



*The 2017
Chaim Ministries
Feast of the Messiah Devotional*



*"The Messiah became a man to enable men to become the sons of G_d."
C. S. Lewis*





CHAIM MINISTRIES

The Jewish salutation L'CHAIM means "To Life!" CHAIM means LIFE in Hebrew, and stands for "CHristians Announcing Israel's Messiah". (Pronounce it with a guttural "h". It rhymes with "ti-ime"). We subscribe solely to the Westminster Standards. CHAIM is Evangelical, Reformed, and Covenantal.

We promote the gospel among the Jewish people through direct evangelism, motivating and equipping churches, and discipling Jewish believers. It is our desire to help rebuild the Reformed witness to the Jewish people in the USA.

Our director, Rev. Fred Klett was the first ordained PCA (Presbyterian Church in America) evangelist specifically called to the Jewish people. Rev. Richard Anderson, from a Conservative Jewish background, is the only ordained evangelist to the Jewish people in the Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church. Our board members are all PCA teaching or ruling elders. We also include on staff as a special Russian outreach project Rev. Vitaly Kalinovsky who works with Rev. Klett in planting Rock of Israel PCA among Russian immigrants. Rev. Michael Saunders, PCA ordained, has just joined our staff as our Florida area representative.



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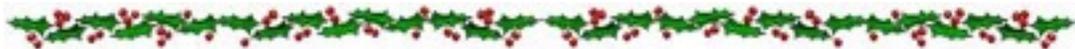




Most of our people do not realize that Yeshua was born a Jew, the first believers of Yeshua were all Jews and the first messianic communities were all Jewish...they were Israelis just like me! As Messianic Jews we observe the Jewish holidays and support the state of Israel. We are Jews in every way and yet believe that the Messiah has come and His name is Yeshua.- Eitan Bar, Media & Evangelism Director, ONE FOR ISRAEL.

The custom of Nittel Nacht, is a name given to Christmas Eve by medieval Talmudists in German-speaking lands, and for centuries in Europe a time when Jews uncharacteristically refrained from Torah-learning. The study-halls were closed, and families stayed at home, passing the time in idle diversions - games of chance, for example. (Some suggest that Nittel may be the source of Chanukah's dreidel.) - Jonah C. Steinberg, Jewish Chaplain at Harvard University (Moadim L'simcha quotes from Sefer Nitzachon that "nittel" is based on the Latin word for birthday, an obvious reference to Jesus' birth.)

We believe that if you were born a Jew, you are a Jew, period!.. and believing in Yeshua not only does not change this but rather, as you will see and hear, fulfills all we ever hoped for as Jewish men and women! We affirm the statement, "If you are born a Jew, you will die a Jew". - Eitan Bar, Media & Evangelism Director, ONE FOR ISRAEL.





2017 FEAST OF THE MESSIAH DEVOTIONAL

What is the “**Feast of the Messiah Season?**” This is the four Sundays before the Feast of the Messiah (December 25). It is a time to prepare our hearts for the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Messiah Yeshua. The miraculous birth of the Lord Yeshua and all the events surrounding His birth was the second most spectacular event in human history- the first being the resurrection of Yeshua from the grave. Because His birth is so significant an event to all of us who know Him as our Messiah, and because the world has stolen this festal celebration and made it a thing of greed and commercialism - even to the banning of Biblical scenes and other religious symbols in public places - true believers want to worship the Lord Yeshua in “spirit and in truth”. The Feast of the Messiah Season allows us to plan and celebrate activities centered around Yeshua and celebrations in our hearts, our families, our homes, our churches and our fellowship communities.

This seasonal devotional offers us an opportunity to keep the Feast of the Messiah Season **Yeshua-centered** and helps us to be able to worship our Messiah in a unified way. That is, as a family and as believers in Yeshua we will be able to celebrate His birth in unity of spirit, heart, and Scriptural teaching. Each day of the Season, we will all be able to have the same devotion, from the Word of Adonai, and daily unite our hearts in worship.

We encourage you to use this devotional each day in your family or private worship. By doing so you will receive a number of blessings, such as: a meditation from G_d’s word, a special prayer from a brother or sister in Yeshua for you, a personal greeting from a member of our spiritual family, a glimpse into the festal customs, experiences and traditions of many families, and some new and delicious holiday recipes. What an enjoyable and blessed way to worship Yeshua at the celebration of His birth!

We have included in the front of this devotional, the **Nativity Account** as recorded for us in the Gospel of Luke 2:1-20 and the Gospel of Matthew 1:18-2:23. Please take some time during this Season to read this and learn why we have the celebration called Christmas at all. You will also find a page about this **Festal Season’s Wreath**. This page explains what the Wreath is, what it means, how to use it and the supplies to make one. There are many variations to the wreath and this page suggests but one.

May G_d richly bless each one of us as we use this devotional to draw near to our Lord and Messiah Yeshua and to one another! May you have a very blessed festal season!





THE NATIVITY ACCOUNT
LUKE 2:1-20 & MATTHEW 1:18-2:23

Around this time, Emperor Augustus issued an order for a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This registration, the first of its kind, took place when Quirinius was governing in Syria. Everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. So Yosef, because he was a descendant of David, went up from the town of Natzeret in the Galil to the town of David, called Beit-Lechem, in Y'hudah, to be registered, with Miryam, to whom he was engaged, and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth; and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and laid him down in a feeding trough, because there was no space for them in the living-quarters.

In the countryside nearby were some shepherds spending the night in the fields, guarding their flocks, when an angel of ADONAI appeared to them, and the Sh'khinah of ADONAI shone around them. They were terrified; but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am here announcing to you Good News that will bring great joy to all the people. This very day, in the town of David, there was born for you a Deliverer who is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know: you will find a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a feeding trough." Suddenly, along with the angel was a vast army from heaven praising G_d: "In the highest heaven, glory to G_d! And on earth, peace among people of good will!"

No sooner had the angels left them and gone back into heaven than the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go over to Beit-Lechem and see this thing that has happened, that ADONAI has told us about." Hurrying off, they came and found Miryam and Yosef, and the baby lying in the feeding trough. Upon seeing this, they made known what they had been told about this child; and all who heard were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. Miryam treasured all these things and kept mulling them over in her heart. Meanwhile, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising G_d for everything they had heard and seen; it had been just as they had been told.

Matthew ~ Here is how the birth of Yeshua the Messiah took place. When his mother Miryam was engaged to Yosef, before they were married, she was found to be pregnant from the Ruach HaKodesh. Her husband-to-be, Yosef, was a man who did what was right; so he made





plans to break the engagement quietly, rather than put her to public shame. But while he was thinking about this, an angel of ADONAI appeared to him in a dream and said, "Yosef, son of David, do not be afraid to take Miryam home with you as your wife; for what has been conceived in her is from the Ruach HaKodesh. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua, [which means `ADONAI saves,'] because he will save his people from their sins." All this happened in order to fulfill what ADONAI had said through the prophet, "The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him `Immanu El."a (The name means, "G_d is with us.") When Yosef awoke he did what the angel of ADONAI had told him to do -- he took Miryam home to be his wife, but he did not have sexual relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Yeshua.

After Yeshua was born in Beit-Lechem in the land of Y'hudah during the time when Herod was king, Magi from the east came to Yerushalayim and asked, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard of this he became very agitated, and so did everyone else in Yerushalayim. He called together all the head cohanim and Torah-teachers of the people and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?" "In BeitLechem of Y'hudah," they replied, "because the prophet wrote, `And you, Beit-Lechem in the land of Y'hudah, are by no means the least among the rulers of Y'hudah; for from you will come a Ruler who will shepherd my people Isra'el.'" Herod summoned the Magi to meet with him privately and asked them exactly when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Beit-Lechem with these instructions: "Search carefully for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had listened to the king, they went away; and the star which they had seen in the east went in front of them until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Upon entering the house, they saw the child with his mother Miryam; and they prostrated themselves and worshipped him. Then they opened their bags and presented him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they took another route back to their own country.

After they had gone, an angel of ADONAI appeared to Yosef in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave. For





Herod is going to look for the child in order to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod died. This happened in order to fulfill what ADONAI had said through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Meanwhile, when Herod realized that the Magi had tricked him, he was furious and gave orders to kill all the boys in and around Beit-Lechem who were two years old or less, calculating from the time the Magi had told him. In this way were fulfilled the words spoken through the prophet Yirmeyahu, "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and lamenting loudly. It was Rachel sobbing for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no longer alive."

After Herod's death, an angel of ADONAI appeared in a dream to Yosef in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to Eretz-Yisra'el, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead." So he got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to Eretz-Yisra'el. However, when he heard that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Y'hudah, he was afraid to go there. Warned in a dream, he withdrew to the Galil and settled in a town called Natzeret, so that what had been spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he will be called a Natzrati.





FESTAL SEASON WREATH

The Evangelist Yochanan frequently talked about Yeshua as the Light of the World. This name was not new to him. Isaiah, many years before, looking ahead to our world, said, *"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."*

The Feast of the Messiah is all about this Light of the World. It reminds us that there is still much darkness. It is a darkness made up of sin, ignorance, hate, and pride. To remind themselves of the growing power of Yeshua, the Light, the followers of the Messiah have long made and used a Festive Seasonal Wreath.

The wreath is covered with evergreen. Just as this particular species of tree is always green and alive, it is Yeshua who is also always alive. Green is the color of life and growth. Around our wreath we will pray to G_d to bring us closer to Him and help us stay alive and grow in faith and hope.

The wreath is also in the form of a circle. A circle has no beginning and no end. What better way to picture eternity to our minds than this? Our life with G_d is everlasting.

The candles used are significant both in their color and in their light. Three of the four candles on the edge of the wreath are violet. Violet is a royal, kingly color, but it is also a color which reminds us that we should ask G_d to forgive us when we do wrong. Just as we light candles and open each weekly Shabbat, Passover and the rest with candles and prayers so we open this festal season with candles and prayers. As we prepare for the coming of Yeshua, we use violet candles to remind us to look into our own lives and confess our sins and rent of them as we prepare to worship Him on His birthday. The three candles stand for the three parts of the TaNaKh - the Law, the Prophets and the Writings.

The fourth candle is pink. It is pink for Miriam, Yeshua's mother, but the candle is to remind us of all the people who were chosen by G_d to have some part in the story of Yeshua's birth; the shepherds, wise men, Miriam, Yosef, Roman soldiers and everyone else!

The first candle is lit before our family devotions on the First Sunday of the season. During this first week, only the one candle is lit when we worship. On each succeeding Sunday, as we draw nearer to Yeshua's birthday, another candle is lit until finally all are aflame.

The light these candles put forth may be small, but these flames, growing brighter each week, stress the growing power of Messiah Yeshua over darkness. On Nittel Nacht, the candle within the circle is lit. This is the Messiah Child candle, telling us that He who is the light of the world has been born. Whoever walks in Yeshua will never walk in darkness!

When we have made our wreath, let us join hands and ask G_d for strength as we use this worship aid, and pray that we may use it to glorify Him.

SUPPLIES FOR MAKING YOUR FESTAL WREATH

- 1 plastic-foam ring about 12" in diameter
- 3 violet and 1 pink candles (uniform in size)
- 1 white candle (larger than others)
- greenery (pine, holly, berries)
- or plastic garlands.





THE CHANUKAH MENORAH

The meaning of Chanukah is rooted in Jewish themes and stories going back over two thousand years ago. The menorah, or Hanukiya (the Hebrew word for candelabra) has become one of the symbols of Judaism, visualized by the nine slotted Hanukkah Menorah.

Chanukah itself goes by many names, called by some the Festival of Lights, and others the Feast of Dedication. It is an eight-day celebration which begins at sundown on the 25th day of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar (this always falls sometime in December). Chanukah is a commemoration of the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem in 167 BC. The story tells of how the Maccabees rejected the occupier Antiochus Epiphanes and retook the temple against great odds. When Judah Maccabee rededicated the temple, they did not have enough oil, but for one day. That little bit of oil though lasted for eight whole days until more oil could be prepared.

The festival of lights today is an eight day celebration of that eight day miracle and the power of will it symbolizes for the Jewish people. The most commonly known and widely practiced Chanukah ritual is to light the Menorah, a candelabrum of nine candles, one for each day of the holiday and a shammas “servant” candle to light the others.

Menorahs do not need to be made of the typical nine armed metal that most often appears in store windows in December. The act is merely a chance to provide a representation of those eight days by lighting eight lights. In older times, lanterns would be lit so as those outside the house could see the lights. The purpose of the celebration is to publicize and share with everyone outside of your home the story of Chanukah.

The candles of the Hanukkah Menorah are placed in the menorah from right to left. The candles are lit from left to right. None of the eight candles can be used for anything beyond publicizing the Chanukah story. The candles must be lit and allowed to burn for one half hour after it has become dark. On the first day of Hanukah, three blessings are said with the lighting of the first candle. On each subsequent day, only the first two blessings are repeated.

The First Chanukah Blessing is recited on all eight nights just prior to lighting the candles: Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

The Second Chanukah Blessing is recited all eight nights just prior to lighting the candles: Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors, in those days, at this season.

The Third Chanukah Blessing is recited only on the first night just prior to lighting the candles: Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us in life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.





The First Sunday of Advent

John 1:1-5 – “The Son Of G_d Has Always Existed”

The First Sunday

The first Sunday of the holiday season has the theme of “*Waiting*.” The Scriptures say that “in the fullness of time” the Messiah came to earth. So also, in the fullness of time will the Messiah come to earth the second time. Both times all of G_d’s creation and all G_d’s people were and are waiting for the saving redemption and eternal life promised by the heavenly Father.

Also, this Sunday we especially think of the *Pre-existence of the Messiah Yeshua*. When we celebrate the birth of our Messiah Yeshua, we are not celebrating the beginning of His existence. Rather, we are celebrating His first coming to earth as the Messiah. He has always existed. As one Biblical father wrote, “*There never was a time when the Son was not.*”

Hymns of the Week

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel and *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

Advent Wreath - One Violet Candle:

Light one candle each night this week as you have your devotions around the Wreath.

Scripture

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with G_d, and the Word was G_d. He was with G_d in the beginning. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing made had being. In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not suppressed it.

Devotional

Children often ask, “Where did G_d come from?” or “Who created G_d?” The thought that there was before time - G_d, existing from all eternity before creation, is hard for child to grasp. Yet also, this glorious truth brings wonder and awe into the mind and heart of us all, who believe. This glorious, mind-stretching G_d is One, yet revealed as Three persons: Father, Son and Spirit. And the Son is the Word. He is the One who makes sense of all there is and all of life. This Word, is a powerful Creator of time and space. He brought this world, and all the universe into existence by His spoken word. This powerful, creating Lord Jesus, has also purposed to bring light, understanding and hope into our dark, confusing world. Not even the forces





of evil can stop Him and His good, loving, and gracious purposes to those who believe Him, love Him, trust Him and serve Him. What a wonderful, mysterious, great Savior we love and adore! *“O come, O come Emmanuel!”*

Prayer: Adapted from Luke 2: - “The Song of Mary”

We bow our hearts and exalt You, our G_d and Savior.
You have looked upon our humble need. You have blessed us and our generations.
You have lifted us up for the sake of Your holy name.
You have shown mercy to all those who reverence Your holiness.
With a strong arm You humble the proud and mighty,
But You lift up the humble, the meek, and the faithful.
In Your faithfulness You remember Your people.
Therefore, I bow before You in grateful praise.

Benediction

O Heavenly Father, who by Thy Son created the world,
May You create life in us and remove the darkness of sin from our lives
And cause the light of Thy dear Son to shine within us,
So that we might know Thy peace and joy.
Now and forevermore at Thy coming.

Favorite Holiday Memory

I’m older now, the children have grown up, married, moved out of the house but the holidays bring special memories. On Christmas mornings we did not rush to rip off the colorful wrapping paper. Rather we sat in the living room where the Christmas tree was glittering above a bounty of gifts. I opened the Bible to read the Christmas Story so that we might remember the reason for the season. Indeed Jesus is the Gift of gifts. One of the children would distribute the gifts one at a time. We waited to see the gift and looked forward to our turn. We crunched the wrapping into a ball and threw it across the room into a big plastic bag, hoping to score two points to add to the gift in our lap.

Favorite Advent Recipe: **Matzoh Balls**

Ingredients: 3 eggs; 1 cup matzoh meal; 4 tablespoons vegetable oil; 2 quarts plus 2 tablespoons chicken broth; ½ cup cold water; 1 teaspoon salt; ½ teaspoon white pepper; ½ teaspoon garlic powder





Recipe: Separate 2 eggs and put the egg whites in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Set the yolks aside because you will add them later. Whisk the egg whites until they are light and fluffy. Crack the last egg and combine with the yolks you set aside. Using a fork, beat together. Gently fold the yolks into your fluffy egg whites. Add matzoh meal, vegetable oil, 2 tablespoons of chicken broth, water, salt, white pepper, and garlic powder, again folding it carefully into your mixture. Place bowl in refrigerator for 1 hour, until the mixture is chilled and firm to the touch. Place 2 quarts chicken broth in a large pot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Remove matzoh mixture from the refrigerator. Using your hands, scoop out a small bit of mixture and gently roll it in your hands to form a ball, about 1 inch (2.5 cm) in diameter. (Rinse your hands with cold water if the dough is sticking to your fingers.) Using a slotted spoon, place matzoh balls into the chicken stock 1 at a time. Reduce heat so mixture is at a low simmer. Cover pot and allow matzoh balls to cook gently for about 45 minutes until they are cooked enough. Serve your matzoh balls in the broth they were cooked in, or as a substitute for the noodles in chicken noodle soup.

A Favorite Advent Hymn

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of G_d appear.*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.





First Monday of Advent

Genesis 3:15 – “The First Promise of Salvation Through A Messiah”

Scripture: *“I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.”*

Devotional: From the Garden of Eden, the ultimate victory over evil, sin and death was promised through G_d’s Son, Jesus. Satan, in the form of a serpent, thought he had defeated G_d’s plan by trickery and deceit, and even though our battle with sin continues today, our victory over sin and death is secure through Jesus, the one who “will crush the head” of Satan.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your perfect plan and your promise of eternal life through your Son, Jesus Christ. May the hearts of many accept your free gift of salvation through the grace of the Gospel this Christmas season. We ask that you be gracious to use us so that our neighbors, friends and relatives would see your Son.

Christmas Blessing: Blessings to you and your family as you rejoice with thankfulness for the birth of Jesus and the amazing gift He has given to us.

Favorite Christmas Memory: Gathering together on Christmas Eve at the parents house for a Christmas Eve buffet, the reading of the Christmas story and singing Christmas carols. Then going to the Christmas Eve Service at church.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Hummus with Olive Oil and Pine Nuts

Ingredients: ¼ lb. chickpeas, soaked for a few hours; ½ cup fresh lemon juice; 3 Tbsp. tahini; 2 garlic cloves, crushed; ½ tsp. salt; 1 Tbsp. olive oil; 1 tsp. paprika; ½ tsp. ground cumin; a few sprigs of parsley, finely chopped; 1 cup pine nuts, sauteed; ½ cup plain yogurt

Recipe: Drain the chickpeas and simmer in fresh water for about 1 hour or until tender. Save the cooking water. Process the chickpeas in a blender (or food processor) with the lemon juice, tahini, garlic, salt, and a small bit of the cooking liquid to obtain a soft, creamy paste. Transfer to a large bowl. Mix in the olive oil, paprika, cumin, a little chopped parsley, pine nuts, and the yogurt. Cover and chill for at least ½ hour and serve cold on hot bread. Makes a wonderful appetizer! Yield: 6–8 servings





First Tuesday of Advent

Psalm 102:25-27 – “The Messiah Is Anointed and Eternal”

Scripture: *In the beginning, you laid the foundations of the earth; heaven is the work of your hands. They will vanish, but you will remain; like clothing, they will all grow old; yes, you will change them like clothing, and they will pass away. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.*

Devotional: This passage from Psalm 102 is quoted in the first chapter of Hebrews. It has long stood as proof of the Deity and Kingship of Jesus. Hebrews 1, speaking of Jesus says, “*Your throne, O G_d, will last forever and ever...You are anointed with the oil of joy...all things will perish, but You remain the same, and Your years will never end.*” Anointing stands as the ceremonial setting apart of the king. Already, in the Old Testament, G_d was unfolding His eternal purpose to send Jesus the King, at a specific time in history, to be our Redeemer. He was, and is, and is to come: our eternal King!

Prayer: O Lord, our times are in Your hands, and we rest secure. You are the King above all kings. Help us, O G_d, to be deeply thankful to You, “who were rich beyond all splendor” came to us in our need. Come by Your Spirit, again and again. Amen.

Christmas Greeting: Jesus is the Reason for the Season! It is the perfect time for us to take advantage of every opportunity to share this message of hope with everyone we meet. The Truth will set them free!

Favorite Christmas Custom: On Christmas Day we read the Christmas story and then have a birthday cake for Jesus.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Chanukah Doughnuts

Ingredients: Vegetable Oil; 1 Package Refrigerator Biscuits; 1¼ C. Good-Quality Raspberry Jam

Recipe: In large heavy-bottomed pot, heat 2 inches vegetable oil to 360 degrees F. Separate refrigerator biscuits into rounds. Fry rounds 1 to 2 minutes or until golden brown, flipping once. Transfer to wire rack using slotted spoon; let cool. Fill pastry bag, fitted with small plain tip, with raspberry jam; use tip to poke small hole in side of each donut, then fill centers. Finish with a dusting of powdered sugar, if desired.





First Wednesday of Advent

Genesis 49:10 – “The Messiah To Be From The Tribe of Judah”

Scripture: *“The scepter will not pass from Yhudah, nor the ruler's staff from between his legs, until he comes to whom [obedience] belongs; and it is he whom the peoples will obey.”*

Devotional: This passage is fulfilled in Jesus because the scepter is a symbol of sovereignty and authority. Jesus is in the line of Judah and came as King. The three wise men, gentiles, (Matthew 2:1-2) symbolize the verse when it says, "the obedience of the nations is His."

Prayer: Lord, our Father, bless us with a sense of belonging to You and of being loved by You as dearly as Isaac was loved by Abraham, and Your Son was loved by You. May our love draw others to Your family, In Jesus name, Amen.

Christmas Greeting: Feliz Navidad! May the love and peace of Jesus bless you this season.

Favorite Christmas Memory: Being with family every year at Christmas, surrounded by love and security that only family gives. The food, family and gifts were something I'll always remember. My favorite times and most blessed times of Christmas are the times when we are able to be with all the family on Christmas. There we have a Christmas Eve banquet, the Uncle reads the Christmas story from the Scriptures, we sing all the Christmas carols and then we all go to church. Money could not buy all the blessings, fun and spiritual joy, we have on those Christmases when the whole family is there spreading the love of Jesus and Christmas cheer.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Dreidel Sprinkle Cookies

Ingredients: 3 eggs; 1 cup margarine (Earth Balance); 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract; 4 cups flour; 2 cups icing sugar (confectioners sugar); 3 tsps. baking powder; Yields 7 to 8 dozen (if dough rolled thin, 4-6 dozen if kids are making them)

Recipe: Preheat Oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large mixer bowl, beat eggs. Add margarine and vanilla. Add flour and baking powder and mix well. Roll out dough on a floured board to 1/4" thickness and cut into desired shapes. Place on cookie sheet. Press sprinkles onto cookies. Bake 10 – 12 minutes or until slightly browned. Remove from cookie sheet to cool.





First Thursday of Advent

Isaiah 7:14 – “The Messiah Will Be Born Of A Virgin”

Scripture: *“Therefore Adonai himself will give you people a sign: the young woman will become pregnant, bear a son and name him 'Immanu El [G_d is with us].”*

Devotional: The name Immanuel means “G_d with us”. It was necessary that Jesus should enter this world in a unique way; a way that would proclaim His divine role and purpose. By being conceived of a virgin by the Holy Spirit’s miracle, He is not affected by original sin and therefore is the perfect sacrifice before G_d the Father. He is the only one who can pay the debt for our sins and unite us once again with the Father.

Prayer: Thank you Lord that we can look to you to provide all things that pertain to life and G_dliness. The impossible for us is now possible with You. May we open our hearts this Christmas season to all the “impossibles” You want to accomplish in, with and through us. May the light of Christ shine brightly through us to others, that they may see the true Light of Jesus and come into the Kingdom.

Christmas Greeting: Let us reverently bow before the Holy Child whose innocence restores to manhood its’ ancient glory; and let us pray that He may be formed in us, to show the hope of glory!

Favorite Christmas Memory: Our favorite Christmas custom is to buy our Christmas tree every year on December 1st. We bring it home and decorate it while listening to Christmas music. The first thing we place on our tree are our special “Christmas together” ornaments, one for each year of our marriage and family.

Favorite Christmas Recipe: **Ambrosia**

Ingredients: 5lbs. of oranges; 1 large can of crushed pineapple; 2 tbsp. of sugar; sliced bananas; 1 cup coconut.

Recipe: The day before serving, peel and section 5lbs. of oranges. Add 1 large can of crushed pineapple, sprinkle with 2 Tbsp. of sugar and store, covered, overnight. Before serving, add sliced bananas and 1 cup (or more, depending on taste) of coconut.





First Friday of Advent

Isaiah 9:7 – “The Messiah Will Be Heir To The Throne Of David”

Scripture: *“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; dominion will rest on his shoulders, and he will be given the name Pele-Yo'etz El Gibbor Avi-'Ad Sar-Shalom [Wonder of a Counselor, Mighty G_d, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace], in order to extend the dominion and perpetuate the peace of the throne and kingdom of David, to secure it and sustain it through justice and righteousness henceforth and forever. The zeal of ADONAI-Tzva'ot will accomplish this.”*

Devotional: In G_d’s plan it was important for the Messiah to be of the lineage of Abraham and David and Solomon and to be from the tribe of Judah. This is because G_d established the lineage of the Messiah from the birth of Adam’s son Seth. This was not just a nice thing to do or a fulfillment of prophecy – though it was both of these things. Rather, this was a sign to the people of G_d who the Messiah was. It was an identification pointing to the true Son of G_d. G_d has given us today His Holy Spirit and His written word to point us to Jesus. May we be faithful to follow and believe.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I pray that You would help us to keep our focus on the true meaning of this season, which is Your son JESUS THE MESSIAH. Thank You for the best Christmas gift of all. In Jesus name, Amen.

Christmas Greeting: May the Lord bless you and your family, giving you joy this season and fulfill all the desires of your heart.

Favorite Christmas Custom: My favorite tradition on Christmas is to get together with the whole family for a BIG dinner late on Christmas Eve and wait until midnight to exchange the gifts. I love all the memories shared!

Favorite Christmas Recipe: Chanukah Cheese Ball

Ingredients: 2- 8 oz. Cream cheese; 1-8 1/2 oz can crushed pineapple, drained; 2 c. Chopped pecans; 1 chopped green pepper; 2 tbs. Chopped onions; 1 tbs. Lowery seasoned salt.

Recipe: Set aside 1 cup of nuts. Mix all ingredients together. Form a ball of the mixture with your hands. Roll the ball in the other cup of chopped nuts. Refrigerate.





First Saturday of Advent

Daniel 9:25 – “The Time For The Messiah’s Birth”

Scripture: “*Know, therefore, and discern that seven weeks [of years] will elapse between the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Yerushalayim until an anointed prince comes. It will remain built for sixty-two weeks [of years], with open spaces and moats; but these will be troubled times.*”

Devotional: The setting of Daniel 9:25 is in a context of **prophecies** dealing with the restoration of the city of Jerusalem and the time of the coming of Jesus The Messiah. The prophetic setting of the date which Messiah would appear is one of the most thrilling of the OT Messianic prophecies. In Daniel 9 it was precisely predicted when He would come. At exactly the right time, Saint Paul declared, “in the fullness of time G_d sent His Son...” What **time** was it? There are several reasons it was the right **time**. It was the right **time** because there was a worldwide peace under Rome – the Pax Romana; there was a common language – Greek; there was relative ease and safety in travel because of the postal road system. According to His chosen time, G_d sent His son Jesus into the world as our dear Savior. At this Christmas Season we can exult with Saint Paul, “Thanks be unto G_d for His indescribable Gift!” (*II Corinthians 9:15*.)

Prayer: Dear Lord, how can we adequately thank You for Your Gift of the Savior, the Lord Jesus? Words seem so inadequate when we try to say THANKS. But we are instructed in Your Word to be THANKFUL and we are THANKFUL. After expressing our thankfulness the next best thing we can do is to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice for Your glory and the eternal benefit to others in service. Occupy our hearts so we will gladly do Your bidding living out our lives before Your watchful eye and before a watching and hurting world. All for Your Eternal Glory, Amen.

Christmas Greeting: May each of you have a blessed Christmas Season with your family and friends. May the light of the baby Jesus shine in each of your hearts through the New Year.

Favorite Christmas Custom: Drinking eggnog, eating fruitcake (or other holiday foods for family members who do not enjoy these!) while setting up the Christmas tree and singing Christmas carols.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Chanukah Coins

Ingredients: 250 g chocolate; colored or chocolate sprinkles. You will also need: a few disposable cups and aluminum foil

Recipe: Melt the chocolate in microwave for 5 minutes on medium heat. Pour some into disposable cups. Repeat until all the chocolate is melted. Try using different sizes of cups, so the coins come out in different sizes. Optional: Sprinkle with colored or chocolate sprinkles. Let cool. Remove chocolate from cup. Wrap in aluminum foil. **Suggestion:** Put the coins into the Dreidle box that can be found in the Crafts section.





The Second Sunday Of The Advent Season

Pastor Randy and Margaret Wilding

Isaiah 40:3-5 – “The Way of The Messiah Will Be Prepared By Another”

The Second Sunday of Advent

The Second Sunday of Advent has the theme of ***Repentance and Preparation***. As John the Baptist came before Jesus to call people to repentance, so we are called to turn to G_d and make ready our hearts for Jesus. So let us during this week, return to the Lord, ask for His help and seek His forgiveness. Jesus came that we might be reconciled to the Father.

Hymns of the Week

Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne and *I Wonder as I Wander*

Two Violet Candles:

Light two candles each night this week as you have your Advent devotions around the Advent Wreath.

Scripture: *A voice cries out: "Clear a road through the desert for ADONAI! Level a highway in the 'Aravah for our G_d! Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill lowered, the bumpy places made level and the crags become a plain. Then the glory of ADONAI will be revealed; all humankind together will see it, for the mouth of ADONAI has spoken."*

Devotional

In the fullness of time, in G_d's perfect season, G_d's Son entered the world. Yet, G_d sent someone to prepare the way for Jesus public ministry. John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, was the Messiah's forerunner. John's task was to proclaim a message of repentance. G_d's people needed to acknowledge at a deep and personal level their spiritual need. They, like all of us, are spiritually bankrupt, therefore we need the gracious and merciful work of G_d in our lives. Yet this work does not occur apart from





a personal responsibility to confess our need. This preparation is like road construction. Earth-moving equipment scrapes, lowers, fills-in and straightens-out the landscape, so that a smooth level road can be constructed. The soil of our lives needs to be in the right condition as G_d begins His good work. James speaks of “...*receiving the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls*” (James 1:21). Jesus spoke of the good soil that produced an abundant harvest (Matthew 13:8). This good soil speaks of those “*who hears the word and understands it*” (Matthew 13:23). These passages speak of preparation and readiness.

So if there is a desire to draw near to G_d and receive His blessing, we must not wait for G_d to zap us like a bolt of lightening. The soil in our lives needs to be prepared with humble repentance. We need to receive the truth of G_d about ourselves regarding our sinful attitudes and responses to G_d. Then with eager and believing anticipation we need to embrace the Good News declared to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior!

Prayer: Adapted from Luke 1:67-79 -- “*The Prayer of Zachariah*”

His father Z'kharyah was filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and spoke this prophecy: "Praised be ADONAI, the G_d of Isra'el, because he has visited and made a ransom to liberate his people by raising up for us a mighty Deliverer who is a descendant of his servant David.

We bless and praise your holy name, ADONAI, the G_d of Isra'el. For in your great mercy you have entered our humble world and rescued your people in the midst of our great need. For from the House of David you have raised up a Savior, and you have showered mercy upon us in faithfulness to your covenant promise. You have rescued us from our great Enemy, so that we are enabled to lovingly, thankfully, devotedly and humbly worship and serve you the rest of our lives. Because of your tender mercies, we pray that you would continue to shine your favor upon us, visit us and guide us, so that we might walk in your ways and experience your peace in Yeshua HaMashiach, in whom we pray. Amen.





Advent Benediction -- Adapted from Luke 1:68,72,74,78,79

"Praised be ADONAI, the G_d of Isra'el,
Because he has visited us
And made a ransom to liberate his people
For he has remember his holy covenant,
To grant us that we might serve him without fear,
Through our G_d's most tender mercy, which causes the Sunrise to visit us from Heaven,
And guide our feet into the paths of peace."

Favorite Holiday Memory

A treasured memory that is not isolated to one event, but may more properly be called a tradition that has enriched my life has been the *Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Carols and Lessons*. I experienced this worship service first at Back Creek Associate Reformed Church where my mentor led us in a beautiful echo or Scripture passage and Christmas carol. No practiced choir anthems, solos or sermons needed to be apart of this simple, yet soul-stirring silent night. The familiar gospel story of Jesus birth coupled with the finest Christian lyric put to music was sufficient to prepare the soul for a true celebration of the Christ Child, born of Mary, sent of the Father to redeem his people.

Favorite Christmas Recipe

**Israeli Couscous With Roasted Butternut Squash
And Preserved Lemon**

Ingredients: 1 preserved lemon; 1 1/2 pound butternut squash, peeled and seeded, and cut into 1/4inch dice; 3 tablespoons olive oil; 1 large onion, chopped; 1 3/4 cups Israeli couscous or acini di pepe (tiny peppercorn-shaped pasta), about 1 pound; 1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick; 1 cup of chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley; 1/2 cup pine nuts, toasted; 1/2 cup golden raisins; 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon





Recipe: Preheat oven to 475°F. Halve lemons and scoop out flesh, keeping both flesh and peel. Cut enough peel into 1/4-inch dice to measure 1/4 cup. Put lemon flesh in a sieve set over a bowl and press with back of a spoon to extract juice. Toss squash with 1 tablespoon oil and salt to taste in a large shallow baking pan and spread in 1 layer. Roast in upper third of oven 15 minutes, or until squash is just tender, and transfer to a large bowl. Cook onion in 1 tablespoon oil in a 10-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally, until just beginning to turn golden. Add to squash. Cook couscous with cinnamon stick in a large pot of boiling salted water 10 minutes, or until just tender, and drain in a colander (do not rinse). Add couscous to vegetables and toss with 2 tablespoon oil to coat. Add lemon peel and juice, parsley, nuts, raisins, ground cinnamon, and salt to taste. Toss to mix well.

A Favorite Advent Hymn

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

*Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.*





Second Monday of Advent

Jeremiah 31:15 – “Rachel’s Mourning Will Be Turned to Hope At The Coming Of The Messiah”

Scripture: *This is what ADONAI says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamenting and bitter weeping. It is Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no longer alive."*

Devotional: When this verse was originally written in Jeremiah, it referred to Rachel, the mother of Israel, mourning because Babylon was about to exile Israel. It also foretells the killing of the boys, two and under, in Bethlehem, by Herod in his attempt to kill Jesus. The verse alludes to the way G_d weeps when the world refuses to accept His Son.

Prayer: Dear Lord, May we be used to point people to the Prince of Peace this day and throughout the year. May our words, actions and heart be one with you. No matter what our circumstances, may our walk with you, Lord, reflect the Bright Morning Star who rules in our lives.

Christmas Greeting: Merry Christmas! May you enjoy the greatest gift of all throughout the year.

Favorite Christmas Custom: A few years ago, after the Christmas Eve Service in Miami, we packed up all the kids and presents in our mini-van and drove to Orlando to be with the family on Christmas day. It seemed like a long trip for some reason, but we were laughing and singing and having a great time. We stopped in Ft. Pierce for something to eat and everything was closed but the truck stop. So we loaded up on junk food. While the girls were inside, Dad and the boys stood in the parking lot telling jokes until we thought dad’s head would explode with laughter. It was a mid-night Christmas Eve journey to remember!

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Vegetable Latkes

Ingredients: 5½ oz. carrots; 11½ oz. parsnips; 1 Idaho potato; ¼ c. all-purpose flour; 2 tbsp. vegetable oil; 3 scallions; salt; Freshly ground black pepper; 2 large eggs; sour cream

Recipe: Preheat the oven to 200 degrees F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper, and place it on the center rack of the oven. Peel the carrots, parsnips, and potato, and grate them on the large holes of a box grater. Place the grated vegetables on a clean kitchen towel, fold it around them, and squeeze tightly to remove all excess moisture. Transfer the grated vegetables to a large mixing bowl. Add the sliced scallions, flour, and salt and pepper, and toss to combine well. Add the lightly beaten eggs, and mix well. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, and add 2 teaspoons vegetable oil. Make a few latkes at a time; for each, shape 2 tablespoons of the vegetable mixture and place in the skillet. Cook 2 minutes on each side, until golden and crisp. Transfer cooked latkes to prepared baking sheet in oven to keep warm. Repeat with remaining oil and latke mixture. Serve the latkes warm with dollops of sour cream, and salt and pepper to taste.





Second Tuesday of Advent

Hosea 11:1 – “The Messiah Will Have To Flee To Egypt”

Scripture: “*When Isra'el was a child, I loved him; and out of Egypt I called my son.*”

Devotional: This verse is both historical and prophetic. Historical in Exodus 4:22-23, when Israel was enslaved in Egypt and G_d calls Israel, His “firstborn”, to be set free. Prophetic in Matthew 2:13-15, when Joseph was ordered to take the Child to Egypt to flee the persecution of Herod so that scripture (Hosea 11:1) would be fulfilled. This is one of the many prophecies assuring and revealing to mankind that this Jesus is the Messiah, the one who would redeem us. As His children, there are times when we all “go to Egypt,” when we are faced with the trials of this life. Though there is that season of “being in Egypt,” G_d loves us dearly and through Jesus calls each of us out at His appointed time.

Prayer: Father, thank you for the higher purpose you have for each of our lives, to bring glory to You through our trials and difficulties.

Christmas Greeting: If you find yourself as one who is “in Egypt”, take comfort that G_d is ultimately glorifying Himself. May G_d bless you and your family this Christmas season and throughout the New Year.

Favorite Christmas Memory: We cook and bake traditional recipes passed down from our grandparents and share memories of our grandparents with our children.

Favorite Christmas Recipe: Chanukah Latkes

Ingredients: 5 big potatoes; 3 eggs; 1/3 cup of flour; 1 teaspoon salt; oil for frying

Recipe: Grind the potatoes. Add eggs, flour and salt. Mix well. Warm up oil in frying pan. Pour batter onto the oil in spoonfuls. Let fry for about five minutes on medium fire. Turn over and let fry for another three minutes. Take out your latkes and lay them on paper towel to cool.





Second Wednesday of Advent

Micah 5:2 and 4:8 – “The Messiah Will Be Born In Bethlehem”

Scripture: *“But you, Beit-Lechem near Efrat, so small among the clans of Y’hudah, out of you will come forth to me the future ruler of Isra’el, whose origins are far in the past, back in ancient times.”* and *“You, Migdal Eder (tower of the flock), hill of the daughter of Tziyon, to you your former sovereignty will return, the royal power of the daughter of Yerushalayim.”*

Devotional: Bethlehem was the town of King David’s birth. Numerous Kings of Israel were born from the line of David. This verse not only connects the Messiah to the line of David but also to the specific city of Bethlehem. This is the only verse in the Old Testament that specifically states that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Isn’t it interesting that G_d used such a small town, one that people would call “insignificant,” to be the birthplace of King David and our Savior, Jesus Christ. It’s a good reminder that G_d can use people like us who may feel insignificant, to accomplish His will.

Prayer: Dear Lord, We pray that You would use this time of year, to draw people to Yourself and that we may be Your useful servants to bring them to You. We pray that we would work in unity to do Your will.

Christmas Greeting: You are a special church family to us and I pray that G_d will bless each one of you.

Favorite Christmas Memory: We’re thankful that we can spend time with both sides of our family. We have “cookie night” to bring both sides of the family together. We also have meals with each side of the family for Christmas as well as Thanksgiving.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Cucumber Dip

Ingredients: 2 lg. cucumbers, peeled, seeded and grated fine; 1 sm. onion, grated fine; 2 to 3 celery stalks, strings removed, grated; 1/2 tsp. garlic powder; 1 c. sour cream; 1/2 c. cream cheese (8 oz.); 1/2 c. mayonnaise

Recipe: Mix all ingredients well. Serve with vegetables of choice or for dipping with crackers.





Second Thursday of Advent and the First Day of Chanukah

Luke 1:10-17 – “ The Prophecy Of The Birth Of John The Baptist ”

Scripture: *“All the people were outside, praying, at the time of the incense burning, when there appeared to him an angel of ADONAI standing to the right of the incense altar. Z'kharyah was startled and terrified at the sight. But the angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Z'kharyah; because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elisheva will bear you a son, and you are to name him Yochanan. He will be a joy and a delight to you, and many people will rejoice when he is born, for he will be great in the sight of ADONAI. He is never to drink wine or other liquor, and he will be filled with the Ruach HaKodesh even from his mother's womb. He will turn many of the people of Isra'el to ADONAI their G_d. He will go out ahead of ADONAI in the spirit and power of Eliyahu to turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready for ADONAI a people prepared.”*

Devotional: We see in this portion of Scripture how G_d answers prayer. Zechariah and Elizabeth were both old at the time the angel appeared to him. It says in verse 13, ‘But the angel said to him, “do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.”’ The Lord answered Zechariah’s prayer and sent him a son, in their old age. A son that would have a special part in the advent of the Messiah...”to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Vs. 17)

Prayer: Dear Jesus, prepare our hearts this advent season as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Help us to remember that you always hear our prayers. And Lord, I want to pray that we won’t forget that you are the real reason for Christmas. Amen.

Christmas Greeting: *Jesus is the Reason for the Season.* Advent is the perfect time for us to take advantage of every opportunity to share this message of hope with everyone we meet. The truth will set them free.

Favorite Christmas Memory: My favorite Christmas memory is being with my family at Christmas.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Fried Mozzarella Sticks for Chanukah

Ingredients: 10 mozzarella sticks (you can use string cheese, or cut a block of cheese to size); 1 egg, beaten; ¼ cup flour; ½ cup flavored Panko crumbs; Oil for frying; Marinara sauce for dipping (optional).

Recipe: Coat each cheese stick in flour, then dip in egg and coat with the crumbs. Place the coated cheese sticks on a tray or plate lined with wax or parchment paper. Freeze for 30 minutes. Heat the oil to medium, then drop 2–3 sticks in the oil. Cook until brown on one side, then gently flip and cook until the other side is lightly browned. Remove from pan and place on a piece of paper towel. Serve immediately, with warm marinara sauce for dipping (optional).





Second Friday of Advent and the Second Day of Chanukah

Luke 1:28-33 - "The Angel Gabriel Blesses Mary"

Scripture: Approaching her, the angel said, "Shalom, favored lady! ADONAI is with you!" She was deeply troubled by his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Miryam, for you have found favor with G_d. Look! You will become pregnant, you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua. He will be great, he will be called Son of Ha`Elyon. ADONAI, G_d, will give him the throne of his forefather David; and he will rule the House of Ya`akov forever -- there will be no end to his Kingdom."

Devotion: The Lord had presented an impossible task before Mary. She would be mother of the Son of G_d, and G_d's instrument in bringing in the long awaited Messiah into the world. In her heart she knew there was nothing special about her. What are questions that must be going through her head, "What does the Lord expect of me?" "Will I be able to measure up to the task that He has set before me?" "What if I fail?" The wonderful story of Grace here is what Gabriel said in his greeting "The Lord is with you." The hope against hope that Mary receives is G_d himself. G_d is reassuring her that the task that He has set, the road that she is on will be one traveled with the Father as her companion. We ourselves are often given impossible tasks like loving our enemies, forgiving the ones who have sinned against us, loving a difficult spouse, or facing the holidays without family. Whatever road we find ourselves on we can know for sure that we are highly favored not because of anything that is special within us, but because of who we have with us, Christ. The love of G_d is not based on our performance, but on *our* spotless righteousness, who is Jesus Christ. Like Mary the Lord is with us.

Prayer: Lord I thank you for your faithfulness. You have promised to be with us as we spread the Gospel throughout this community. Thank you for changing the hearts of men and women with your Gospel of good news. Thank you for the people that you have entrusted to our care. I pray that you will prepare our hearts, that we might be used as instruments to bring the Gospel to the lives of the people in our communities. Father, teach us to love each other so others might see that we belong to you.

Christmas Greeting : Grace and peace to you from G_d our Father in sending His blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ!

Favorite Christmas Memory: Driving around the neighborhoods with mugs of hot apple cider looking at the Christmas lights.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Cranberry-Orange Relish

Put through a food chopper, a fresh package of cranberries (4 cups), and 2 oranges (quartered and seeded). Add 2 cups of sugar.





Second Saturday of Advent and the Third Day of Chanukah

Matthew 1:20, 21 – “The Christ Is Conceived By The Holy Spirit”

Scripture: But while he was thinking about this, an angel of ADONAI appeared to him in a dream and said, "Yosef, son of David, do not be afraid to take Miryam home with you as your wife; for what has been conceived in her is from the Ruach HaKodesh. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua, [which means `ADONAI saves,'] because he will save his people from their sins."

Devotion: Joseph and Mary were pledged to be married. While they were still not yet married, Mary was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, a righteous man, was planning to divorce Mary quietly. However, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to keep Mary as his wife. He obeyed and G_d used him to help fulfill the prophecy found in Isaiah 1:14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; the virgin will be with child, and will give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You for loving us enough to grant us Jesus’ grace. We know that Your solution to our problems is unmerited. We sometimes believe ourselves important and strong. We confess we are not. We desire, though, Lord, that Your humility would overwhelm us. That the weakness of Your son would be our strength unto obedience. Amen.

Christmas Greeting: Blessings to the Christian community as we look forward as a family to what He will accomplish through the grace of His Son Jesus.

Favorite Christmas Memory: Over the years we have not usually lived near our extended family and so most of the time we had no extended family with us on Christmas. But sporadically we would have my grandmother and Christmas always seemed the most special when she was there. For me, the more family there is, the better the holidays. This year our children are all grown and have moved away, but most of them will be coming home for the holidays and my mom, their grandmother, will be with us. I hope they enjoy Christmas with her as much as I did with my grandmother! I know they will - she is fun and plays games with them.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Holiday Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients: ½ c. Crisco shortening; ½ c. sugar; ½ c. brown sugar; 1 egg; ½ tsp. vanilla extract; 1 c. plus 2 tbs. flour, ½ tsp. baking soda; 1 pkg red and green M&Ms (minis if possible), 1 pkg. mini chocolate chips.

Recipe: Mix Crisco, sugar, brown sugar. Mix eggs and vanilla extract. Mix flour, salt and baking soda. Combine all 3 mixtures and add chocolate chips. Drop by teaspoons on un greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Add M&Ms while cookies are warm from the oven.





The Third Sunday of the Advent Season and the Fourth Day of Chanukah

Pastor Randy and Margaret Wilding

Matthew 1:18-25 – “The Angel of the Lord Appears to Joseph”

The Third Sunday of Advent

The theme of the Third Sunday of Advent is **Rejoicing**. We are mindful that all those who are looking to Christ Jesus for redemption should give thanks and praise. We should REJOICE for our Savior has come! We are reminded in this season that when we come at the end of our earthly lives, and we enter the presence of Christ and live with Him throughout eternity, that we will rejoice with singing, Alleluias! We will rejoice and sing praise to Him who sits upon the throne, to Him be glory and honor, now and forever!

Hymns of the Week

Angels from the Realms of Glory and *O Come All Ye Faithful*

Three Violet Candles:

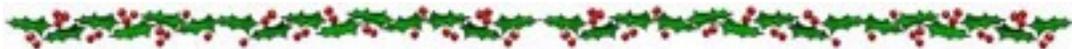
Light three candles each night this week as you have your Advent devotions around the Advent Wreath.

Scripture:

Here is how the birth of Yeshua the Messiah took place. When his mother Miryam was engaged to Yosef, before they were married, she was found to be pregnant from the Ruach HaKodesh. Her husband-to-be, Yosef, was a man who did what was right; so he made plans to break the engagement quietly, rather than put her to public shame. But while he was thinking about this, an angel of ADONAI appeared to him in a dream and said, "Yosef, son of David, do not be afraid to take Miryam home with you as your wife; for what has been conceived in her is from the Ruach HaKodesh. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua, [which means 'ADONAI saves,'] because he will save his people from their sins." All this happened in order to fulfill what ADONAI had said through the prophet, "The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him 'Immanu El.'a (The name means, "G_d is with us.") When Yosef awoke he did what the angel of ADONAI had told him to do -- he took Miryam home to be his wife, but he did not have sexual relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Yeshua.

Devotional

Getting ready for your wedding is one of the most anticipated, joy-filled seasons in a couple's life. So how do you tell your fiancé that you are pregnant, and how does Joseph deal with this





shame? It was much more scandalous in the first century to be pregnant out of wedlock than it is today. How does Joseph who truly loves Mary deal with this infamy? Certainly people would be counting their fingers after Jesus was born.

The scandal took nothing less than a divine messenger to encourage Joseph it was ok. “Go ahead, marry Mary. This Child is from G_d. Rather than being a scandal within the community, He will be a blessing to the nations! Name him, Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins! He is Immanuel, a sign and pledge that G_d is indeed with us. G_d has not forgotten our plight. He is not calloused toward our heartaches. He has not gone on vacation or taken a nap. The Creator is the Redeemer. The long-promised King, the Suffering Servant, the Branch, the Son of David, the Second Adam restores His people.

Prayer: Adapted from Matthew 1:23-23; 2:6 - “The Song of the Prophets”

O Lord our G_d, we offer our thanksgiving and worship for the gift of Thy Son, Jesus,
our Immanuel.

In thy mercy Thou have dwelt with us, saved us, kept us by Thy grace.

Out of the tribe of kings, from Judah; thou has giving us a King,
who is the Shepherd of our souls.

To Thee we offer our humble praise and we beseech Thy care and protection
for Thy name’s sake. Amen.

Advent Benediction

O G_d our King, our Redeemer, our Immanuel, be among Thy people.
Keep them in Thy care; Visit them with Thy Help; Rule over our hearts and minds
That we might know with assurance Your love and promised faithfulness. Amen.

Favorite Holiday Memory

The quest for the perfect Christmas tree has been a family tradition from the early years of our children. We would visit lots with lines of rows and rows of perfectly shaped evergreens. Yet these trees were far from evergreen. In days their needles would dry and drop until the branches are bare covered with green colored spray. We would lengthen their apparent life by going to farms where we cut our own tree, yet the same fate would soon come to these “evergreens.” So I thought we would solve the demise of these evergreens. We would dig our tree from the tree farm and transplant it into a large pot. So we found the perfect tree. Instead of killing our tree I took shovel rather than saw. I dug and dug. What seemed like an hour later the proud tree was rescued from the field. Big problem. How do you get that heavy, dirt-laden tree into the pot and into my car. Trust me it wasn’t easy! The saddest memory however is that my rescued tree now planted in my yard, slowly turned brown, dropped its needles and died! Thanks be to G_d for a Savior rescued from the earth never to die again!





Favorite Christmas Recipe

Stuffed Onions With Spiced Lamb And Pomegranate

Ingredients: 2 large Spanish onions (1 pound), peeled and left whole; 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling; 1/4 pound ground lamb; 1 1/2 oil-packed anchovies, drained, patted dry, and finely chopped; 1/2 tablespoon kosher salt; 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper; 3/4 cup raw jasmine rice; 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice; 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon; 1 pinch ground nutmeg; 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided; 3 tablespoons pomegranate molasses, divided; 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, plus more for garnish; 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish; 3 tablespoons tomato paste; 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds, for garnish.

Recipe: **Boil the onions:** Fill a medium pot with enough water to cover the onions and bring to a boil. Add whole onions, return to a boil, and cook until tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove onions to a colander, drain, and let stand until cool enough to handle. Cut a 1/2-inch wedge from the outside to the core of each onion, then carefully peel 5 outer layers from each onion and reserve; chop the onion wedges and core, and reserve separately. **Make the stuffing:** In a medium skillet, heat the oil over medium-high. Add the chopped onion and cook, stirring, until golden, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the lamb, anchovies, salt, and pepper and cook, breaking meat up with a wooden spoon, until lamb is no longer pink, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the rice and cook, stirring, until translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the spices and 1 cup broth; cook, stirring, until evaporated, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer lamb mixture to a rimmed baking sheet and cool slightly; cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Remove from the refrigerator, transfer to a bowl, and add parsley, cilantro, and 1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses. **Stuff and bake the onions:** Preheat the oven to 250°F. In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining broth and pomegranate molasses with the tomato paste. Wrap one onion layer around about 2 to 3 tablespoons filling and arrange seam side down in a 2-quart shallow baking dish. Repeat with remaining onion layers and filling. Pour liquid over stuffed onions, cover with foil, and roast until tender and some of the liquid is absorbed, 2 hours (you can roast for up to 3 additional hours for softer, more savory onions). Remove from oven and uncover. Preheat broiler and broil until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes. To serve, drizzle with oil, and garnish with pomegranate seeds, parsley, and cilantro.

A Favorite Advent Hymn

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!





Third Monday of Advent and the Fifth Day of Chanukah

Luke 1:46-55 – “The Song of Mary in Praise To G_d The Father”

Scripture: *Then Miryam said, "My soul magnifies ADONAI; and my spirit rejoices in G_d, my Savior, who has taken notice of his servant-girl in her humble position. For -- imagine it! -- from now on, all generations will call me blessed! "The Mighty One has done great things for me! Indeed, his name is holy; and in every generation he has mercy on those who fear him. "He has performed mighty deeds with his arm, routed the secretly proud, brought down rulers from their thrones, raised up the humble, filled the hungry with good things, but sent the rich away empty. "He has taken the part of his servant Isra'el, mindful of the mercy which he promised to our fathers, to Avraham and his seed forever."*

Devotional: In Verses 48-49 Mary states “..all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me-“. It is easy to understand why Mary would feel blessed. She would give birth to the Messiah, but what about the rest of us? What has He done for me? The ancient blessing that the Lord gave to Moses (Num 6:24-26) consists of five parts: “The Lord 1) bless you and keep you” (favor and protect); 2) “make His face to shine upon you” (be pleased); 3) “be gracious” (merciful and compassionate); 4) “turn His face toward you” (give his approval); 5) “give you peace.” When we broaden our perspective from just our current situation in life to eternity in the presence of G_d (versus in hell), there is no question that we enjoy all five aspects of His blessing. Jesus Christ, through His life, death, and resurrection assures it for all believers. No wonder we feel blessed as Mary did!

Prayer: Lord I pray that the revitalized awareness of the need for Your love and protection cause people to stop and find out what the true meaning of Christmas really is. And through that inquiry may they find Jesus Christ and receive Him as their Lord and Savior.

Christmas Blessing: Blessed be the name of the Lord and blessings to all that call upon the Lord Jesus Christ and present to him a sacrificial gift of themselves and their families at Christmas.

Favorite Christmas Memory: Having a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot of gifts to play with on Christmas morning!

Favorite Christmas Recipe: [Pumpkin Bread](#)

Ingredients : 1 c. oil; 4 c. sugar; 2 eggs; 4 c. pumpkin; 5 c. flour; 4 tsp. baking soda; 1 tsp. baking soda; 1 tsp. cloves; 1 Tbs. Cinnamon; 1 Tbs. Salt.

Recipe: Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix oil, sugar, eggs, and pumpkin. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Grease 3 loaf pans. Pour batter into pans. Bake about 45 minutes.





Third Tuesday of Advent and the Sixth Day of Chanukah

Luke 1:39-45 – “John Worships Christ While In The Womb”

Scripture: *Without delay, Miryam set out and hurried to the town in the hill country of Y'hudah where Z'kharyah lived, entered his house and greeted Elisheva. When Elisheva heard Miryam's greeting, the baby in her womb stirred. Elisheva was filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and spoke up in a loud voice, "How blessed are you among women! And how blessed is the child in your womb! "But who am I, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy! Indeed you are blessed, because you have trusted that the promise ADONAI has made to you will be fulfilled."*

Devotional: In this dramatic passage we are there with Elizabeth and Mary, seeing each other for the first time since either one of their miraculous conceptions. Here we see how, through the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth is enabled to see beyond the obvious – her unwed, pregnant teen-age cousin Mary. She doesn't despair of the condition or situation that Mary is in, even though her very life is in danger by the people because of her unwed pregnancy. Instead, Elizabeth and even her unborn baby, John the Baptist, immediately recognizes the presence of the long awaited Messiah, G_d Himself when they hear Mary's voice. They both are filled with joy and respond with worship.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I pray that the Your Holy Spirit would enable us to be devoted to one another in brotherly love, and that we would have clear spiritual vision to recognize Your presence.

Christmas Greeting: May the peace and the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ and G_d the Father and the Holy Spirit be with you at this holy time of year.

Favorite Christmas Memory: Waking up early on Christmas morning to see the anticipation of our children to open their gifts. We fix our traditional Christmas breakfast and present each gift, one by one.

Favorite Christmas Recipe:

Chanukah Honey and Spice Cookies

Ingredients: 1/2 cup (1 stick) margarine, softened; 1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar 1/2 cup honey; 1 egg; 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour; 2 teaspoons ground ginger; 1 teaspoon baking soda; 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon; 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves. Icing: 2 egg whites; 3 cups confectioners' sugar; 1 tablespoon lemon juice; 1/8 teaspoon salt.

Recipe: In a large mixing bowl, cream margarine and brown sugar until well combined, and then beat in honey and egg. In a small bowl, combine flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and cloves; add to honey mixture. Beat on low speed until well blended. Cover dough and refrigerate at least 1 hour. Grease cookie sheets and set aside. Working with 1/4 of the dough at a time, roll out on floured surface to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes. Using a spatula, place on prepared cookie sheets 1 inch apart. Reroll and cut scraps. Bake in a preheated 350° F oven for 7 minutes, or until done. Transfer to wire racks to cool. Meanwhile, prepare the icing. In a large mixing bowl, combine egg whites, confectioners' sugar, lemon juice and salt. Beat on high speed until the mixture holds up soft peaks.





Third Wednesday of Advent and the Seventh Day of Chanukah

Luke 1:67-80 – “ The Prophecy of Zechariah Concerning John ”

Scripture: *His father Z'kharyah was filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and spoke this prophecy: "Praised be ADONAI, the G_d of Isra'el, because he has visited and made a ransom to liberate his people by raising up for us a mighty Deliverer who is a descendant of his servant David. It is just as he has spoken through the mouth of the prophets from the very beginning -- that we should be delivered from our enemies and from the power of all who hate us. "This has happened so that he might show the mercy promised to our fathers -- that he would remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore before Avraham avinu to grant us that we, freed from our enemies, would serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. You, child, will be called a prophet of Ha`Elyon; you will go before the Lord to prepare his way by spreading the knowledge among his people that deliverance comes by having sins forgiven through our G_d's most tender mercy, which causes the Sunrise to visit us from Heaven, to shine on those in darkness, living in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the paths of peace." The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he lived in the wilderness until the time came for him to appear in public to Isra'el.*

Devotional: As Christians we can look forward to the future because there is no end to our life because it continues to eternity in heaven. This is the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Prayer: Heavenly father, as Zechariah prophesied the coming of the forerunner of the Messiah, may we in our time look forward to the Advent Season and the blessings of worshipping the risen Savior with the promise of the babe in the manger.

Christmas Greeting: May the promise of the Messiah and His gift of salvation be with you during the Advent Season and the year round.

Favorite Christmas Memory: At Christmas time we hung our stockings on the mantel of our fireplace and surprised our five children with Christmas goodies. They still love getting their stockings to this day. Each has a special stocking that brings back memories.

Favorite Christmas Recipe: [Easy Festive Mexican Dip](#)

Ingredients: 8 oz carton sour cream; 1 can refried beans with green chilies; 1 envelope dry taco sauce; 1 small jar cheese whiz; shredded cheddar cheese.

Recipe: Mix all ingredients, sprinkling cheddar cheese on top. Heat through oven or microwave. Serve with tortilla chips.



Third Thursday of Advent and the Eighth Day of Chanukah

Luke 2:1-2 – “The Time For Christ’s Birth Has Arrived”

Scripture

Around this time, Emperor Augustus issued an order for a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This registration, the first of its kind, took place when Quirinius was governing in Syria.

Devotional

The Christ Child came into this sad world to rescue the powerless, the oppressed, the hopeless. In Him the hope of the world resides. Ever since Adam’s sad, sinful Fall, humanity has suffered its consequences. On the pages of history, G_d is writing His Story of Redemption. He salvaged a human race from destruction, rescued a family from a deluge, called a family from idolatry, delivered a nation from bondage, gave this nation a king, and then gave them and all nations a Savior. Throughout the course of history G_d saves His people and will redeem the earth itself.

Prayer Adapted from Luke 2:14 -- “The Song of the Angels”

O Lord, we give Thee praise and glorify Thy Name. Thou abides in the glories of heaven. May You grant reconciled peace to those on earth among all those upon whom Thy favor rests. *Amen.*

Precious Christmas Memory

Moving to Coliseum Ave in Live Oak brought joys and responsibilities. One responsibility is the annual placement of Christmas decorations within the yard. Our neighborhood gathers after Thanksgiving for a meal and predetermined vote on the seasonal decorations. Within days the neighborhood is transformed with lanterns lining the roadway and festive lights brightening the landscape of happy homes.

Favorite Christmas Recipe

Blintz Souffle

Ingredients: 10 to 12 frozen blintzes, assorted flavors, defrosted just enough to separate; 1 cup sour cream; ¼ cup sugar; ¼ cup orange juice; 4 eggs, beaten; 2 tablespoons butter, melted; 2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract; 1/8 teaspoon salt; 1 tablespoon cinnamon sugar; Additional sour cream, for serving (optional)

Recipe: Preheat oven to 350° F. Place blintzes in a 9 x 13-inch pan. In a medium bowl, mix together sour cream, sugar, orange juice, eggs, butter, vanilla and salt. Pour mixture over blintzes. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 45 minutes, until puffed and golden. Serve with sour cream on the side, if desired. Tip: If you have an attractive baking dish, use it. This is a soufflé best served right out of the dish at the table.

I never met a soufflé that I didn’t like, and they like me, too. They tend to settle contentedly on my hips. Blintzes are classic in the Jewish cooking world and every chef has his or her own version of this soufflé. You really can’t go wrong with all that butter, cream, sugar and eggs.





Third Friday of Advent

Luke 2:3-5 – “Mary And Joseph Go To Bethlehem“

Scripture: *Everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. So Yosef, because he was a descendant of David, went up from the town of Natzeret in the Galil to the town of David, called Beit-Lechem, in Yhudah, to be registered, with Miryam, to whom he was engaged, and who was pregnant.*

Devotional: Mary and Joseph had to be registered because the Romans wanted taxes and they had to know how many people there were so they could get all the taxes. But because this secular, pagan government wanted money – G_d’s prophetic plan was fulfilled. Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth. Why would they have gone to Bethlehem when she was so far along in her pregnancy? G_d orchestrated events in Israel to assure His plan became reality. We have a sovereign G_d who is always in charge. All things happen according to His good plan and nothing can stop His perfect will from being accomplished!

Prayer: Dear Lord, I pray that this season You would draw our us all together. Ages and cultures set aside so that You would be our main focus. Help our communities to hear Your word. Thank You for Your many blessings, Amen.

Christmas Greeting: This year at Christmas may G_d bless you with happy memories, happy experiences and future blessings. And may He do all these things for you as you grow in your faith and relationship with His Son Jesus.

Favorite Christmas Custom: Christmas in my home was always a time of light, peace, celebration and happiness. It was also a time of closeness with each family member to reaffirm the ties of love and family. For these same reasons Christmas time in my home begins in November and we extend it through the month of January.

Favorite Christmas Recipe: [Vegetable Soup](#)

Ingredients: 1 lb. beef cubes; 1 can tomatoes; 1 cup diced potatoes; 1 onion; 1 can Veg-All, drained.

Recipe: Cook meat in tomatoes and water for 1 hour. Add all other ingredients and cook until potatoes are tender. Salt & pepper to taste.





Third Saturday of Advent

Luke 2:6, 7 – “ No Room In The Inn ”

Scripture: *While they were there, the time came for her to give birth; and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and laid him down in a feeding trough, because there was no space for them in the living-quarters.*

Devotional: No room for Jesus. This is, at first glance, a very simple, matter of fact statement. Yet it holds a very deep truth that we struggle with every day of our lives. No room for Jesus. The innkeeper turned him away...there was no room. We turn Him away in the busyness of our daily lives, sometimes giving Him the “mangers” of our day. The good news is that, the baby Jesus, born in a manger, is our Lord and King! He loves us and wants to fellowship with us. Let us together make Him the center of our holiday celebrations. Let’s give Him the best room in the “Inns of our Hearts” this Christmas and every day.

Prayer: Dear Lord may we as a church family celebrate Your great love for us by bringing You glory and honor as we celebrate Your birthday this year and throughout the coming one. In Jesus name, Amen

Christmas Greeting: May G_d grant you the peace and joy that the angels announced that Jesus would bring to the world. Merry Christmas! Feliz Navidad! G_d’s Peace to You!

Favorite Christmas Custom: My favorite memory is of Christmas morning and the production my family made of the holiday. Dad had every video camera angle. It really was a pleasant time for my family.

Favorite Christmas Recipe: Holiday Baguettes

Ingredients: 2 Tbsp oil; 1 small red onion, diced; 1 red bell pepper, diced; ½ tsp dried basil; ¼ tsp kosher salt; pinch coarse black pepper; 1 (24-in) baguette; shredded cheese; 3 long wooden skewers

Recipe: Preheat oven to 475°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Heat oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for 3-4 minutes. Add pepper and sauté for an additional 3 minutes. Season with basil, salt, and pepper. Cut off the ends of the baguette; discard ends or reserve for another purpose. Slice baguette into 1 ½ inch thick slices (you should have about 15 slices). Slit each slice through the top, leaving the lower end uncut. Thread each skewer through uncut (lower) part of 5 slices. Add vegetable mixture and cheese into each slit. Place skewers onto prepared baking sheet, cheese side up. Place baking sheet on upper oven rack (top quarter of oven) and bake for 4-5 minutes, or until cheese is melted and top of bread is slightly browned. Remove skewers and serve mini sandwiches alongside a salad and dipping sauces.





The Fourth Sunday Of The Advent Season Christmas Eve

Luke 2:8-16 – “The Angels and The Shepherds”

The Fourth Sunday of Advent: The theme of the Fourth Sunday of Advent is *Salvation*. The story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is how the heavenly Father provided salvation for His people through His Son, Jesus our Messiah. The Advent and Christmas seasons remind us of that pivotal event when the Son of G_d, Jesus, the Messiah, entered time and space to live a life, to die a death, and to be resurrected to new life so that the work needed to grant salvation would be provided for our salvation. Yet during Advent and Christmastide we look forward to the promised return of our Savior, who told his followers that He would return and grant eternal salvation to those who believe in and rely upon His saving person and work.

Christmas Eve: This night reminds us of our Savior’s birth. Jesus the Messiah, G_d Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer of all the universe, yet born in a lowly, humble, animal stall. Jesus’ birth was, in the physical aspects, the lowliest of births. But in each of our hearts significant beyond all we could ever understand. No room in the inn for G_d, but there is room to spare in our hearts for Him. “Jesus our Messiah was born a man, under the law to redeem us that are under the law so that we could receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. 4:4-5).

Christmas Eve Hymns: *Hark the Herald Angels Sing; Silent Night; O Little Town of Bethlehem and Away in a Manger*

All Five Candles:

Light all five candles each night this week as you have your Advent devotions around the Advent Wreath.

Scripture: *In the countryside nearby were some shepherds spending the night in the fields, guarding their flocks, when an angel of ADONAI appeared to them, and the Sh'khinah of ADONAI shone around them. They were terrified; but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am here announcing to you Good News that will bring great joy to all the people. This very day, in the town of David, there was born for you a Deliverer who is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know: you will find a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a feeding trough." Suddenly, along with the angel was a vast army from heaven praising G_d: "In the highest heaven, glory to G_d! And on earth, peace among people of good will!" No sooner had the angels left them and gone back into heaven than the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go over to Beit-Lechem and see this thing that has happened, that ADONAI has told us about." Hurrying off, they came and found Miryam and Yosef, and the baby lying in the feeding trough.*





Devotional: Why the Shepherds? Why there (In Luke 2:8)? It is believed that the fields talked about are the fields on the slope half way between Jerusalem, where the Temple was, to the south toward Bethlehem where the Messiah was born (there is only 6 miles between the 2 towns). These shepherds tended sheep that were purchased by people to be used for sacrifices for their relationship with the Lord in the Temple. How appropriate that G_d, through Angels, invited the shepherds to greet the **LAMB OF G_d** who would take away our sins and make us right with the Father forever! The shepherds ran to meet the Messiah, then they ran to spread the news. Like them, we need to be urgent to come and meet the Messiah, your Savior Jesus and urgent in our desire to tell others.

Prayer: Lord, help us to know You, our owner. Lord, remind us of Your care for us. We are Your people and the sheep of Your pasture. Confirm in us all Your promises through Jesus. Amen.

Christmas Greeting: O Come Let Us Adore Him! From our tribe to you and yours. It's never too late to start a Christmas tradition to pass down to generations. May you find a flagship verse as you sail through the uncharted New Year's waters.

Favorite Christmas Memory: There are certain days that do stand out in my mind. But the one thing I have always treasured about my childhood during the Christmas season was the way this day was made special by both my parents. And it wasn't just the gifts. My mom and dad would cook special meals, have special dinner times for weeks prior to Christmas. They would tell special stories of their own childhoods. They made the whole house be a very special home to live in during those very special days so much so that all my brother and sisters and I love Christmas. We don't love the shopping so much as the gift of family and friends and the warmth of gracious home.

Favorite Christmas Recipe: [Holiday Dump Cake](#)

Ingredients: 1 can cherry pie filling; 1 lg. can crushed pineapple, drained; 1 box yellow cake mix, dry; chopped nuts, walnuts or pecans; 1½ sticks butter.

Recipe: Use 13 inch pyrex baking dish - do not grease. Dump pie filling, pineapple and cake mix in pan. Spread out and sprinkle chopped nuts on top. 1½ stick butter over entire dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Serve warm. Serve 12-15.

A Favorite Advent Hymn

What Child Is This?

What Child is this who, laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.





Christmas Day

Pastor Randy and Margaret Wilding

Luke 2:4-20 – “YESHUA HAMASHIACH, IS BORN!”

Hymns of Christmastide: *Good Christian Men, Rejoice* and *Joy to the World*

Scripture: *So Yosef, because he was a descendant of David, went up from the town of Natzeret in the Galil to the town of David, called Beit-Lechem, in Y'hudah, to be registered, with Miryam, to whom he was engaged, and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth; and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and laid him down in a feeding trough, because there was no space for them in the living-quarters. In the countryside nearby were some shepherds spending the night in the fields, guarding their flocks, when an angel of ADONAI appeared to them, and the Sh'khinah of ADONAI shone around them. They were terrified; but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am here announcing to you Good News that will bring great joy to all the people. This very day, in the town of David, there was born for you a Deliverer who is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know: you will find a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a feeding trough." Suddenly, along with the angel was a vast army from heaven praising G_d: "In the highest heaven, glory to G_d! And on earth, peace among people of good will!" No sooner had the angels left them and gone back into heaven than the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go over to Beit-Lechem and see this thing that has happened, that ADONAI has told us about." Hurrying off, they came and found Miryam and Yosef, and the baby lying in the feeding trough. Upon seeing this, they made known what they had been told about this child; and all who heard were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. Miryam treasured all these things and kept mulling them over in her heart. Meanwhile, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising G_d for everything they had heard and seen; it had been just as they had been told.*

Devotional: The anticipation and waiting is finally over. Bursting into the starlit night came angels singing and declaring the Good News, *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* Less-than-admired shepherds first heard the news that night. Obviously stunned and fearful (an astounding understatement), these shepherds were not so terrified to run for safety. Rather, they ran to Bethlehem to witness this wonderfully announced event. There they found Joseph, Mary and the Babe, a humble sight. The place was not lit with colored bright-shining lights, its was not strung with garland, it did not glitter like tinsel or gold. It was a common place with animals boarded for the night - strewn with hay and feeding troughs.

Jesus came humbly into this world, born as a baby needing to be clothed and fed, soothed and suckled, taught and nurtured. This baby looked like all others these shepherds has seen. But this Baby was different. For ages and for hundreds and hundreds of years longing hearts ached for the Messiah to





come. Now, He finally has come! Joy, hope and praise so much filled the hearts of lowly shepherds that they could not contain this knowledge to themselves. They ran to tell others. But the first one they told was Mary. Her inexplicable pregnancy was now making more and more sense. She gave birth to the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of G_d; celebrated now until He comes again with song and service, pageant and party, family reunions and gifts of love. O glory to G_d in the highest!

Prayer: Adapted from Luke 2:29-32 - “The Song of Simeon”

O Lord, we now can leave this anxious world in perfect peace,
We have come to believe according to Thy Word
The salvation Thou hast provided in Christ, the Lord!
Promised by prophets of old; revealed to Thy people ages ago;
Light to darkened Gentle mind and glory to Thy People now.
We rest in Thy grace and in Thy salvation this joyful Day.

Christmas Benediction

Now, O Lord, release us as your-servants into your care
That we may depart in your peace,
May we ever behold with eyes of faith
Your salvation in Christ our Lord,
May Your presence go with us to lighten our path and
to reveal your glory, now and forever. Amen

Favorite Holiday Memory: As a little boy, Christmas morning was the happiest day of the year. It was even better than one’s birthday. Gifts with your name on the colorfully wrapped box awaited to be opened and enjoyed with hours of gleeful play. One cold, snowy Christmas morning I ran out of the house after all gifts were opened. I ran far enough to look at the roof. After all Santa Claus was to have come last night and the sleigh tracks on the snowy roof would prove it. But wait, there was no tracks, then therefore there was no Santa. There was no mistake about the gifts inside so have I been misled? Yes, the modern Santa Claus is made of myth, but not the story of Jesus. His life, filled with equally remarkable feats of watered transformed into wine, resurrected friends, and stilling stormy winds and waves.

Now the most joyful part of Christmas is not the gifts under a tree or evidence of a swift-flying benevolent, happy, slightly obese Gift-giver. Rather, the joy of Christmas is One come as G_d’s indescribable Gift to all mankind!

Favorite Christmas Recipe

Torah Cannoli

Ingredients: 1 pkg cannoli wafer rolls (18 rolls), such as Presidor; 2 cups ricotta cheese (drain if watery); 3/4 cup powdered sugar; 1 tsp vanilla bean paste (or extract); 1/2 tsp lemon or orange zest





(optional); 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips; 1/4 cup melted chocolate or marshmallow fluff; assorted sprinkles, mini chocolate chips and nonpareils for topping; powdered sugar, for finishing

Recipe: Place melted chocolate or warmed marshmallow fluff in a piping bag and pipe a thin line onto half of the cannoli wrappers. “Glue” pairs of cannoli wrappers together to resemble Torah scrolls. In a bowl, combine the ricotta cheese, vanilla bean paste, citrus zest and chocolate chips. Place in a piping bag. Pipe the filling into both sides of the cannoli wrappers, working one at a time. Over a plate, sprinkle your favorite toppings over the exposed ricotta filling (dipping the ends causes them to flatten, so I prefer pouring the toppings over). Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve. **Note:** The filling causes the cannoli wafer to soften, so if preparing in advance, it’s best to freeze rather than refrigerate. **Variation:** You may use [this cream cheese mousse](#), your favorite mousse, softened ice cream or whipped cream instead of the classic ricotta filling. **Diy Option:** If you cannot get cannoli wafer rolls, you can [make your own](#) or use wonton wrappers. You will need [cannoli molds](#) to form the wrappers.

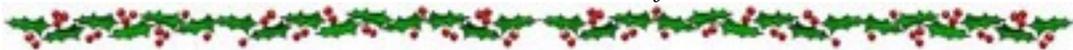
A Favorite Christmas Hymn

Joy to the World

*Joy to the World , the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.*

*Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love*





Tuesday

Luke 2:25-35 – “The Prophecy of Simeon Concerning Jesus The Christ”

Scripture: *There was in Yerushalayim a man named Shim`on. This man was a tzaddik, he was devout, he waited eagerly for G_d to comfort Isra'el, and the Ruach HaKodesh was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Ruach HaKodesh that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah of ADONAI. Prompted by the Spirit, he went into the Temple courts; and when the parents brought in the child Yeshua to do for him what the Torah required, Shim`on took him in his arms, made a b'rakhah to G_d, and said, "Now, ADONAI, according to your word, your servant is at peace as you let him go; for I have seen with my own eyes your yeshu`ah, which you prepared in the presence of all peoples -- a light that will bring revelation to the Goyim and glory to your people Isra'el." Yeshua's father and mother were marvelling at the things Shim`on was saying about him. Shim`on blessed them and said to the child's mother, Miryam, "This child will cause many in Isra'el to fall and to rise, he will become a sign whom people will speak against; moreover, a sword will pierce your own heart too. All this will happen in order to reveal many people's inmost thoughts."*

Devotional: As was the custom and the law, Joseph and Mary brought their infant Son, the baby Jesus, to the temple on the eighth day to be circumcised. At the same time, the Holy Spirit led Simeon there so the prophecy could be fulfilled - that he, Simeon, could depart the world in peace after he had seen G_d's salvation. He spoke to Mary and Joseph of the things to happen and they were in awe at what he said - that their Son would be the future of Israel and that He would suffer and die for the world.

Prayer: Lord of life, thank you for the blessing of Jesus, our savior. Thank you that not only did the angels proclaim him G_d but that your saints are also worthy of praising him with such recognition. Help us this day to praise the Savior of the Church, the Redeemer of your Elect; help us to praise our G_d, Jesus the Messiah. Though we are young as children or as seasoned as grandparents, be praised through our lips and hearts. Amen.

Holiday Greeting: Our Consolation has come! May the Lord bless you with every great gift of grace in the New Year!

Favorite Holiday Memory: Going and spending time together with the family for the holiday season. The older I get the more fun it gets because we have more stuff to do and more places to go and share each others company. I like catching up on everything since the last time we saw each other and every year we seem to get closer and closer.

Favorite Holiday Recipe:

Corned Beef Soup

Ingredients: 1 can corned beef; 2 cans diced or chopped tomatoes; 1 can cream style corn; 1 can whole kernel corn.

Recipe: Start tomatoes cooking 20 minutes. Add corned beef, broken up. Add corn to cook 15 minutes Continue simmering, add water if necessary and stir as needed. Best if it cooks for all flavors to blend.





Wednesday

Luke 2:36-38 – “The Prophecy of Anna Concerning Jesus The Christ”

Scripture: *There was also a prophet named Hannah Bat-P'nu'el, of the tribe of Asher. She was a very old woman -- she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage and had remained a widow ever since; now she was eighty-four. She never left the Temple grounds but worshipped there night and day, fasting and praying. She came by at that moment and began thanking G_d and speaking about the child to everyone who was waiting for Yerushalayim to be liberated.*

Devotional: Anna the prophetess, who had for many years fasted and prayed in the temple, also realized that Jesus was the promised Messiah. She bore testimony to this truth that had been revealed to her by the Holy Spirit to all who looked for redemption.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, bless us with Yourself as the greatest treasure to be held. Then bless us with the grace to give it away again, to the world through evangelism and to You through praise.

Christmas Greeting: For the best news of the season, check out the vanity plate in our grocery parking lot: 4 UN 2 US. This – this is the greatest blessing, and this is ours! Merry Christmas to one and all!

Favorite Christmas Memory: Opening our gifts with our children around the Christmas tree after Christmas Eve Services at church.

Favorite Christmas Recipe: [Christmas Cookies](#)

Ingredients: 1 cup shortening, 2 cups sugar (granulated or light brown) 2 eggs, approximately 5 cups flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder, 1 teaspoon soda, 1/4 cup mil and 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Recipe: Cream shortening and sugar together, Add flavoring. Use half butter for good flavor. Add eggs and beat until fluffy. Sift flour. Measure and add salt, soda and baking powder. Sift again. Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with milk. Stir until dough is smooth. Chill in refrigerator for several hours. Roll out to 1/4 inch thickness and cut in Christmas shapes like bells, trees, angels and Santa Claus. After baking decorate and hang some of them on the Christmas tree.





Thursday

Matthew 2:9-12 – “ The Wise Men And The Star ”

Scripture: *After they had listened to the king, they went away; and the star which they had seen in the east went in front of them until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Upon entering the house, they saw the child with his mother Miryam; and they prostrated themselves and worshipped him. Then they opened their bags and presented him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they took another route back to their own country.*

Devotional: Even wise men from the east were looking for the Messiah. And they were wise enough to recognize the sign, the star that led them straight to Him. G_d has chosen the Jews, but many of them refused to acknowledge the sign of G_d had so clearly revealed to them. How about you? Have you recognized the Child for who He is? The Messiah, the Son of G_d, sent to save you from your sins. Have you believed in Him to become your Savior and Lord – your King? May we all be like the wise men and follow G_d’s leading in our lives.

Prayer: I pray that everyone will realize the true meaning of Christmas and that we will be able to relate that to others in our community.

Christmas Greeting: Blessings as you celebrate the incarnation of Jesus while remembering its culmination at Calvary for our redemption.

Favorite Christmas Custom: One year we went to North Carolina for Christmas. We had about 2 feet of snow. After Christmas, we planted our tree in the front yard. It was fun to come back every year and see how much the tree had grown.

Favorite Christmas Recipes: [Applesauce](#) (Low Carb, Fat Free)

Ingredients: 10 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced into eighths; juice of half a lemon; dash of salt; 1 teaspoon vanilla extract; 3-4 flavored tea bags of your choice; water; sugar substitute, optional (For fruit compote: use fruit of choice)

Recipe: Place apples in a 5-quart pot. Add lemon juice, salt, vanilla, tea bags and water, covering not more than half the apples so that the end result will not be too watery. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer until apples are soft. Hand-blend and mash to desired consistency. For additional sweetness, you can add sugar substitute. **Variations: For a crunchy fruit compote:** Bring ingredients to a boil and cook on high heat for 7 minutes. Turn off heat and cover. Let stand overnight. In the morning, put into a jar and refrigerate. This can be frozen in an airtight container. **For a strawberry-rhubarb apple compote:** Add 1 1/2 cups of sliced strawberries and 1 cup of sliced rhubarb to the apples. Rhubarb is quite tart, so add sugar substitute according to taste. Blend well and refrigerate. **For cinnamon applesauce:** Add 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon to blended apples. For a beautiful crimson color, as well as additional flavor and fiber, add 1-1 1/2 cups frozen blueberries.





Friday

Matthew 2:13-15 – “Mary and Joseph and Jesus Must Flee To Egypt”

Scripture: *“After they had gone, an angel of ADONAI appeared to Yosef in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave. For Herod is going to look for the child in order to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod died. This happened in order to fulfill what ADONAI had said through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.” ”*

Devotional: Immediately following G_d’s warning to the magi to avoid King Herod on their way home (Matt 2:12), an angel alerts Joseph in a dream to escape to Egypt with Mary and Jesus. Of course, Herod has no intention of worshipping this newborn King; he seeks only to kill Him. Arousing from his dream, Joseph wastes no time. He, Mary, and Jesus begin the trip to Egypt before sunrise. Seeing he has been “outwitted” by these wise men, Herod orders the killing of all infant boys in Bethlehem (v. 16). Matthew is careful to note this tragic event is in perfect fulfillment of prophecy in Hosea and Jeremiah (see Matt 2:13 & 18). It also demonstrates that no power, not even the destructive order of a king, can harm Jesus before G_d’s appointed time. Egypt had been a place of refuge for Jacob’s (Israel’s) family; it again becomes a shelter for the Savior who comes to redeem the children of Israel.

Prayer: Dear Lord, sometimes it is difficult for us to see that You are in control of circumstances. We can be so frightened by the evil we see in the world. But even though we “walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” You are with us. We thank You that Jesus, the Perfect sacrifice for our sins, loves us and cares for us. In our Savior’s name we pray. Amen.

Holiday Greeting: Blessings and best wishes to you and your family on the occasion of the remembrance of the birthday of Christ Jesus, the King of Kings and The Lords of Lords.

Favorite Holiday Memory: Usually the weekend after Thanksgiving, our family, including grandparents, gathers for dinner and then decorates the Christmas tree while we listen to Christmas carols.

Favorite Holiday Recipe: **Baked Beef Stew**

Ingredients: 2 lbs. shank steak, cut into cubes; 4 or 5 med. Potatoes, diced; 2 c. carrots, sliced; 1 ½ c. celery, sliced; 1 lg. onion, chopped; 1 lg. can diced tomatoes.

Recipe: Put meat, potatoes, carrots, celery and onions in Dutch oven. Pour tomatoes over the top, cover and bake in oven for 2 hours at 325 degrees.





Saturday

Matthew 2:16-18 – “Herod Kills the Children Because of Jesus’ Birth

Scripture: “Meanwhile, when Herod realized that the Magi had tricked him, he was furious and gave orders to kill all the boys in and around Beit-Lechem who were two years old or less, calculating from the time the Magi had told him. In this way were fulfilled the words spoken through the prophet Yirmeyahu, "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and lamenting loudly. It was Rachel sobbing for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no longer alive." ”

Devotional: This passage speaks of Herod the Great. He was an old, cruel man and very suspicious of any rival to his throne. To Herod, this new King, the baby Jesus, was such a threat to him. Not knowing where the infant was, he had all the babies in Bethlehem and surrounding areas killed. When this happened, there was great sadness and crying. All of the mothers of Bethlehem cried for their babies who were so brutally taken from them. With this, the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled.

Prayer: Lord, let us rejoice for our wonderful Savior’s birthday. We thank you G_d, for loving us so much that you sent us your son. We pray Father, that you bless each person at our church, so that they can be a shining example of your love. In Jesus name, Amen.

Holiday Greeting: May you all have a blessed Holiday season, full of G_d’s grace, and may G_d’s saving grace be with you throughout this New Year.

Favorite Holiday Custom: Gathering as a family around the Advent Wreath, reading the Advent devotions, singing Christmas carols, praying together and worshipping the Lord and loving on each other.

Favorite Holiday Recipe: Cranberry Orange Chex Mix

Recipe: Mix 3 cups each of Corn Chex, Rice Chex, and Wheat Chex cereals and 1 cup of sliced almonds - set aside. Microwave ¼ cup butter, ¼ brown sugar, and ¼ cup frozen (thawed) orange juice concentrate on high for 30 seconds. Stir. Pour butter mixture over cereal mixture, stirring until evenly coated. Pour into large roasting pan. Bake uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring after 15 minutes. Stir in ½ cup dried cranberries; cool. Store in an airtight container.





New Year's Eve

Matthew 2:19-23 – “Jesus Returns To Nazareth”

Hymns of the Week: “*Christ Returneth!*” and “*Is it the Crowning Day?*”

Scripture: *After Herod's death, an angel of ADONAI appeared in a dream to Yosef in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to Eretz-Yisra'el, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead." So he got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to Eretz-Yisra'el. However, when he heard that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Yhudah, he was afraid to go there. Warned in a dream, he withdrew to the Galil and settled in a town called Natzeret, so that what had been spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he will be called a Natzrati.*

Devotional: You’ve heard it asked many ways: Where do you call home? Where do you hail from? Where were you born? Where did you grow up? A sense of place. When someone says, “I’m from New York.” Or, “I was born in Minnesota.” Or, “I grew up in Georgia.” That tells us a whole world about them. That is why Matthew in his gospel tells us about Jesus’ going home. First, he wants us to know that the promise given long ago about Israel (coming out of Egypt) is also true about Jesus (the true Israel or Prince of G_d). But, he tells us more than that. The political circumstances in Israel were such that Jesus would be in danger living in Judea (close to the capital). This is why His Father took him out into the middle of nowhere. Galilee was for country bumpkins and uncultured folks, a place the Roman authorities hardly knew existed. Here, Jesus could safely grow up. This is what every mom and dad wants for their kids. But, Matthew sees in this move far more than that. He knows it is the plan of G_d. But you ask, where did the prophets say the Messiah would be a Nazarene? Good question, they don’t. Well, at least not in so many words. The word for Nazareth/Nazarene has links to two very important passages: Judges 16:17 where we are reminded that a Nazirite is set apart for G_d from birth, and Isaiah 4:3 where we are told that He “will be called holy,” (nazoraios).

So what was Matthew trying to tell us? Jesus would live at the place, Nazareth that would remind us of what G_d has done to Him. The Father has set Jesus apart from birth to beholy and to live in faithfulness to Him. The total of Jesus’ life was to be lived from Nazareth to the cross in obedience to the Father. For this reason, He is called the Nazarene, the Set Apart and Holy One.





Prayer: Lord of life, thank you for the blessing of Jesus, our savior. Thank you that not only did the angels proclaim him G_d but that your saints are also worthy of praising him with such recognition. Help us this day to praise the Savior of the Church, the Redeemer of your Elect; help us to praise our G_d, Jesus Christ. Though we be young as children or as seasoned as grandparents, be praised through our lips and hearts. Amen.

Holiday Greeting: May the Lord bless you with every great gift of grace in the New Year! We are on the eve of another new year with all the excitement of new beginnings. This provides us the opportunity to reflect on the past year and look forward to what the Lord is going to do in the coming year. May this be a year that we continue to grow in the knowledge and understanding of His perfect will for our lives.

Favorite Christmas Memory and/or Custom: The day after Christmas is a day of rest. We enjoy family, friends and the good things G_d has given to us.

Favorite Holiday Recipe: **Waldorf Salad**

Ingredients: 2 c. diced apples; 1 c. chopped celery; 1 c. white seedless grapes, halved; ½ c. chopped walnuts; 1/3 c. mayonnaise; ¼ c. cool whip; ½ tsp. lemon juice.

Recipe: Combine apples, celery, grapes and nuts. Sprinkle lemon juice over. Mix in mayonnaise and cool whip. Chill. Serves 6-8.

Favorite Holiday Hymn

Glad Day, Glad Day!

*Glad day, glad day! Is it the crowning day?
I'll live for today, nor anxious be;
Jesus, my Lord I soon shall see.
Glad day, glad day! Is it the crowning day*





New Year's Day!

Matthew 4:12-17 – “Jesus Begins His Public Ministry”

Scripture: *“When Yeshua heard that Yochanan had been put in prison, he returned to the Galil; but he left Natzeret and came to live in K'far-Nachum, a lake shore town near the boundary between Z'vulun and Naftali. This happened in order to fulfill what Yesha`yahu the prophet had said, "Land of Z'vulun and land of Naftali, toward the lake, beyond the Yarden, Galil-of-the-Goyim -- the people living in darkness have seen a great light; upon those living in the region, in the shadow of death, light has dawned." From that time on, Yeshua began proclaiming, "Turn from your sins to G_d, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!"*

Devotional: Matthew shows us an important time in Jesus' life, the beginning of his public ministry. Isaiah had prophesied the **light** would come, and Matthew writes about Jesus fulfilling the prophecy. One of the Messiah's works was to bring **light** into **darkness**; He would be a light to both Jews and Gentiles [John 1:9; 12:46.] Jesus said that we are the **salt and light** of this darkened world. Therefore we need to shine so brightly, that the world would see the difference and change that Christ has brought into our lives! What a privilege to be used by G_d and be a little ray of **light** illuminating peoples' broken lives. In this new year ‘... Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.’ Mat. 5:16.

Prayer: Father, we wait on You and in your guidance for this new year; Strengthen our lives, our homes and our resources, so that Your Holy name will be proclaimed and exalted daily. We give unto You each one and pray that as we go through our challenges this year, we will have the attitude that You require from us.

New Year's Greeting: May the Lord bless you in this New Year with the greatest of celebrations centered on His Son our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Favorite Holiday Custom: Eating black eyed peas, rice and ham hocks – “Hoppin’ John” for lunch! Um-um good!





Favorite Holiday Recipe: **Old-Fashioned Latkes Recipe**

Ingredients: 4 1/2 pounds (2kg) russet potatoes (about 7 medium-large); 5 cups diced onion; 4 eggs; 1 1/4 cups matzo meal (more or less as needed); 2 tablespoons (30g) kosher salt, to taste; Canola or peanut oil, for frying; Applesauce and sour cream, for serving.

Directions: Shred potatoes with the grating disk of a food processor. After every 2 or 3 potatoes, wrap shreds in cheesecloth that has been folded over twice. Tie corners around the handle of a wooden spoon and twist bundle until water flows out. Collect water in a bowl and squeeze all potatoes until dry. Transfer potatoes to a large mixing bowl along with diced onion. Let drained potato water sit, undisturbed, until a pool of brown water forms on top of a slurry of pale potato starch. Carefully drain off water, then mix starch into potato and onion mixture with your hands. Mix in eggs, one at a time, alternating with 1/4-cup additions of matzo meal, until latke mix can be formed into patties that just stick together in your hands. Add salt incrementally. Heat 1/2 inch oil in a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat until a shred of potato immediately bubbles when added to pan. Form a small amount of latke mix into a disk and fry on both sides until golden brown to test for seasoning. Taste and add more salt as needed. Form latke mix into patties about 4 inches wide and 1 inch thick in the center. Slide into pan, cooking no more than 4 at a time. Fry until a golden-brown crust forms on bottom, then flip with a slotted spatula and fork until same color is achieved on other side. Flip as needed to get a firm, darker-than-golden crust on both sides. Transfer to a sheet pan lined with paper towels to cool for 2 minutes, then serve with applesauce and sour cream at the table.





Advent Devotional Song Sheet

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of G_d appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Go Tell It On the Mountain

When I was a sinner
I prayed both night and day
I asked the Lord to aid me
And He showed me the way:
Go tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and ev'rywhere
Go tell it on the mountain
'Cause Jesus Christ is born

I Wonder as I Wander

I wonder as I wander Out under the sky
How Jesus the Savior Did come for to die
For poor on'ry people Like you and like I,
I wonder as I wander Out under the sky

Angels From the Realms of Glory

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

Hark, the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild
G_d and sinners reconciled
"Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down His sweet head
Bless all the dear children In Thy tender care
And take us to heaven To live with Thee there



Christmas Devotional Song Sheet

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

Good Christian men rejoice
With heart and soul and voice!
Give ye heed to what we say
News! News! Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before Him bow
And He is in the manger now
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Joy to the World

Joy to the world!
The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart Prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

Over the River and Through the Woods

Over the river and thru the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way To carry the sleigh,
Thru the white and drifted snow, oh!
Over the river and thru the wood,
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes, And bites the nose,
As over the ground we go.

Ding Dong! Merrily on High

Ding dong! merrily on high
In heaven the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with Angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas
We wish you a Merry Christmas
We wish you a merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year
Good tidings we bring To you and your kin
Good tidings for Christmas
And a Happy New Year

Deck the Halls

Deck the halls with boughs of holly
Fa la la la la, la la la la
'Tis the season to be jolly
Fa la la la la, la la la la
Don we now our gay apparel
Fa la la, la la la, la la la
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol
Fa la la la la, la la la la

Go Tell It On the Mountain

When I was a sinner
I prayed both night and day
I asked the Lord to aid me
And He showed me the way:
Go tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go tell it on the mountain
'Cause Jesus Christ is born



Christmas Devotional Song Sheet

Jingle Bells

Dashing through the snow
In a one-horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go Laughing all the way
Bells on bobtail ring Making spirits bright
What fun it is to ride and sing
A sleighing song tonight!
Oh! Jingle bells, Jingle bells,
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh! Hey!
Jingle bells, Jingle bells Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh!

Good King Wenceslas

Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even
Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel
When a poor man came in sight
Gathering winter fuel
In his master's steps he trod
Where the snow lay dinted
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed
Therefore, Christian men, be sure
Wealth or rank possessing
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing

Here We Come A-Wassailing

Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wand'ring
So fair to be seen.
Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail, too,
And G_d bless you, and send you
A Happy New Year,
And G_d send you a Happy New Year.

It Came upon the midnight clear

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heav'n's all gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

The First Noel

The first Noël, the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël,
Born is the King of Israel!

