Board of Christian Education is here to facilitate. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly! See Trevor Heumann, Board Chair.

Human Care Ministries

Thank you once again to our church family for making our 50th Anniversary such a celebration during all of 2017. We feel so grateful for your support for each and every one of the 50 servant events, whether it be through prayer, random acts of kindness, walking the Coldest Night of the Year, or the various food and meal events...each event allowed us to celebrate both our anniversary and that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For our last month of 2017 you can look forward to:

December: We collect new socks and underwear for clients of the Mustard Seed for Christmas

Dec 1: Preschool Family Advent Event

Dec 8: Foothills Family Advent Event we gather in celebration of the season and work together to make gingerbread houses to be sold

Dec 10 and 17: Silent Auction of the 5 gingerbread houses with proceeds going to Habitat for Humanity

Dec 15: Foothills Lutheran Carolling to our homebound members: Meet at the church at 6:15 to gather for carolling teams, with fellowship to follow at the Bode's

Dec 17 week: Set aside time for praying for our youth and university students -- for their exams and travel this month

Dec. 24 week: Random Acts of Kindness

FAMILY ADVENT FESTIVAL



Join us **Friday, December 8** for some Advent family fun. And by family, we mean the Foothills family!

Bring a dish to share for our **pot-blessing supper at 5:30 pm** or come at 6:00 pm to join in the festivities. Supper will be followed by a devotion, gingerbread house building and tree decorating.

All are welcome.

One of the things that new parents often do is to publish a "birth announcement" to share the good news. God has been telling people the good news of the Saviour since the very foundation of the world.

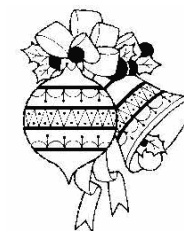
We will look at some special "Advent Announcements" that tell us a bit about the who, what and where of God's gift to the world. As we do, we will rejoice that this message is one that can be shared over and over with all people, everywhere.

Join us for these special services--and for the soup suppers that begin at 5:45 pm each week. Worship begins at 6:30 pm so all our families can participate, and we believe that these service will appeal to members of all ages. Be with us, as we join in fellowship in worship and at the table, as we share our hope and joy together.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE / POT-BLESSING MEAL

"*Bells Tell the Story*" will be presented by the children of our congregation during our worship service on **Sunday, December 10th**. Sunday School families - rehearsals take place Saturday, December 2nd at 1 pm and December 9th at 10 am.

Join us after the service for a "**pot-blessing**" meal. Everyone is asked to bring a family favourite or a dish from your childhood to share.



SPECIAL SERVICE SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve Candlelight Carol Services
4:00 pm; 6:00 pm; 11:00 pm December 24

Christmas Day Family Celebration with Communion
(No Sunday School or Bible Studies)
10:15 am December 25

New Year's Eve Vespers
7:00 pm December 31

