



# *The Epistle*

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2019

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## *O COME, O COME EMMANUEL*

*This Advent season we have many chances to learn, serve, and fellowship as we await the birth of Christ!*

**LEARN:** Follow along with our 2019 Advent devotionals:

- The Advent Star devotional from United Seminary can be picked up in church on top of the memory chest. It makes a great table centerpiece and can spark some dinner time conversation!
- The 2019 Advent devotional from Luther Seminary can be delivered straight to your email, or downloaded as a pdf. It makes a lovely personal daily devotional! Check the last page for more information.

**FELLOWSHIP:** Christmas Eve services will happen December 24th with a youth led Family Service at 7 pm and a Traditional candlelit service with Communion at 9 pm. The church has been beautifully decorated for the advent season, and we hope you can join us in worship!

**SERVE:** There are many opportunities to share some Christmas cheer this December, including packing Love Boxes, donating to the GVCS Food Bank and the Frederick Cold Weather Shelter, and volunteering at the Soup Kitchen! Check the announcements page for more information.

## Church Calendar

- Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> - Congregational Life
- Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> - Executive Council
- Dec 4<sup>th</sup> - Walkersville Tree Lighting
- Dec 7<sup>th</sup> - Christkindl Market
- Dec 9<sup>th</sup> - Finance
- Dec 10<sup>th</sup> - Council
- Dec 15<sup>th</sup> - Love Box Packing
- Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> - Worship & Arts
- Dec 24<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Eve Services
- Dec 30<sup>th</sup> - Soup Kitchen





Check out the Soup Kitchen crew from this Veterans Day! Saint Paul's volunteers were joined by students from Middletown High School.

# Send out 2019 with Service!

An opportunity to serve at the Soup Kitchen one more time in 2019, on December 30th. If you are interested please contact Belinda for more information at [youthandfamily@saintpaulsluthernchurch.org](mailto:youthandfamily@saintpaulsluthernchurch.org) or 240-315-5030. We will meet at St. Paul's to depart for the soup kitchen at 4pm and return about 7:30pm.

## End of Year Giving Challenge

An anonymous donor has approached the leadership with a \$2,000 matching gift to help offset any year end deficit. If members of the congregation can contribute \$2,000 over and above their normal giving, this anonymous member will match that \$2,000 contribution! If you are writing a check, please include "challenge" on the memo line. If you give a cash offering, place it in one of the pew envelopes and write "challenge" on it. If you give online, choose the general fund and make a comment that says "challenge". The deadline for the challenge is December 29th! We have successfully raised the money each time the challenge has been issued in the past, so let's continue this wonderful tradition!



## 15th Year A Success!

Thank you to all who helped with the 2019 Stocking Stuffer Project, and a huge thanks to the Kahler Family for their year-round efforts on behalf of the children of the Walkersville community. 151 stockings were filled and will be delivered to the Town Hall on December 3rd for distribution to the parents. Thank you again for your support of this project and we look forward to the New Year!



# Vicar's Valley

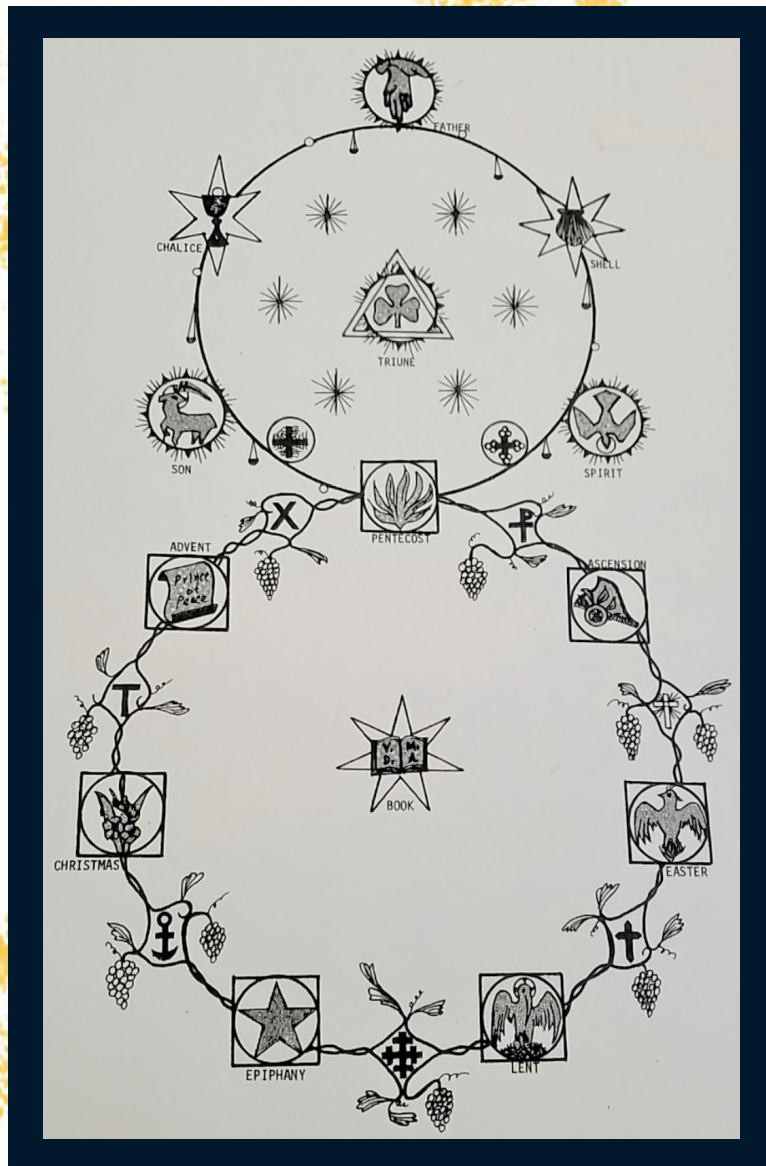
Advent marks the beginning of the church calendar. It traditionally starts on the Sunday closest to St. Andrew's Day (November 30th) and continues for four Sundays until Christmas. During this time the liturgical paraments and vestments in many churches will change to violet to recognize Advent as a time of preparation and repentance as well as a symbol of the royalty of the coming King. The color blue can also be used as a symbol of anticipation and hope.

Christians in many countries have adopted various traditions of lighting candles during Advent to observe this as the time of the coming of Christ who is the light of the world. One widespread tradition is the use of an Advent wreath both in the church and the home to mark each Sunday in the Advent season. While the origin of this as an Advent tradition dates back to the Lutheran church following the Reformation, the current form commonly used today was developed more recently and is used in many other Christian churches throughout the world. The wreath is made out of evergreens in the shape of a circle to represent eternal life. It consisted of four candles originally; three purple or blue candles to match the liturgical colors and one pink candle lit on the 3rd Sunday in Advent. This 3rd Sunday is known as Gaudete Sunday, meaning “rejoice” in Latin and comes from Philippians 4:4. Lighting this 3rd candle, Christians relax the fast to rejoice for the promised Messiah is coming soon. Many Advent wreaths also have a 5th candle, the Christ candle, which is lit during the time of Christmas, symbolizing that Christ, the light of the world, has entered the darkness.

Chrismons™ Ornaments were originated and first made for use on the Christmas tree of Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia, in 1957 by Mrs. Frances Kipps Spencer, a church member. The designs were monograms of and symbols for our Lord Jesus Christ. Because these designs have been used by his followers since biblical times, they are the heritage of all Christians and serve to remind each of us regardless of denomination of the One we follow. All Chrismons™ Ornaments are made in a combination of white and gold to symbolize the purity and majesty of the Son of God and the Son of Man<sup>1</sup>.

As with the Christmas tree, the evergreen tree itself, for Christians, "symbolizes the eternal life Jesus Christ provides". However, the Chrismon tree differs from the traditional Christmas tree in that it "is decorated only with clear lights and Chrismons made from white and gold material", the latter two being the liturgical colors of the Christmas season. The double loop/figure 8 explains, symbolically, our Lord's life and the nature of God within the framework of the Christian year. The upper loop proclaims the Triune God; the lower loop, read counterclockwise, shows God's revelation of himself in the life of Jesus.

As we enter this season of anticipation and hope, let us be focused on the needs of our neighbors in our church, community, and world. It is easy to get wrapped up in the hype of the commercial aspect of the season, but it is incumbent upon us to reflect on the goodness in our lives and the realization that Christ is in our lives, ever present and always the steadying force. Take a moment to prepare your hearts for the commemoration of the birth of our Savior and the promise that He will come again in glory. This is the season in which we look to the eternal life we have been promised in Jesus Christ. We remember this promise and find rebirth, reconciliation, and promise for us in our Baptism and in the sharing of the Lord's Supper.



Vicar Phil

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.chrismon.org/chrismons-ministry.html>



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Advent Devotionals

There are two devotionals available this year: pick up the Advent Star from the memory chest in church and get the Luther Seminary "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" devotional.

You can access it several ways:

- Go to this link (<https://www.luthersem.edu/advent>) and download the regular or large print to print at home
- Sign up [here](#) to receive the devotion through your email each day in advent (put in your name and email, and check "God Pause Daily Devotions")
- Pick up a regular or large print version from the side table at church (limited copies available)

The devotional will begin on Sunday Dec. 1st, so be sure to get your copy by then!

## Turkey Tree & GVCS Food Bank

If you would like to support the Glade Valley Food Bank during the holiday season our "needs" tree has brown envelopes for your contributions. St. Paul's will send all money collected to help the Food Bank in their efforts to help those in need during the holidays. If you would like to contribute other items to be delivered, they are in need of spaghetti sauce, Hamburger Helper, Tuna, cereal, canned fruit & pasta.

## Cold Weather Shelter Donations

The Alfred P. Linton Jr. Cold Weather Shelter in Frederick is especially in need of donations of warm clothing and blankets as the temperatures continue to drop. Contact the office if you have donations!

## Prayer List Updates

As we look forward to a new year, the office is updating our records, including the prayer list. If you or someone you know is on the prayer list currently, and you would like them to continue being on the prayer list, please call or email the office at [officeadministrator@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org](mailto:officeadministrator@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org) to confirm this! Thank you.

## Poinsettias

Help us decorate St. Paul's by ordering a red or white poinsettia! Sign ups are on the side bulletin board, and more information is in the bulletins and weekly email.

The deadline for ordering is Dec. 15th!

# EVENTS

## Love Box Packing

On Sunday, December 15 at 3 pm, we will be assembling approximately 30 "Love Boxes" to be given to those recently bereaved (2019), shut-ins, and elderly members of our congregation. We are asking for donations of cookies, candy, individual snack packs, and fruit (apples/oranges). If you would like to add someone to our list, please contact Candy Swet, at [crswet@gmail.com](mailto:crswet@gmail.com), or cell phone 412 721 8836 by Friday, December 13 so that they can be included. Afterward, we will enjoy refreshments and share Christmas fellowship. We hope to see you there!

## Christkindl Market

The Walkersville Christkindl Mart is **December 7, 2019 from 11 am until 6 pm.**

We are selling Bratwurst, Glühwein (warm spiced drink), cake, spiced nuts and German candy. We are also selling many handmade items. This is a town wide event - lots of things going on! Some of our youth are playing elves and Katie King is performing a contemporary dance. We could use your help. There are sign up sheets under the clock. We welcome your support and encourage you to tell friends and family. It should be a fun day! Check the event website at [www.walkersvillechristkindlmarket.com](http://www.walkersvillechristkindlmarket.com) or the Facebook Page at **Walkersville Christkindl Mart.**

## **Luke 2: 9-11**

*<sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."*