

Messiah Lutheran Church
1796-15 Avenue East
Prince Albert, S6V 8A1

Website: www.messiahluthpa.ca

Facebook and YouTube: MessiahLutheranChurchPrinceAlbert

Pastor Fran Schmidt

Cell: 1-306-716-3954

Email: pastor.mlc@sasktel.net

Lisa/Office: 306-763-7374

E-mail: messiah@sasktel.net

Messiah office hours: Tuesday – Thursday 10-2 pm; Friday 1:30 – 5:30 pm

Worship for Sunday, November 28, 2021
Advent: Hanging of the Greens Sunday

Assisting with Worship: Thank you for your assistance with the service.

Sunday Worship Service: In person and live broadcast on-line, begins at 10:30am. Pre-registration is not required, but the wearing of masks is mandatory. Covid vaccinations and hand sanitizing are encouraged. Offering is collected as you enter the Sanctuary. The service is taped for later viewing on the Messiah Facebook page and website. Special Thank You those who put up the tree and decorating the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas Seasons!

Prayers for Healing and On-Going Health Concerns:
To all those we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts.



Today: Sunday School at 11:45am, right after Worship Service on Zoom (call Messiah office or Pastor Fran for the link).

Confirmation: Tonight at 7 pm

This Week:

Wednesday: Bible study at 7pm – Lectionary Bible Study resumes in a Hybrid format (both in-person and on Zoom). For more info ask Pastor Fran.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Massive floods and landslides have devastated parts of British Columbia, destroying roads and leaving several mountain towns isolated. 18,000 people are displaced and authorities expect death tolls to rise. CLWR invites you to pray for the people of British Columbia, and to consider making a gift to support recovery efforts. CLWR is accepting donations now on its website at clwr.org/BCfloods. Donations can also be made by phoning our office at 1.800.661.2597 (Monday to Thursday, 9:00 – 16:00 CDT) or by mailing a cheque to 600-177 Lombard Avenue,

Winnipeg, MB R3B 0W5. Thank you for responding in love to this emergency. Blessings, Karin Achtelstetter - Executive Director of Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

Salvation Army Christmas Kettle at the Co-op Grocery store at Cornerstone on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4: Volunteers are needed for the remaining shifts: 10:00am-12:00pm (1 person), 2:00-4:00pm (1 person). To volunteer, please contact the Messiah office or sign up on the sheet provided in the narthex. Vaccination Requirements: Volunteers need to be double vaccinated and will be asked to provide dates of their vaccination to the Messiah office, for the Salvation Army. You may also be asked to show your vaccine documentation to a Salvation Army representative at the Co-op. Ask for their identification before providing that information.



Mitten Tree:

We have set up two boxes in lieu of the tree for "mitten tree" collection of mitts, toques, scarfs and gloves. A box will be in the Narthex and another in the entry by the office under the coat rack. Most years, these articles are given to a community school to give to children without these necessities.

Memorial Christmas Tree:

🌲 REMEMBERING:

During Advent a decoration will be provided to hang on the Memorial Christmas Tree. You can also write the names of those you wish to remember on the attached card. After Christmas the decorations will be available to take home. If you will not be in church and would like a decoration prepared, please contact the office with your information.

If you would like to donate a Poinsettia for the Christmas services; please drop your plant off to the office no later than Wednesday, December 22, by 12 noon. If you are donating a Poinsettia in memory of someone, please phone (leave a message) or email the Messiah office by noon, December 22.

Christmas Hampers for Families in Saskatchewan Rivers Schools

Again this year, Messiah Lutheran Church will be donating Christmas Food Hampers to families of children attending Saskatchewan Rivers Schools. We are accepting donations of food items to fill five hampers. The donation can be a monetary gift or a donation of food items. Food items may be dropped off in a designated box in the entrance by the Church office and monetary donations can be dropped off or e-transferred. We would like these items by December 10, as they need to be put together and ready for the schools to pick up prior to the school Christmas break. Please see the larger announcement in the December Newsletter. Thank you!

Advent Giving
For December 5 Service and Throughout Advent
Food Bank Donations

On **Sunday, December 5**, and throughout Advent, we ask that you bring food and other items to church to be donated to the Food Bank. As well as **Sunday mornings**, these items can be **dropped off at Messiah during Office Hours**.

Some of these items may also be used to put together **Food Hampers** to be donated to families from schools in Prince Albert.

Here are 24 Food items you may consider donating each day of Advent. Other non-perishable items are gratefully accepted.

1. <i>Box of Cereal</i>	9. <i>Dessert Mix</i>	17. <i>Package of Pasta</i>
2. <i>Peanut Butter</i>	10. <i>Jar of Applesauce</i>	18. <i>Spaghetti Sauce</i>
3. <i>Stuffing Mix</i>	11. <i>Can of Hearty Soup</i>	19. <i>Chicken Noodle or Tomato</i>
4. <i>Boxed Potatoes or Bag of</i>	<i>or Stew</i>	<i>Soup</i>
<i>Potatoes</i>	12. <i>Cranberry Sauce</i>	20. <i>Canned Corn, Green Beans,</i>
5. <i>Macaroni and Cheese</i>	13. <i>Canned Brown</i>	<i>Carrots</i>
6. <i>Canned Fruit or Box of</i>	<i>Beans</i>	21. <i>Jar of Pickles</i>
<i>Fruit Juice</i>	14. <i>Box of Crackers</i>	22. <i>Jar of Jam</i>
7. <i>Canned Tomatoes</i>	15. <i>Package of Rice</i>	23. <i>Small bag of Flour</i>
8. <i>Canned Tuna</i>	16. <i>Package of Oatmeal</i>	24. <i>Tub of Margarine</i>

You may also consider donating:

1. <i>Diapers</i>	3. <i>Cleaning Supplies</i>	5. <i>Hygiene Items</i>
2. <i>Baby Formula</i>	4. <i>Pet Food</i>	6. <i>Dish or Laundry Detergent</i>



Prepare your heart and soul for Christmas, with a prayer! I'll email you a concise, meaningful prayer each morning, along with a picture to ponder and a bit of scripture to meditate upon. It's free, and your email address remains confidential. Click on this link:

<https://mailchi.mp/telus/advent-2021-landing-page> or send me an email with "subscribe" in the title: pbprayer@telus.net

Advent blessings to you! Rev. Bruce Ehlert

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION TO ADVENT

Pastor: The new Christian Year begins with the Season of Advent. Advent is the church's wakeup call: Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming soon! We make preparations as best we can, knowing that it is God whom we celebrate in these days of Advent in expectation and preparation for Christ's arrival.

Advent has been enriched by Christian tradition to reflect its distinctive Christian meaning. It proclaims the revelation of God's love as expressed in Christ's birth in a humble stable, his sacrificial death on the cross, and his victorious resurrection! It points to the hope of Christ's coming again as the King of kings and Lord of Lords.

This morning our church building will begin to wear its Christmas apparel. For the first time our Christmas trees stand in the sanctuary. This day for the first time its lights will shine for us. As we make ready for the birth of the child by preparing this sanctuary, we make ready ourselves and the sanctuary of our own hearts. We are mindful that, although it is not Christmas yet, it will be here soon, very soon.

As we decorate the church, not only will we explain the history of the symbols of this special season, but we will rededicate these symbols and ourselves to the service of God. Advent makes innkeepers out of all of us, asking each of us to make room for the arrival of Christ The King. Let us, today, prepare him room in our hearts, our lives, and our homes! Amen.

THE COLORS OF CHRISTMAS

Reader 1:

Both visual and performing arts have always been important ways to communicate the Christian faith. The use of music has helped believers understand their Godly hope. Other forms of visual art have been used from the beginning to help express various aspects of Christian doctrine and life.

Colors, altar paraments or coverings, and banners are some of the most important visual ways Christians have used to express their faith in worship. The objective in covering the Communion Table with cloths of various colors was to help focus the attention of worshippers on the special nature of Christ as the perfect sacrifice.

During Advent and the Christmas season the colors have a special meaning. The traditional color for Advent is purple, a color that signifies the sacred, and spiritual fulfillment. Some traditions use blue, which represents anticipation and promise. Both colors, purple and blue, represent royalty.

Green reminds us that spring will come and that winter will not last forever! Evergreen plants, like holly, ivy and mistletoe are used to decorate and brighten up buildings during the long dark winter. In the church, green symbolizes the renewal of vegetation and generally of all living things and the promise of new life. (Evergreen is held up along with holly and ivy).

An early use of red at Christmas were the apples on the paradise tree. They represented the fall of Adam in the plays. Red is also the color of holly berries, which is said to represent the blood of Jesus when he died on the cross. In the church, red is the color of fire and so symbolizes the presence of God. (Apple and holly berries are held up).

Gold is the color of the Sun and light – both very important in the dark winter. And both red and gold are the colors of fire that you need to keep you warm. Gold was also one of the presents brought to the baby Jesus by one of the wise men and traditionally it's the color used to show the star that the wise men followed. In the church, gold symbolizes what is precious and valuable, and so symbolizes majesty, joy, and celebration. (The Christ candle is lit with a small candle).

White is often associated with purity and peace. The snow of winter is also very white! White is used by most churches as the color of Christmas, when the altar is covered with a white cloth. It symbolizes

purity, holiness, and virtue, as well as respect and reverence. (Maybe a snowball is held up, or snow in a bowl). At Advent we wait with anticipation for the Christ-child as our hearts sing out, "O Come Emmanuel!"

HYMN: ELW #257 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" vs. 1

THE ADVENT WREATH

Reader 2:

A reading from Isaiah 60:2-3: "For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn."

The lighting of candles has been a part of religious worship for centuries. The Hebrews burned candles for eight days as part of their Feast of Lights. Light has been used by many religious groups to symbolize truth, while the darkness of night has been the universal symbol for evil.

The origin of a burning wreath is found in the traditions of pre-Christian Germanic people who burned the greens in the hope of spring following a long winter. In the sixteenth century throughout Germany, the Advent wreath became a traditional symbol for many Christians. The circle of evergreens, having no end and bearing four candles, reminds us of the eternal Christ, the light of the world. Each Sunday in Advent a new candle is lighted until all four candles glow on the fourth Sunday.

There is also symbolism in the colors of the candles. In some traditions, the candles are blue, representing expectation and hope. In other traditions, purple and pink candles are used. Often, a tradition is celebrated whereby each Sunday represents a different Advent theme: hope, peace, joy, and love. The large white candle in the center is known as the Christ candle, and it serves to remind us of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. It is lighted, finally, on Christmas Eve.

Let us pray,

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe. You sent your Son to be the Light of the world and to spread his light of love to all. Bless us and accept these wreaths of light made from our hands. May their ever increasing brightness be a sign to us of the approaching nearness of your Son, that we might prepare in joy for his humble birth in a manger and be ready to receive him at his coming again in glory; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

HYMN: ELW#262 "Wait for the Lord" 2X"

EVERGREENS

Reader 3:

The most striking and the most universal feature of Christmas is the use of evergreens in churches and homes. Among ancient Romans, evergreens were an emblem of peace, joy, and victory. The early Christians placed them in their windows to indicate that Christ had entered the home. Holly and ivy, along with pine, and fir are called evergreens because they never change color. They are ever-green, ever-alive, even in the midst of winter. They symbolize the unchanging nature of our God, and they remind us of the everlasting life that is ours through Christ Jesus.

Under Christian thought and sentiment, holly became widely used in church celebrations. Holly was considered as the burning bush, or a symbol of Mary whose being glows with the Holy Spirit. The red berries represented the blood drops from the cruel thorns in the crown of Jesus.

In Isaiah 60:13 we find these words: "The Glory of Lebanon shall come unto you, the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of your sanctuary." Our forefathers called the procuring of these evergreens, "Bringing home Christmas!"

Reading: 1 Peter 1.23-25 "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of

imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, all of us are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall. But the word of the Lord stands forever."

POINSETTIAS

Reader 4:

Most Christmas greenery reflects European tradition. But one colorful plant, the poinsettia comes from Mexico. In Spanish it is called the "Flower of the Holy Night." But in English it received its name from Dr. Joel Robert Poinset, the ambassador to Mexico who first introduced it to North America in 1828.

The legend of the poinsettia tells of a girl named Maria and her little brother Pablo. They were very poor but always looked forward to the Christmas festival. There were parades and parties. And each year a large nativity was set up in the village church. The two children loved Christmas but were always saddened because they had no money to buy presents. They especially wished that they could give something to the church for the baby Jesus. But they had nothing. One Christmas Eve, Maria and Pablo set out for church to attend the service. On their way they picked some weeds growing along the roadside and decided to take them as their gift to the baby Jesus in the manger scene. Of course, other children teased them when they arrived with their gift, but they said nothing for they knew they had given what they could. Maria and Pablo began placing the green plants around the manger and miraculously, the green top leaves turned into bright red petals, and soon the manger was surrounded by beautiful star-like flowers and so we see them today.

The Poinsettia is a many-pointed star that has become a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem.

Reading: Isaiah 35.1-2

"The desert and the parched land will be glad; The wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; It will rejoice greatly and shout for joy."

HYMN: ACS#908 "In a Far-off Place, Jesus Comes"

THE NATIVITY SCENE

Reader 5:

A reading from Luke, chapter 2: "When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger." (Luke 2.15-16).

One of the most heart-warming expressions of Christmas is the Nativity. St. Francis of Assisi is often credited with the first manger scene about 800 years ago when he used a cave outside a small Italian town and set up a manger scene with live animals and real people. Jesus, the Christ child, was life-size and was made of wax. For a people who could not read it was an effective visual aid in telling the story of the birth of Jesus.

The Nativity speaks of the mystery of God's wisdom. Why God chose to send his son into our world as a baby of humble birth and born in common surroundings, we do not know. What we do know is that God reached out to all people including the poor and the wealthy, the simple and the wise, the powerless and the powerful. All kneel in awe and humility before him. Emmanuel, God with us, is coming into the world. May we continue to be overwhelmed with awe whenever we see a Nativity, knowing that we are in God's presence in the baby Jesus.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Reader 6:

The Christmas tree is for many the center of our festivities. Glittering with lights and ornaments, it is a part of the beauty and meaning of Christmas. There are several legends and stories about the Christmas tree.

The first use of the Christmas tree was in the medieval German Paradise Plays, held outdoors and portraying the creation of humankind. The Tree of Life was a fir tree decorated with apples. Later other ornaments were hung upon them, such as paper flowers and gilded nuts. In England, branches or whole trees were forced into bloom indoors for Christmas. From these beginnings the use of a tree at Christmas

was established. Martin Luther was perhaps the first to use a lighted tree.

The story is told that on one Christmas Eve, Martin Luther wandered outdoors and became enraptured with the beauty of the starry sky. Its brilliance and loveliness led him to reflect on the glory of the first Christmas Eve as seen in Bethlehem's radiant skies. Wishing to share with his wife and children the enchantment he had felt, he cut an evergreen from the forest, glistening with snow, and took it home. He placed candles upon it to represent the glorious heavens he had seen. The use of a candle-lighted tree spread to all Europe, then North America came to regard it as the central ornament of Christmas. During this season of Advent, whenever you see a lighted Christmas tree, let it remind you of Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world.

Let us pray.

Loving God, we come with joy to await the birth of Jesus Christ, whose path of justice and inclusivity lights a path for all who follow him. May this tree, arrayed in splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THE CHRISTMAS STAR

Reader 7:

A reading from Matthew, chapter 2: "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

The star serves as a symbol of Christmas in many ways. First, we remember the star of Bethlehem and the Magi following the star to find the Christ child. The Bible, in Revelation 22.16, also refers to Jesus as the Morning star, "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." As well, the starlight is universal, its rays are seen everywhere, and so stars have become a symbol of peace throughout the world.

CHRISTMAS BELLS

Reader 8:

Christmas joy naturally overflows into music. About the fourth century A.D. bells first pealed forth in glad song at Christmas. Of all our Christmas symbols, the bells have experienced the fewest changes. Church bells, which have gladdened the hearts of people throughout the ages, are said to have been originated by Bishop Paulinus of Nola in Campania, Italy, who died in 431 A.D. Medieval peoples had a tender feeling for bells. They were dedicated with prayers and regarded as almost living beings. Historical bells that have rung out the glad news at Christmas are the Emperor Bell in Moscow, the Great Bell of China at Peking, Big Ben of London, and the Liberty Bell of Philadelphia. However, it is church bells in every community around the world, that have found their way into each of our hearts.

HYMN: ELW#266 "All Earth is Hopeful"

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Reader 9:

A reading from Matthew, chapter 2: "When the wise men saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh."

From the beginning of Christmas celebrations, gift giving has been a part of the season. The Wise Men gave out of their treasures, and the Shepherds gave of themselves. Both express the Gift of God in giving Christ as the Savior of the World.

Unique in our history of generous givers is the story of Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia in the fourth century A.D. He is reputed to have been wealthy and he gave money away secretly to those whom he found in need. He was deeply interested in young people, giving his wealth especially to maidens whose lack of a dowry was affecting their matrimonial future, and to needy boys. Gifts coming from unknown

sources were commonly attributed to him and parents customarily gave him credit for their gifts to their children. The name of Saint Nicholas survives today as a Christian example of generous giving.

Jesus continuously called the people to care for the orphan, the widow, the leper, the poor. In response to Jesus' call to care for others, we give during this season of Advent as we follow Jesus' command to love one another, as it is written in Matthew: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

OFFERING HYMN: ELW#583 "Take My Life"

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray, Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence, praying hear us, O God and responding, Your mercy is great.

...

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray,

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey. In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Sung Three-fold Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW# 248 "People Look East"

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.