

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

DECEMBER 2020



Keeping the Joy this Christmas

The holiday season is often a more difficult one for those who've lost loved ones or who long for the big celebrations they remember from their youth or who aren't able to experience the "normal" festive celebration and gift-giving. This year we have the pandemic compounded on that, bringing increased loneliness, fear, and sadness. The devil especially takes pleasure in robbing our joy during Christian festivals. How can we find peace and joy this Christmas?

Retell and remember the original story of Christmas. God became man and dwelt among us. He was born to know our loneliness and sorrows from experience. He suffered the loss of family and friends, was rejected by His own people, and died surrounded by His enemies. Our God sympathizes with our weaknesses and is able to help us because He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, forever bridging the gap between mankind and God and mankind and one another.

Because Christ has come there is a community, a fellowship which is real and cannot be taken away, no matter what we are experiencing or how we feel. We are members of Christ's body in baptism and therefore connected to more people than we can even imagine – saints around the world and to those who have died in Christ, all who have believed in Him. We also have fellowship with the angels who worship with us and watch over us. And we have Christ Himself, who says, "Wherever two or three are gathered, there I am in the midst of them."

Therefore, although we enjoy large gatherings, family traditions, and all the bells and whistles of Christmas when we have them, when we don't, Christmas' unfading joy and glory is nevertheless ours. The Son of God is still man. Heaven and earth are still bridged by Him who rules the universe with His grace and truth. The angels are still singing for you, "Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth, goodwill toward man!"

Join us in celebrating the unfading joy of Christmas as we hear God's Word and commune with heaven! You will find that the pandemic can keep us from our traditions and regular family gatherings, but not from the assembly of innumerable saints and angels of heaven with Christ our Lord! And no power in heaven or on earth can keep us from one day seeing and experiencing for eternity the fellowship the Christ child has brought us!

Pastor



*"Loving, Sharing, Serving
Jesus with you."*

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FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE...

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14)! We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God's people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deuteronomy 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas but throughout all the year. We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us. Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.



**CONGREGATIONAL QUARTERLY
VOTERS MEETING**

TUESDAY, DEC.15, 7:00 PM

This is an important voters meeting for all members. We will be electing new officers for 2020 and voting upon the budget for the coming year.



**Advent Midweek Services
Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.
Dec. 2, 9, & 16**



Christmas Week Services

- Saturday, December 19**
6:00 p.m. Worship Service with Communion
- Sunday, December 20**
10:00 a.m. Worship Service with Communion
- Thursday, December 24**
6:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols Service
- Thursday, December 24**
11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion
- Friday, December 25**
9:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service with Communion
- Saturday, December 26**
6:00 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer
- Sunday, December 27**
10:00 a.m. Worship Service with Communion
- Thursday, December 31**
6:00 p.m. New Year's Eve Service with Communion



CHRISTMAS LIBRARY CORNER

There will be a Christmas Library Corner in the Gathering Place during Advent. Books, music, and videos featuring *Christian* Christmas themes will be available for members to borrow for use at home during the Christmas season.

We will all be spending more time at home this Christmas season. Many of the Christmas concerts and programs we like to attend will not be available to us this year. We would like to share some resources for you to use at home in your devotions, for your family reading time, or just to enjoy together.

We will set out Christmas & Advent items from Immanuel's library, and items others would like to lend to us for the month to share with others (*be sure your name is on your items*). Materials should be signed out when borrowed and signed in when returned.



PLEASE NOTE: There will not be a January edition of *Gabriel's Gazette*. Watch your mailboxes and the weekly bulletin for information about January activities.



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12-19-1997

I'M SORRY GUY, I KNOW THAT YOU'VE GOT A GOOD HEALTH PLAN AND YOU GIVE OUT FREE GIFTS AND ALL, BUT JESUS REALLY DOES HAVE A MUCH BETTER PLAN



What is a church? Church is more than Sunday services and community projects. It's a family, a family of young and old, married and single, hospitalized and healthy, bound together in mutual love for Jesus Christ and for one another. It's family that has decided to grow up and grow old together, that joyfully joins hands to worship and work ... side-by-side. And every member of the church family is a needed member who comes with unique gifts to give.



Shepherds & Lambs

The Sunday School Newsletter

December 2020

It is with great regret that I have to announce that we are cancelling our children's Christmas service.

With the ups and downs of Covid-19, it seems like the safe thing to do this year. Besides managing the safety of the children during the program, we are also thinking about families and friends who could be put in an unsafe situation during the service.



We will try to continue part of our Christmas celebration that the children enjoy and learn from. On December 19, we will personally deliver the children's treat bags to their homes. We will call prior to our visit. Students will hear the Christmas lesson on Dec. 20 in Sunday School.



Again this year, the students will receive a Christmas ornament from Sunday School. This is just a reminder that these ornaments are meant to be saved for the students. When they grow up and have their own families and tree, they can take them with them as a memory of Sunday School times. Thanks for saving these memories for them!

Thank you to all who helped pack a shoe box for Samaritan's Purse!

We were able to finish 43 boxes for the children ages 2-14. We also collected \$180 for shipping charges. The boxes will be sent to children around the world for Christmas. Recently I heard a testimony from a young woman who grew up in an orphanage. She related that she had received a shoe box as a young girl. Her most prized gifts in her box were a toothbrush and a stuffed animal. She related that she had to share a toothbrush and was overwhelmed with her OWN toothbrush. She also said that at the orphanage, there was a small number of adults to pay attention to the youngsters. She said that when she needed comfort and didn't get it from anyone, she clung to her stuffed animal. These little items that we take for granted, meant much to this little girl. You showed the love of God to little ones like this child. Thank you!!



The children have been studying in the Old Testament and have had some exciting stories of Joseph and Moses. I hope you are asking your children each week to tell you the lesson they learned. The lesson recap in the bulletin is a great way to see what lessons we are working on. Check it out!!

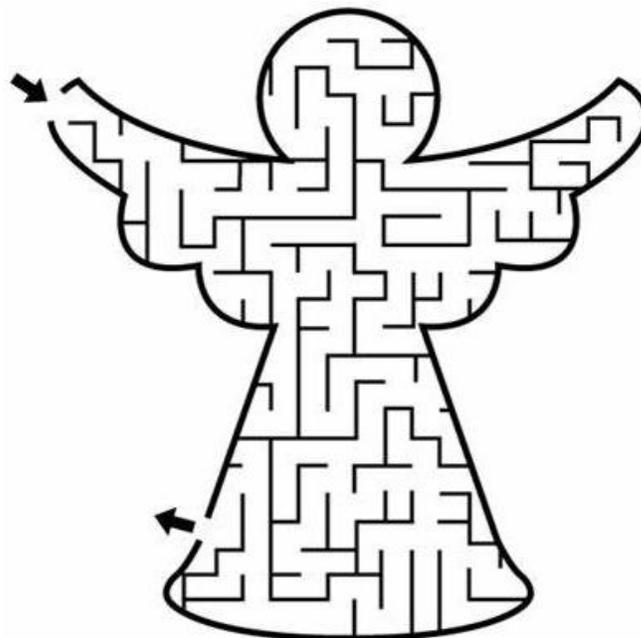


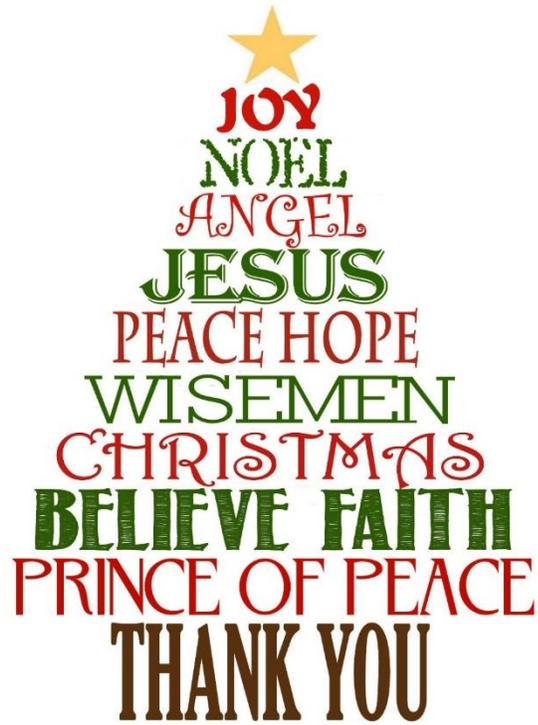
We wish a very Merry Christmas to your family!!

*- Lynette Johnston-Martin,
Superintendent*



Christmas Tree Angel Maze





MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Sunday, **Jan. 3** – Installation of new officers of the congregation
Monday, **Jan. 4** – Deadline for submitting news for the February *Gazette*
Tuesday, **Jan. 5** – First Council Meeting of the New Year
Thursday, **Jan. 14** – Red Cross Blood Drive
Saturday, **Jan. 16** – Planning Conference

