

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 Reduced Staff through the week.
January 2 Office Closed

Offering Envelopes for 2023 Available

The new offering envelopes for 2023 are now available. When these are distributed, **please do not use them until January**. At that time, we also ask that you discard any old envelopes from 2022. 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.

Portals of Prayer for January – March 2023 are now available on the Welcome Desk. Consider picking up a copy for a friend, neighbor or shut-in.



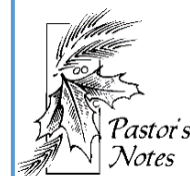
FOOTHILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2022

Advent & Christmas Footprint

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

What is it about Christmas that brings forth so many memories for people?



As I sat down to write this letter, I started remembering-- remembering the Christmas when I received my trombone; remembering the way my father used to decorate the tree with what seemed countless lights and a blanket of tinsel. I remembered my first Christmas with Brenda, and our first Christmases with our children. I remember waiting until after church on Christmas Day to open presents with the children, only to come home from church so sick that I passed out before we could really do anything, which made the children have to wait even longer for their presents.

I also remember the dear saints who rejoiced in the good news of the Saviour's birth in the many Christmas services: some of whom have moved to other parishes; some of whom now worshipping the Lamb before His heavenly home. Over the years there have been new faces, too, as members have joined the church; as families have grown; as children grew and had their own children.

In every remembrance of Christmases past, and in the celebration of Christmas present, what a joy it is to know that God has never forgotten us. The psalmist says: He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations (Psalm 105:8 - ESV). God remembers His covenant, which He first made with Adam and Eve, that He would send the Saviour, born of a woman, to destroy the works of the devil. God remembered, and sent His Son into the world, to be born of a virgin mother. God remembered His promises, and gave His Son to suffer the punishment that you and I deserve. God remembers His promises, so that we have the forgiveness that flows from Christ; as we have the peace which He brings; as we have the joy of knowing we have been redeemed and brought into God's kingdom of grace through faith in the Saviour-King.

As Christmas memories come to your mind this holy season, remember God's love for you. Remember all that He has done to give you the blessings of life, both now and forever. Rejoice and be glad, for you are His child. Remember what that means, as you live in the light of His love.

May the coming days be filled with joy and gladness, as you celebrate God's love for you. From our home to yours, we wish you all the blessings that are ours in the One who comes for us. May His love, joy, and peace be in your hearts and in your home throughout all the days of your life!

In His love and ours,

Pastor David Bode

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Our Christmas Services

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

Carol Communion Service
11:00 pm

December 25-10:15 am
Christmas Day Family Celebration
with Communion

January 1, 2023-10:15 am
New Year's Day Worship
with Communion

PLEASE NOTE:

With the extra services of Christmas Eve, there will be no midweek service on December 21, 2022.

Since New Year's Day is a Sunday, we will not have a New Year's Eve service this year.

Our regular midweek service will be held on Wednesday, December 28, 2022.

Christmas Cross-words

Did you miss our Advent services this year? You can still access them through our Facebook page. Go to facebook.com/foothillslutheran

We looked at God's promises through the words of the prophet Isaiah. In these wonderful words we see how the cross comes through several themes intersect in the text. To help you find the videos, they were recorded on the dates below

November 30—Isaiah 64:1-9
Christmas Cross-Words: Faith, Watch

December 7—Isaiah 40:1-11
Christmas Cross-Words: Comfort, Hope

December 14—Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Christmas Cross-Words: Grace, Promise

Our Advent Tea and Talents

On Friday, December 2nd, we enjoyed an evening social with tea, talents and activities for all the family. This event was organized by our Board of Fellowship and was a fun evening for all who came. We had piano music, displays of arts and crafts, jokes, trivia and just a wonderful time of fun and fellowship! We thank Sarah Knudtson and the Board of Fellowship for sponsoring and organizing this evening.

