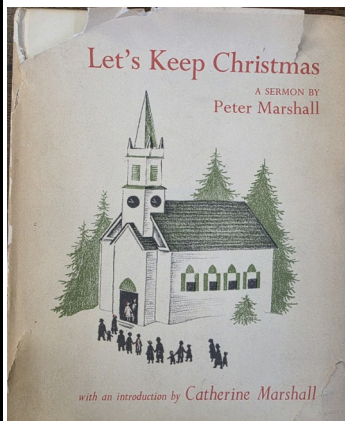


As we approach the beginning of December, many people – even many of you long-standing LCMS Lutherans think of it as the beginning of the Christmas season. And, while you've heard me talk about the great value of us not allowing the wonderful season of Advent (the four Sundays prior to Christmas Eve) to be overshadowed and pushed out of by the commercial influence of Christmas in early December, that is not where I'd like to focus our attention here in this article.

Many of you have seen – or perhaps own – a car magnet like the one to the right that says, “*Keep Christ in Christmas.*” Not only is that directed at those who want to rename the holiday to *Xmas* or even worse *Winter Holiday* but more importantly it is a way for us Christians to provide a witness to our current culture about the true Biblical point of the Christmas holiday – that it is always to be about Christ and His birth and the difference He makes as our God and Savior.



In going through our Church library earlier this year a small little book was found entitled *Let's Keep Christmas*, which is the recounting of a short sermon by Rev. Peter Marshall published in 1952. Rev. Marshall was a Presbyterian pastor in Washington D.C. who also served as Chaplain of the United States Senate from 1947 to 1949.



Even though his sermon was written more than 75 years ago, Marshall speaks of the challenges regarding the way people misuse the holiday of Christmas as if he were still alive and preaching to you and me right now today. What follows are some of the key points and applications that I have gleaned from Marshall's words.

“Changes are everywhere. Many institutions and customs that we once thought sacrosanct have gone by the board,” and that was in the 1940s! Marshall bemoans the complete disconnect to Christmas that we see in the “modernistic Christmas cards.” “I cannot appreciate the dogs and cats, galloping horses, ships in full sail...or any of the cute designs that leave out the traditional symbols of the star...the manger... and Angels there must be.”

“There is no need to search for stories new and different. There is only one after all – and no modern author can improve it: ‘...And the angel said unto them, Fear

not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’”

See if any of this sounds familiar: “We all feel the pressure of approaching Christmas. The traffic is terrible. The stores are crowded...Mob scenes make shopping a nightmare. ... You think of friends and loved ones who are so hard to shop for. You can't think of anything they need (which is rather strange when you take time to think of it).” “Maybe there is nothing in a store that they need. But what about some token of love – what about love itself... and friendship... and understanding... and consideration...and a helping hand... and a smile... and a prayer? You can't buy these things in any store, and these are the very thing people need.”

Here's what I believe is one of Marshall's most important quotes, “*Your Christmas is not commercialized, unless you have commercialized it.*” So “Let's not succumb to the sophistication that complains: ‘Christmas belongs only to the children.’ That shows that you have never understood Christmas at all, for the older you get, the more it means.”

“Have you been saying, ‘I just can't seem to feel the Christmas spirit this year’? That's too bad. As a confession of lack of faith...You are saying that you feel no joy that Jesus came into the world...You are confessing that His presence in the world is not a reality to you... Maybe you need all the more to read the Christmas story over again.”

In fact Marshall goes to the point of saying, "Would that Christmas lasted all year." "Then you will remember that Christmas means – the beginning of Christianity...". The promise that the angels sang is the most wonderful music the world has ever heard. 'Peace on earth and good will toward men'."

Pastor Marshall wraps up his thoughts in this way: "If history has any voice, it is to say that all these ways of men lead nowhere. There remains one way – The WAY ... the way of Him Who was born a Babe in Bethlehem." "So we will not 'spend' Christmas... nor 'observe' Christmas. We will 'keep' Christmas – keep it as it is...in all the loveliness of its ancient traditions. May we keep it in our hearts, that we may be kept in its hope."

Friends, my response to Marshalls reflective, sometimes convicting, but overall exhorting sermon is this:
Amen!

Let's *Keep Christmas*, this year; yes, during the season, but even more, throughout the year and the rest of our lives, for Christ is keeping us forever in His grace.

Pastor Keith Bess



Advent & Christmas Worship Service Schedule



"The Lord Opens the Womb"

Mid-week Advent Worship and meals will be:

Dec. 3rd, 10th, and 17th

6:00pm Dinner - hosted by various church groups

6:45pm Hymn Sing

7:00pm Advent Worship Service

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, Dec 24th, 6:30 pm



Christmas Day Service

Thursday, Dec 25th, 9:00 am



CELEBRATING OUR BLESSINGS!

**It's easy for us to find
things to gripe about, but
God's blessings abound!**

- ✦ Members of all our Boards who have served so faithfully and wonderfully this year!
- ✦ Isaiah Dux, who has taken on the church janitorial job as his first part-time job.
- ✦ Family to celebrate the holidays with.
- ✦ New members who joined our church this year.
- ✦ Ann Pepmeyer, our oldest church member, who comes in to empty the dishwasher.
- ✦ Mary Ann Merritt for everything she does.
- ✦ Tracy Tiscareño for running "an amazing" Craft Bazaar.
- ✦ All of our faithful musicians over the years: organists/pianists, instrumentalists, choir/soloists, (including our director).
- ✦ That we are a "singing" congregation.
- ✦ Warm homes in winter.
- ✦ Utilities (electricity, running water, gas, etc.).
- ✦ Fellow Christians that help and support us in our needs.

Count Your Blessings

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

Church Decorating will be on Saturday, **December 20th at 8:30 am.** If you purchased poinsettias to share, please bring those then as well.



**Help Us "Spruce"
Up the Church!**
8:30 am



Come and have some fun on New Year's Eve from **5-9 pm!** Bring snacks to share and games to play.

We still need a few more Poinsettias!

Please purchase a poinsettia, or two, from any retailer and bring it in to the church and leave it until after the Christmas Day service. We will have labels to put on your plant in case you would like to have it after the Christmas services. You have the option to spend as little or as much as you like—it's totally in your control. The only stipulations are that they should be **red** or **white** and need to be **at the church by December 20th** as that is the day the Altar Guild cleans and decorates the sanctuary for Christmas.



A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board to help you plan for making your purchase/s and for us to keep track of how many are coming in. Thank you for adding to the beautification and enhancement of our sanctuary during the Christmas season.

Sunday Morning Prayers: Kindly help us out by making your prayer request for Sunday prayers before noon on Fridays if at all possible. After that, please communicate directly with Pastor as soon as you are able, **prior to Sunday morning**, to assure that your request can be included. On Sunday morning, please **call the church** number with new prayers. Texts or email on Sunday morning will not be seen by Pastor as he is preparing for worship. Also, if you have submitted a Prayer Request to the Prayer Team, and do NOT want it in the Sunday prayers, PLEASE state your wishes. Our intention going forward is to print every prayer submitted, unless there is instruction to keep it private. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.





Remember – Confirmands this includes YOU!
Please remember that we cannot be a
Youth Group without YOU!
All school age kids are welcome:

This is the last newsletter for 2025, just as Sunday, November 23 was the last Sunday of 2025. The Advent of our Lord is upon us, and we are looking forward to celebrating His birth.

We still have 2026 calendars for sale. Isaiah will be selling the calendars at our Wednesday Advent services. Sunday, December 7th, Natalie oversees sales. Sunday, December 14th, Anna and Jacob oversee the sales. Sunday, December 21st, Abby will oversee sales. Hopefully all 50 calendars will have been sold by this date, but if not, Natalie will oversee the sales on Sunday, December 28th.



The Youth are hosting the Advent meal on Wednesday, December 17th. We are going to serve spaghetti and meatballs with salad and garlic bread. As always, desserts will be provided by the congregation.



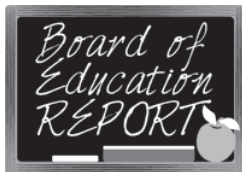
Anna will have a dance recital sometime in December. As of this writing, no date has been announced yet, but I will keep you posted. Jacob is involved in Knowledge Bowl and has a competition on December 13th in Alamosa. We will pray for safe travels for all involved. His team will compete in nationals in April in Chicago! Natalie has a choir concert on December 8th at 6 pm at Coal Ridge and a band Concert on December 11th at 7:00pm. If you are curious, ask one of the kids!

Advent Event: The Youth Group invites ALL AGES, especially non-members, to a night of fellowship and fun, Sunday, December 21st from 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Chili and drinks will be provided and everyone who attends is encouraged to bring 2 dozen of their favorite Christmas cookies to enjoy and to share in a cookie exchange. We will also have stations set up to make ornaments or Christmas cards for shut-ins. We will also be watching “A Charlie Brown Christmas” movie. There will be a special gift to the youth group member who brings the most guests.

Youth sponsored:
ADVENT EVENT
for ALL ages 5-8pm

Charlie and I want to thank all of you for your prayers during his hospitalization and recovery. We are so blessed to have our Mount Calvary family to pray for us and support us. Thank you!

Yours In Christ's Service,
Nona Schaefer, Chairperson Board of Youth



Advent greetings from the Board of Education! I remember as a child receiving an Advent calendar at church. It showed the nativity with Mary and Joseph around the manger cradling Baby Jesus with the barn behind them and the animals all around with the Shepherds. The angels were in the sky by the star. I loved opening a square each night and reading the Bible verse telling the story of Jesus' birth. I was most excited on Christmas when Baby Jesus was finally born! I loved looking at the nativity scene that my dad painted in high school, the Baby Jesus was my favorite. As my sister and I got older we painted a ceramic nativity scene in 4-H for my mom. Again, my favorite piece was the Baby Jesus. During Advent we look forward to Jesus' birth and also look forward to His return. This is a good reminder to be ready all the time, not just in December.

Sunday, January 4th during combined Sunday School/Bible Study, please mark your calendars for a melodrama to celebrate the best birthday in human history!

- Corinne Gabel





As we will soon come to the end of another year, it is normal to look back on the past year and reflect on how it went. We easily remember the big events and milestones, both good and bad, but we often overlook so many of the small blessings that happened and we almost always fail to recognize how we spent all the time in between these events.

I don't know if you have ever thought about the amount of time God gives us every year, I know I had never broken it down, so here's some data: There are 8760 total hours per year (24 hr x 365 days) and if you are able to follow the recommended guidelines of 8 hrs of sleep per night, then you have 5840 hrs left. Of course then there is work or school (for most) which is about 2080 hrs (8 hrs x 5 days x 52 wks) and ignoring the holidays and time off that reduce that number we now have 3760 hrs. I'll then remove a generous 4 hrs a day for daily things like getting ready/food prep/eating/travel time/restroom time, etc. and we are still left with around 2300 hrs/yr, so how do you fill those hours?

Those with dependent children, parents, or other family may spend much of that time with them, but once they are grown that goes down, so what else? In our technology driven world I suspect media (movies, TV, streaming apps, games, social media, etc.) fills in more than we would like to admit. I know I have lost hours immersed in these distractions to the peril of what should be more important priorities.

Now I come to the hardest part ... How much of your time do you spend following God's will for you as a Christian? Many people treat the few hours a week they are in Church as a burden they must endure, but it should be a joyful giving back to God in thanks for all the time we have been given. If you attend an hour of church weekly, that's 52 hrs (just over 0.5% of a year) and maybe you add an hour of Bible Study/Sunday School and raise that up to 1% of your time. But what if we follow the biblical model of tithing and give 10% of our time back to God? That is 2.4 hrs a day (10% of 24 hrs) or 16.8 hrs a week that would be given to serving God's will. There are many ways to serve Him like worship, studying his word, devotions, prayer, and caring for others, but how else could you serve the Lord with your time?



This time of year we are looking for people to serve in the leadership roles of the congregation for the coming year. As someone that has held many of the congregation's leadership roles through the years, from my personal experience, I can say none of them come close to an average of 16 hrs a week. For those already serving in these roles I know it can be thankless at times, so I want to be sure to say: Thank You! on behalf of your fellow members for your answer to God's call and I pray you continue to serve as you are able. Luther spoke in a sermon on Rom 12 7-8 about the gifts of grace and serving others:

4107 Be Undeterred by Unthankfulness

Among Christians, where one wants to help the other, this should be done with singleness of purpose so that nothing is sought but the honor of God and the benefiting of our neighbor, without noting whether he is grateful. But the world says: This is what I did for him, while he does the worst to me. The world will be served and celebrated. But a Christian says: I have given this to him in the service of Christ and for the good of my neighbor ... You say: I would gladly give to him, but he is always so ungrateful and contrary. No! If you want to practice mercy, its water must rise from the spring and fountainhead. If water must be poured *into* a fountain, it is no good. If I let myself become impatient, mercy does not well up from my heart but has been poured into it. Rather the heart should say: I do it gladly, willingly, and take delight in it; let a man react however he pleases. God, too, gives many things in vain and expects nothing in return.

It is not God's desire that you serve for your own honor, but to honor Him in gratitude for all He has given you. So, I ask that you prayerfully consider how you can prioritize more time serving God's will for you as a member of His body of believers here at Mt. Calvary in the coming year. This does not just mean a leadership role, but willingness to serve fellow believers and help wherever you are able. Let's all try to find a way to dedicate at least 10% of our time Serving Him in the coming year as thanks for all the time we have been given. - Scott Heusinkveld



Mt. Calvary's Ministry Plan – Monthly Update

Church Council Update

Sharing God's Word and Serving All!

That is our "Mission Statement". How do we do this? In part, that is what the "Target Teams" are about.

Target #1: Mt. Calvary is actively involved with the youth in our community.

Target #2: We are good stewards of the property God has given us.

Target #3: Every member of Mt. Calvary is participating in the ministry of Mt. Calvary

Target #4: Mt. Calvary's members care for each other.

Target #5: Our church members care for the needs of the community.

Many of Mt. Calvary's servants have been working all year toward the goal of Sharing God's Word and Serving All. They have been reaching out to our communities with Christ's saving love and Gospel. Thank you for your dedication and faithful hard work.

Pastor wants us to remember Mt. Calvary members are "saints in Christ" and to foster closer relationships. When we become comfortable interacting with each other, we can become comfortable reaching out to our larger communities.

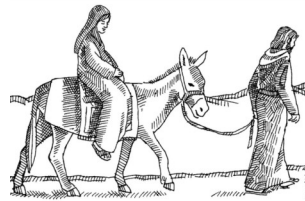
Our communities are in a housing boom. There are many new people we can invite to join us in worship and service. God has brought the mission field to us. He wants to save their souls. How will they know if we don't tell them?

Continue to watch the newsletter for monthly updates on what our Target Teams are achieving.

If any Target Teams need assistance, please contact any member of the Council.

Submitted by Kent Dreher, President

Divine Bible Study
will be taking a break
for December and will
resume January 8th.



"And Joseph also went...
to...Bethlehem to be
registered with Mary,
who was with child."

Luke 2:4-5, ESV

Board of Spiritual Outreach

A big thank you goes out to all who donated turkey gravy packets to be used in the Thanksgiving baskets put together by the Methodist Church. A total of 208 packets were collected! Thank you once again!

We are still collecting medicine bottle caps to be used by Miracle House (They have raised over \$62.50) and milk bottle caps from Longmont Dairy for Butler Elementary. Please place them in the boxes that are on the table by the restroom. Your donations have been helping tremendously.—Judy Kimball

