



**Messiah Lutheran Church**  
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**Messiah Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday 9am - 4pm**

**Worship for Sunday November 27, 2022**  
**Advent: Hanging of the Greens**

Sunday Worship Services begin at 10:30 am in-person and livestreamed/posted on the Messiah YouTube channel. **Wearing of masks is not required but Messiah is a mask-friendly environment.** Covid vaccinations, social distancing, and hand sanitizing are encouraged. **Due to water main issues, the water has been turned off in the building, with limited access to washrooms (pails of water are available for emergency flushing purposes).** All are welcome to join in pre-service coffee time in the Peace Chapel.

**Prayers for Healing and On-Going Health Concerns:**

We pray for comfort and healing for all those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit; give them courage and hope in their time of need.



**ADVENT CHOIR**

***For Anyone Interested in singing during Advent; practices will be on Sunday mornings in the Messiah Sanctuary at 9:15 am.***

Please contact May Janzen or Colleen Bowen if you have questions or for further 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 Messiah office under the coat rack. Most years, these articles are given to a community school to give to children without these necessities.



### **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 monetary gifts and donations of food items to fill **at least six** hampers. Food items may be dropped off in a designated box or the Messiah office and monetary donations can be dropped off or e-transferred. We would like to receive all donations by **December 15**, for assembly ready and pick up/delivery prior to the school Christmas break. Further details will be in the Christmas Newsletter coming next week. Thank you!

### **SALVATION ARMY KETTLE**

Messiah has volunteered to manage the Salvation Army Kettle at the Prince Albert Coop Grocery store on Saturday, December 10. If you are interested in volunteering for a two-hour shift, please sign up on the sheet that is posted in the Narthex.



### **Food Bank Sunday Donations**

On **Sunday, December 11**, 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**. A least of food suggestions is provided in the Narthex. Thank you.

**Lutheran Campus Ministry-Saskatoon** invites your partnership and support via a video update and information about the ministry. The video link is <https://youtu.be/UPWpNS5Z1rc> ; Facebook users, please visit [Lutheran Campus Ministry at Usask Saskatoon](#). Thank you for your consideration of partnering and supporting Campus Ministry-Saskatoon.

**EVERY MONDAY DURING ADVENT**, the national church leaders of The Anglican Church of Canada, The Evangelical Lutheran in Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The United Church of Canada will release an ecumenical Advent meditation and conversations reflecting the four Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love, and addressing challenges facing the Canadian churches.

**EVERY THURSDAY DURING ADVENT**, listeners are invited to join in a live discussion, via Zoom, with one of the leaders on that week's Advent theme. Attendees to the gathering will be able to ask questions during the online conversation. To receive the meeting link for each event and receive email reminders of each week's upcoming events, visit [Advent2022.ca](http://Advent2022.ca)



**Thursday, Dec 1, 2022 - HOPE / "Signs of the Time"** – Bob Faris in conversation with *Susan Johnson* about the church in the 21st Century. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many trends that all Canadian churches are experiencing. All of the churches face shrinking membership and a changed position in communities across the country. Can we read the signs of our own times to understand where we are being called to be the church?

### **Watsonairs Christmas Carol Festival: Thursday, December 1, 2022 @ 7pm; Sacred Heath Cathedral, 1401 – 4 Avenue West, Prince Albert**

The Watsonairs are hosting a Christmas Carol Festival with guests, a sing-a-long and a lot of Christmas cheer! There will be a collection during the program. All proceeds go to the local Salvation Army Christmas Cheer Fund. If you are unable to attend in person you can send your donations through etransfer to [watsonairs@gmail.com](mailto:watsonairs@gmail.com). Tax receipts are available upon request.

## GATHERING

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

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### INTRODUCTION TO ADVENT

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

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

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.

As winter days dim and bow to early darkness, you, God of light, set watch in the night sky and beckon the wise to follow. When hope hangs low in the human heart, you, loving creator, kindle compassion, breathing life into the early embers of change and empathy.

We light a candle for hope, sending prayers high into the inky heavens and dreams deep into the human soul. As Advent dawns, God of all hope, shine your light on the story of the saints who journeyed before us. May the seeds they planted in the world – peace, joy, love – take hold in our hearts and stretch towards the light. **We light a candle for hope. May it light the way.**

**HYMN: ELW#240 Light One Candle to Watch For Messiah (vs 1)**

### EVERGREENS

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 6 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

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 Roberts Poinsett, 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.”*

### THE NATIVITY SCENE

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.

### **HYMN: ACS#908 ‘In a Far-Off Place, Jesus Comes’**

- 1** In a far-off place, Jesus comes to earth. Sheep and cattle grace the site.  
As the angel songs begin, like the whisper of the wind, nature's hope awakes again;  
Jesus comes.
- 2** For the poor in heart, Jesus comes to earth. Humble shepherds start the news.  
For each homeless infant born, for the meek and those who mourn, for the weary and the worn, Jesus comes.

- 3 In our deepest night, Jesus comes to earth: radiant star to light our way.  
Summer's heat or winter's chill, with a warm and loving will, to a world that needs him still,  
Jesus comes.**

### **THE CHRISTMAS TREE**

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.

**HYMN: 'O Christmas Tree'** (German Traditional Carol)

1. **O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches.  
In beauty green they'll always grow through summer sun and winter snow.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches.**
2. **O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, you are the tree most loved.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, you are the tree most loved.  
How often you give us delight in brightly shining Christmas light!  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, you are the tree most loved.**
3. **O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, your beauty green will teach me.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, your beauty green will teach me.  
That hope and love will ever be the way to joy and peace for me.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, your beauty green will teach me.**

**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**

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

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

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 8 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 continuous 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.”*

### THANKSGIVING

**OFFERING HYMN: ELW##294 ‘In the Bleak Midwinter’ (vs. 1 and 3)**

#### OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray, **Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ’s presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope, saying God, in your mercy, and responding **hear our prayer.**

...

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus’ name we pray. **Amen.**

**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****BLESSING**

God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Sung Three-fold Amen.**

**SENDING SONG: ELW#253 'He Came Down'**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is near. **Thanks be to God.**



To Subscribe for a daily Advent prayer: <https://mailchi.mp/telus/advent-2022-landing-page>