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## Gethsemane Lutheran Church

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***Our Shared Mission: We are saved by grace through faith to share the good news of the Gospel with all people and live God's love by our words and actions.***

# Monthly Newsletter – December 2021



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## December 2021 Worship Schedule

Dear Church, welcome back **INDOORS!** Worship services will be held **INDOORS** beginning in **December of 2021**. Here's the plan for December (COVID-permitting):

**Sundays**, December 5, 12, 19

**9a** Worship inside Gethsemane Sanctuary

*(This is our 'regular' worship time through September of 2022.)*

**Friday**, December 24<sup>th</sup>

### Christmas Eve Worship Services

**4p** inside Gethsemane Sanctuary

**6p** inside St. Stephen's Sanctuary

**Sunday**, December 26<sup>th</sup>

**ONLINE** Worship Only: *With Christmas Eve and Sunday worship being back-to-back, the Joint Council agreed that there would be **no, in-person worship service** this day. An **online** worship service will be made available on our Facebook pages: [bit.ly/GethMI](https://bit.ly/GethMI) or [bit.ly/StephMI](https://bit.ly/StephMI).*





## STEWARDSHIP + FORTUNE LAKE UPDATES



Your Church Council has been preparing the **Budget for 2022**. During this unique time of worship, we will depend even more on the generosity of our worshipping community.

**PLEASE** continue to give of your hearts so our congregation will emerge from this pandemic in a healthy space, ready to continue the ministries of Christ. **God's Work, Our Hands!**



***We're getting all of the "pieces" in place for next summer's camping season, and we need your help "putting it all together."***

You've guessed it... We're hosting **LEGO® Camp in 2022!** This camp will be a 5-night program July 17-22, 2022 for grades 3-8 and will include loads of building challenges, exciting projects, and old-fashioned fun. In order to do so, **we need A LOT of LEGO® bricks!**



Do you have a toy box or closet full of LEGO® bricks that you don't need? Are you an avid thrifter who likes to find great deals? **We need your help!** Watch for LEGO® bricks, and get them to Fortune Lake. **Thanks in advance!**



**PRAYERS  
FOR OUR MILITARY**  
And Their Families

4 Jim Parrish  
8 Lynda Caylor,  
Jacob Hoof,  
Lilliana Revall  
28 Darrell Havelka

Jordan Baril, Jay Chapple,  
Trish Dams, Thomas Dutkavich,  
Brent Jurmu, Jared Jurmu



Check out the beautiful plants near the Highway 41 entrance! Cool spirals!

*Thank you for holding the friends and families of our Congregants in your daily prayers. **Corrections? Additions?** Please contact the Church Office. Thanks!*



***We continue to hold in prayer:***

- |                    |                    |                        |                   |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Art Kaliszewski    | Avery Hayward      | Caitlin Christophersen | Dan Etelamaki     |
| David Kohrt        | Dean Kauthen       | Deanna Thill           | Delores Erickson  |
| Delores Gill       | Denise Marineau    | Dennis Paul            | Dorothy Peretto   |
| Emily Christenson  | Evelyn Gewerth     | Gene Wangerin          | James Dutkavich   |
| Jim Gill           | Jim Wenger         | Joan Hofer             | Karen Raether     |
| Keith Thoun        | Kenny Kline        | Kevin Havelka          | Lewis Nicholson   |
| Logan Parrett      | Lois Azelton       | Lorrie Stone           | Luann Q. Kiefer   |
| Macy Berszenyi     | Michelle Beauchard | Mike Lubore            | Mike McCarthy     |
| Mike Pfeiffer      | Miles Sorenson     | Pat Heiden             | Rob Boe           |
| Robert Berszenyi   | Sandy Baumler      | Sarah Hess             | Sheila Konkel     |
| Stephanie Wallgren | Sue Skowronski     | Tammy Parrett          | Terry Stage Roddy |
| Tom Kuntze         | Tom Wenger         | Tracy Klatt            | Wally Majkrzak    |
| Wayne Sundstrom    | Wendy Gravelle     | Wendy Hanson           | Wendy Majkrzak    |

*The hope and comfort of the Resurrection is with the families of  
**+Richard Lesperance+ and +Bill Harris+***

# REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beans

We are continuing our Advent tradition of helping collect food for our local Mid-County Food Pantry!

Your donations will help fill the shelves of the Food Pantry on Samuel Street, directly next to the Post Office in Stephenson. *(The old Northlands building).*

*Donations can be brought to the Food Pantry after December 25<sup>th</sup>, or by coordinating with the Food Pantry using this e-mail: [midcntyfoodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:midcntyfoodpantry@gmail.com)*



## Daily Bible Readings - Year C

**Year C** focuses on the Gospel of **Luke**. The semi-continuous Old Testament readings are of prophetic proclamation chosen in chronological order and highlighting Jeremiah. The second, New Testament, readings are chosen mainly from Colossians 1 and 2 Timothy and 2 Thessalonians.

Wed — Dec. 1	Isaiah 1:24-31	Luke 11:29-32	Psalms 90
Thu — Dec. 2	Malachi 3:5-12	Philippians 1:12-18a	Luke 1:68-79
Fri — Dec. 3	Malachi 3:13-18	Philippians 1:18b-26	Luke 1:68-79
Sat — Dec. 4	Malachi 4:1-6	Luke 9:1-6	Luke 1:68-79

### Sun. Dec. 5 — Second Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3:1-4	Luke 1:68-79 (78)	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
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**Prayer of the Day:** Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Mon — Dec. 6	Isaiah 40:1-11	Romans 8:22-25	Psalms 126
Tue — Dec. 7	Isaiah 19:18-25	2 Peter 1:2-15	Psalms 126
Wed — Dec. 8	Isaiah 35:3-7	Luke 7:18-30	Psalms 126
Thu — Dec. 9	Amos 6:1-8	2 Corinthians 8:1-15	Isaiah 12:2-6
Fri — Dec. 10	Amos 8:4-12	2 Corinthians 9:1-15	Isaiah 12:2-6
Sat — Dec. 11	Amos 9:8-15	Luke 1:57-66	Isaiah 12:2-6

### Sun. Dec. 12 — Third Sunday of Advent

Zeph 3:14-20	Isaiah 12:2-6 (6)	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18
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**Prayer of the Day:** Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Mon — Dec. 13	Numbers 16:1-19	Hebrews 13:7-17	Isaiah 11:1-9
Tue — Dec. 14	Numbers 16:20-35	Acts 28:23-31	Isaiah 11:1-9
Wed — Dec. 15	Micah 4:8-13	Luke 7:31-35	Isaiah 11:1-9
Thu — Dec. 16	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Hebrews 10:10-18	Psalms 80:1-7
Fri — Dec. 17	Isaiah 42:10-18	Hebrews 10:32-39	Psalms 80:1-7
Sat — Dec. 18	Isaiah 66:7-11	Luke 13:31-35	Psalms 80:1-7

## Daily Bible Readings ... continued

### Sun. Dec. 19 — Fourth Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a      Luke 1:46b-55 (52)      Hebrews 10:5-10      Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

**Prayer of the Day:** *Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.*

Mon — Dec. 20	Genesis 25:19-28	Colossians 1:15-20	Psalms 113
Tue — Dec. 21	Genesis 30:1-24	Romans 8:18-30	Psalms 113
Wed — Dec. 22	Micah 4:1-5	Ephesians 2:11-22	Luke 1:46b-55
Thu — Dec. 23	Micah 4:6-8 2	2 Peter 1:16-21	Luke 1:46b-55

### Fri. Dec. 24— Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7      Psalm 96 (11)      Titus 2:11-14      Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

**Prayer of the Day:** *Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the rightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.*

### Sat. Dec. 25 — Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day

Isaiah 62:6-12      Psalm 97 (11)      Titus 3:4-7      Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

**Prayer of the Day:** *All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.*

### Sun. Dec. 26 – First Sunday of Christmas

Samuel 2:18-20, 26      Psalm 148 (13)      Colossians 3:12-17      Luke 2:41-52

**Prayer of the Day:** *Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.*

Mon - Dec. 27	Proverbs 8:32-36	John 21:19b-24	Psalms 148
Tue - Dec 28	Isaiah 54:1-13	Revelation 21:1-7	Psalms 148
Wed - Dec 29	1 Chronicles 28:1-10	1 Corinthians 3:10-17	Psalms 147:12-20
Thu - Dec 30	2 Chronicles 1:7-13	Mark 13:32-37	Psalms 147:12-20
Fri - Dec 31	1 Kings 3:5-14	John 8:12-19	Psalms 147:12-20

## The Church Council of Gethsemane Lutheran Church

### Minutes from Council Meeting on Thursday, November 18, 2021

**PRESENT:** Judi Freis, Sandy Gill, Pr. Brenda Greenwald, Wendy Hanson, Carol Klein, Mary Jo Mahaffy, Janet Mullard, Ruth Thoune

**ABSENT:** Wendy Christophersen, Deb Kruhmin



#### COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 18, 2021

\*\* Pastor Brenda noted that the media upgrade in the sanctuary has been completed and is working!!

\*\* It has been determined that worship services will be held inside beginning in December at the regular service times. Masks will be optional, communion will continue to be self-serve, and the offering will be collected upon entering.

\*\* It was decided to seek bids for the replacement of the heating/cooling systems in the church building considering we have been advised by the repairman that it is time to begin saving \$\$'s to replace the units as it is getting harder to find replacement parts. The bids will give us an idea of how much this would cost so that we can plan accordingly.

\*\* Pastor B presented the Council with a "Safe Church" policy she has put together outlining the supervision guidelines for young children and teens while in the church buildings or during church sponsored events including travel to and from.

\*\* Ruth presented a preliminary budget proposal for 2022 - discussion followed with some changes being made. The final proposal will be acted on at the December Council meeting to be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

*Respectfully submitted by Carol Klein, Council Secretary*



*A note from Ruth.....We have a new email for the Gethsemane treasurer so that whoever is in that position can get all the information from one location. If you have any bills to forward to the treasurer or any requests for payment, please send them to [GethTreasure@gmail.com](mailto:GethTreasure@gmail.com).*



## UPDATE FROM BISHOP FINEGAN



***Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?  
But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." ~Romans 8:24-25***

**Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,** You have no doubt noticed the increasing darkness. The kids go to school in the dark, and soon, the school day will end as it began, in darkness. The hours of light are getting shorter and shorter, and people are grateful for lingering twilight. How ironic that the most hopeful season of the church year begins as the darkness increases. In the weeks to come, we light candles on the Advent wreath, and it's not a moment too soon. These lights of hope stand against the growing darkness. And every week, as we add the flame of another candle, the light will increase and shine brighter even as the darkness comes sooner and lasts longer. In this season of Hope, and as this year of Hope 2021 comes to its end, I share with you some things that I do see that give me hope:

1. **Our congregations continue to find new, creative ways to do ministry.** As I read through your newsletters, whether online or hard copy, I am impressed and encouraged by your continued efforts. Sure, some things have paused. Yes, some priorities have been re-evaluated and energies placed in new directions. Yet, this is all good as we continue to be church together and church for the sake of the world. I am grateful to the Spirit that is at work among and through us as the work of Christ continues.
2. **We have wonderful pastoral leaders!** In the past few years, we have welcomed many new pastors and they bring new energy, perspective, and ideas. And our seasoned pastors and Licensed Lay Ministers have provided stability and the blessing of trusted relationships that keep congregational partnerships in motion and help reduce anxiety. And congregations in pastoral transition have been patient and involved, waiting for God's timing with hope.
3. **We have renewed joy in being together again...safely.** As pandemic restrictions have eased, Pastor Jim and I are once again happy to gather with you for worship. I do not mind wearing a mask if it means we can sing together and gather in the same space. I love hearing the voices of others raised in song and prayer. It has felt like salve on a wound to share the peace, sing alto to someone's soprano, and hear combined voices pray the Lord's prayer together in the rhythm and cadence of voices in unison. While I truly believe that some sense of community can be achieved and appreciated through Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook live, the joy and value of the community gathered in person is also true and real.
4. **Our synod is newly connected** through Lifelong Faith Formation, Pastoral Leader Check-Ins, and various Zoom meetings. While I have missed being able to add lunch and snacks to in-person Synod meetings, in many ways we are more connected as a synod than we have ever been. Teachers and students from the Copper Country to Marinette, from Ironwood to Sault Ste. Marie gather in virtual classrooms and discussion groups. We are church together in a whole new way, gathering to discuss and wrestle with conversations about issues of race, scriptural interpretation, and to consider and plan various ministry efforts.
5. **God is at work!** In all our efforts, in all our re-evaluations, in all the changes and future uncertainty, the Spirit of the living Christ is gathering, inspiring, supporting, and guiding. We are discovering again what it means to be church, what the purpose of the Body of Christ is in this world, and who we are in mission together. I see a new hunger for deeper spirituality and for meaningful connectedness to God and each other. I see ministry efforts taking on a life of their own. I see details and pieces falling together. I see a willingness to experiment, to try new things, to jump even when the landing is unclear.



There is much to be hopeful for because of what we can see even as we continue to hope for that which is still becoming. As Advent candles are lit, as the glow from the manger bed grows brighter, as we strain to hear the songs of angels, remember that you are not alone. In hopeful anticipation of Christmas and a blessed New Year, I believe it is not too soon to share the following verse from "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" that speaks anew to our present circumstances: And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow: look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing; Oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!

**Yours in Christ, Bishop Katherine Finegan**



**DECEMBER 5, 2021**  
**HYMN OF THE WEEK**  
*Come, Thou*  
*Long-Expected Jesus*  
**WEEKLY MILESTONES**

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

- Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:
- When you are expecting company in your home, how do you prepare for their visit?
  - How does preparing for the coming of Christ reflect your hope for the future?

**DEVOTIONS**

*Read:* Luke 3:1-6.

Baptism by John the Baptist was not the same as that of Jesus. Jesus' baptism brings the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16). It is our Christian baptism that gives birth to a life of faith and salvation. John's baptism does reveal something about our life in Christ through baptism: daily renewal through repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Christian baptism begins a way of life of daily renewal in grace, free to confess shortcomings and free to receive forgiveness, new life, and new opportunities to love one's neighbor. John prepares the way of Jesus into the world, and so do we with our daily return to our baptism. Our faith, born by the Spirit, gives hope not only to us, but to the whole world because in our relationships with others, we speak of repentance, forgiveness, and salvation for all.

*Discuss:* How do you share this faith with others?

*Pray:* **Come, Lord Jesus, renew us in faith each day that we may prepare for your coming into our lives so that all may live in hope through the power of forgiveness. Amen.**

**SERVICE**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme this week, how can you share the hope of Jesus' coming through your actions or words?

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

This is the Second Sunday of Advent. Light two blue/purple candles on the Advent wreath.  
*Say:* **We light the first candle, the Prophet's candle, and the second candle, the Bethlehem candle, naming where Jesus will be born. May we prepare for the coming of Christ into our lives and our world with confidence and with hope for all the world.**

*Pray:* **Dear God, give us faith to trust your word, love to care for others, and hope in your promise to return and make all things new through Christ our Lord. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

**DECEMBER 12, 2021**  
**HYMN OF THE WEEK**  
*Joy to the World*  
**WEEKLY MILESTONES**

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

- Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:
- Tell or think about a time you experienced great joy.
  - How does the message of John the Baptist bring joy as well as repentance?

**DEVOTIONS**

*Read:* Luke 3:7-18.

John the Baptist calls the people, "brood of vipers." He demands repentance. What does not reflect "good fruits" of repentance will be burned up in "unquenchable fire." John calls his message "good news." Really? Yes, really. The good news is that injustices that harm people's lives will not be tolerated. We can do simple steps to make a positive difference by giving food, clothing, and fair treatment to others. All of this prepares us for the coming of the Messiah who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and a cleansing fire. The good news for a life of faith is that there is real joy in God through Jesus Christ. The power of God is present in this Messiah, this Jesus. Thanks be to God for this joyous news!

*Discuss:* What steps can we take to prepare for the coming of the Messiah?

*Pray:* **Come, Lord Jesus, bring your power and your rule of justice and mercy to all the world, and lead us to bring joy and love to others. Amen.**

**SERVICE**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme this week, in what way can you bring joy to the needy?

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

This is the Third Sunday of Advent. Light two blue/purple candles and the pink candle on the Advent Wreath.

*Say:* **We light the first candle, the Prophet's candle, the second candle, the Bethlehem candle, and the pink candle, the Shepherd's candle, representing the joy the shepherds felt upon finding the Christ child. May we prepare with joy for the coming of Christ Jesus our Lord.**

*Pray:* **Dear God, give us faith to trust your word, love to care for others, hope in your promise, and joy for the coming of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**



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**taking faith home**

**DECEMBER 19, 2021**  
**HYMN OF THE WEEK**  
*He Came Down*

**taking+ faith home**

**WEEKLY MILESTONES**

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

- Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:
- How is love more of a commitment to others than an emotion that comes and goes?
  - How does Jesus' birth show God's loving commitment to us?

**DEVOTIONS**

*Read:* Luke 1:39-55.

It is quite common for Christians to wonder what the God of the Old Testament has to do with the God of the New Testament and the grace, mercy, and peace described there. For Luke 1, the answer is everything. It is the same God. The God of the Old Testament keeps promises, like the promise of new life to Elizabeth, a woman beyond the child-bearing years, and Mary, a young maiden without a husband. This is the God who cares for the lowly and brings down the powerful, cares for the hungry, and sends the rich away empty. This new world order of lifting up the lowly is never fully lived out in Luke for all to see, but God's mercy definitely changes lives and households, like those of Elizabeth and Mary. God's steadfast love and mercy is here to stay, and God's people rejoice.

*Discuss:* Where do you see God's love today?

*Pray:* **Loving God, just as you gave Elizabeth and Mary reason to rejoice, fill us with love and joy in your presence through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**SERVICE**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme this week, how can you care for the lowly and feed the hungry?

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

For this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we light four candles on the Advent Wreath.

*Say:* **We light the first candle, the Prophet's candle, the second candle, the Bethlehem candle, the third candle, the Shepherd's candle, and light the fourth candle, the Angel's candle. The fourth candle announces Jesus' mission on earth to love and unite all people, bringing them closer to God. May we prepare for the coming of Christ into our lives and our world with hope, peace, joy, and love.**

*Pray:* **Dear God, give us faith to trust your word, peace to care for others, hope in your promise, joy for the coming of Jesus, and love to share through Christ our Lord. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

**DECEMBER 26, 2021**  
**HYMN OF THE WEEK**  
*Jesus, What a Wonderful Child*

**taking+ faith home**

**WEEKLY MILESTONES**

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

- Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:
- Think or talk about a time you received a compliment for something you did well.
  - Think or talk about a time when you felt the divine presence of God in your life.

**DEVOTIONS**

*Read:* Luke 2:41-52.

Growth is a part of life. That growth can be physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. What was it like for Jesus to grow up both human and divine? Amazingly, in the four New Testament Gospels, only this childhood story from Jesus' life exists. It says quite a bit: Jesus lived in a community of care with parents and other adults; he grew up as a Jew, going with his family to Jerusalem for the Passover; he experienced tensions with his parents as he explored his faith with elders in the temple; Jesus was obedient to his parents; his mother observed Jesus' development with awe; and, Jesus grew and gained wisdom and the approval of God and humans alike. God's unfathomable entry into our world brings divine acceptance of us through a baby, then a child, and finally an adult who brings God's saving work for all.

*Discuss:* What questions do you have about what it was like for Jesus to be fully human yet fully divine?

*Pray:* **Awesome God, for what we understand and what we cannot understand about all that you have done for us in love, we give you thanks through Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.**

**SERVICE**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme this week, in what ways can you reflect the love of Jesus to others?

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

Christmas is a season of twelve days. St. Francis of Assisi is credited with making the first nativity scene on Christmas Eve in the year 1223. He is also known for his love of animals and birds and felt they should be remembered during Christmas because they were present at the birth of Jesus. Consider decorating a tree or bush outside with popcorn or pinecones rolled in peanut butter and bird seed. Enjoy watching God's creatures around you.

*Pray:* **Dear Lord, we praise you for all creation. We praise you for mountains and hills, for fruit trees and cedars, for wild animals and cattle, for creeping things, and flying birds. Amen. (Psalm 148)**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)



**Christ has turned all of our sunsets into dawns.**  
St. Clement of Alexandria



We give thanks for such natural beauty around Gethsemane **AND** for all who volunteered during **November** at the Food Pantry! A special thanks to **Carol Lindner** for coordinating our helpful hands!

**DECEMBER 24-25, 2021**

**HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

taking+  
faith  
home



**CHRISTMAS MILESTONES**  
Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.



**CARING CONVERSATIONS**  
Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What concerns do you have for the world today?
- How does God bring hope for the whole world?



**DEVOTIONS**

Read: Luke 2:1-20.

Read these verses slowly. Treasure the message that Mary treasured. As the hymn *O Little Town of Bethlehem* says, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." From a small town, from peasants tending sheep at night, and for a young couple gazing at their newborn son, comes a message that conquers powerful empires. When political, economic, and military realms wreak havoc on defenseless people, whether ancient or modern, God remembers promises made and enters into human history. The Christmas gospel confidently tells the story of God's determination, God's loyalty, and the power of God's reign even while suffering lingers in our daily lives. The angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." This is the story of God's glory and power that will not be stopped.

Discuss: Who is someone to whom you would like to tell the story about the birth of Jesus?

Pray: **God of love and mercy, help us to remember the story of Jesus' birth and your entry into our lives that gives us eternal hope and peace. Amen.**

**SERVICE**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Christmas Bible Readings and theme, what act of kindness can you do for someone in need?

**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

For Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, light the four candles on the Advent Wreath plus the white candle in the center.

Say: **We light the Prophet's, Bethlehem, Shepherd's, and Angel's candles on the Advent wreath symbolizing God's unending love. We now light the white candle, the Christ candle, that represents the birth of Jesus and hope for all the world.**

Pray: **Dear God, we thank you for entering our world. May we show your hope, peace, joy and love in our daily lives, through Christ Jesus. Amen.**



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Northern Great  
Lakes Synod  
[www.nglsynod.org](http://www.nglsynod.org)

# 2021 MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

**CHRISTMAS EVE and WORSHIP DETAILS INSIDE!**



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

# December

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**Gethsemane Lutheran Church**