



MARCO LUTHERAN CHURCH  
2023 DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

# THE SHIP'S MESSENGER



WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

Jaye Spencer

Betsy Sabbides

Laurence Socar

Edwin

Mike Williams

Dina Davis

Rev. Lynn Grayson

Pastor Gary  
Ellis



"At Marco Lutheran Church, we are followers of Jesus Christ who share His Good News  
by loving and serving all people."

Marco Lutheran Church • 525 N. Collier Blvd. • Marco Island, FL 34145 • 239-394-0332  
[www.marcolutheran.org](http://www.marcolutheran.org)



# A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR GARY KOLTZ



Many people know Advent as a time of expectation, waiting, and preparation for both the celebration of Jesus' birth and his return or second coming. Advent is also the beginning of anew church year. What a fitting way to start the new liturgical church year with a celebration; a birthday celebration for Jesus. We prepare our hearts and minds for this wondrous event with many symbols that remind us of Jesus.

The celebrations usually starts with the **Christmas tree**. We think of the Tree of the cross on which our Savior gave His life for our redemption. An evergreen tree is God's reminder to us that He comes to us and is ever-living. Trees were first used in German Paradise Plays portraying the creation of mankind. They were later decorated in the woods as part of the Christmas celebration, eventually being brought into homes. Martin Luther is credited with being the first to put lights on trees, symbolizing the beauty of the sly and stars. He had sseen the sky refelecting off the snow covered tree and wanted his wife and children to share in the experience.



The **wreath** is a circle of evergreens reminding us of the never-encing love of God and the eternal glories He holds before us.

**Chrismons** are Christmas decorations with Christian symbols on them. They help Christians to remember that Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birthday. They are often used on Christmas Trees in Churches and Christians homes. I hope this list of Chrismons below will help you in this season of Advent to prepare for our saviour's arrival.



The Cross symbolizes that Christians believe Jesus Christ died for everyone on a cross.



The **Celtic Cross** is a normal cross with a circle in the middle to symbolize eternity.



The **Anchor** cross reminds Christians that Jesus is the anchor of their faith. HIS are the first three letters of "Jesus" in Greek.



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The **Fish** is one of the oldest Christian symbols. The letters are from the Greek word for fish (ichthus) that stands for Jesus (i), Christ (X), God, (Q), Son (Y), Savior (S). Some of Jesus' disciples were fishermen.



Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.. Used together, they symbolize that Christians believe Jesus is the beginning and end of all things.



The **Chi-Rho** looks like a "P" with an "X" on top of it. These two letters are the first two letters of the Greek word "Christos" which means Christ.



The Star of David, sometimes called the Star of Creation, is a symbol that Jesus was a Jew and a descendant of King David.



A Five Pointed Star represents the five wounds of Jesus on the cross.

The Nativity Star is the symbol of the Star of Bethlehem or Epiphany, when the Wisemen visited Jesus.



An Eight Pointed Star represents baptism and regeneration.



The Nativity Star is the symbol of the Star of Bethlehem or Epiphany, when the widemen visited Jesus.



The Crown is the symbol that Jesus is King. It shows that Christians believe Jesus is ruler over heaven and earth.



The Shepherd's Crook or Staff remembers that Jesus sometimes called Himself a shepherd. It can also represent the shepherds who were the first people told about the birth of Jesus.



Hands in Prayer help Christians remember that they should pray to Jesus.



The Scroll represents the Bible.



The Dove is the symbol of peace and the Holy Spirit. It is shown pointing down to represent the Holy Spirit that appeared as a Dove when Jesus was baptized.



The Lamp and The Candle both represents that Christians believe Jesus in the Light of the World.



The Shell is a symbol for baptism. It reminds Christians of the water that they are baptized in. It is also a sign of Pilgrimage, as Pilgrims to the Holy Land (Israel) would use a shell as a drinking vessel.



The Ship is also a symbol of the Church, sailing towards heaven.



The Cup or Chalice is a symbol of the Mass, Eucharist or Communion. It also represents God's forgiveness.



The Angel reminds Christians of the angels who told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. It can also represent the second coming of Jesus, which the Bible says will start with an Angel blowing a trumpet.



**Babe/Manger** represents Jesus as a baby at Christmas.



The **Lamb** is a symbol for Jesus who is sometimes called "The Lamb of God".



The **Butterfly** is a symbol for transformation and the immortal soul.



The **Heart** is a symbol of love and reminds Christians that God is love.

As we await the arrival of the new born King may each of the symbols remind us of the hope born out of wall that our Lord has done and will do for all of humanity. Jesus brings peace to us now in a world filled with trouble. His peace knows no boundaries or end. There is joy in Jesus as the angels declared at his birth to the shepherds—Rejoice.

Christmas is a time to rejoice and celebrate its miracle. Love is the very core of the Christian story, it's something that we receive from Jesus and that we have to share with one another. Finally, remember to let your light shine in the darkness. Jesus is the source of light, our hope, joy, peach, and giver of love.

Merry Christmas to all.



# BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY

By Linda Harrison

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and that your plans for Christmas are shaping up. May God grant each of us a stress-free holiday season.

Please take a few minutes and make a donation to the BOLM Staff Christmas Gift fund before **Sunday, December 17**. We take the total amount donated and divide it among ALL staff members. It is our congregation's way of thanking our dedicated church staff for their hard work throughout the year. If you so desire, you can also earmark your gift to a specific staff member. Your wishes will be honored. Let's make this a wonderful Christmas for our staff.

Because December 24 falls on a Sunday, we've made a change in our worship schedule. Please note that there will be NO 9:30 a.m. service on December 24. We will have two Christmas Eve services: 4 PM and 6 PM. And, we will serve communion at both of those services. So, please plan to join us at one of those services.

If Christmas Day services are more to your liking, we will be STREAMING a service at 9:30 a.m. December 25. There will be NO in-person worship. This will allow our church staff to spend Christmas morning with their families.

Thank you for your continued support of our staff and our ministries.

Merry Christmas to you and your families!

The Board of Lay Ministry

## ***Thank You***

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the Marco Lutheran Family for your support of my family and me with your prayers during Bob's illness and following his death. The flowers the church sent were beautiful!

Many people have been asking me about the Celebration of Life. We will be holding the Celebration of Life at the church on **Saturday, January 13 at 1 PM**. Bob hated formality – and particularly suits. What he really liked was his Hawaiian shirts. In respecting his wishes and in celebration of Bob, please wear your favorite tropical attire.

## Christmas Worship Schedule

### **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

**Sunday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.**

***(There will be no 9:30 a.m. service)***

### **Christmas Day Service—Monday, December 25**

**Pre-recorded on line service only—9:30 a.m.**

**[www.marcolutheran.org](http://www.marcolutheran.org)**



# MUSIC NOTES

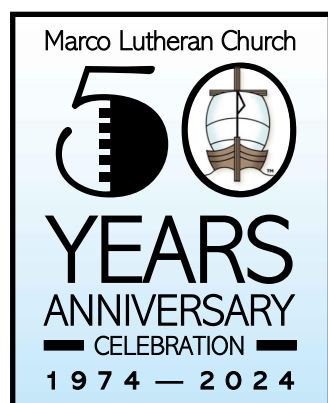
By Craig Greusel



## C.A.R.O.L. ( COME & REJOICE OUT LOUD! )

We need our members to go to the Esplanade on Thursday evening, December 14 around 6:45 p.m. You might like to make a dinner reservation at one of the restaurants, have a drink at the Star Bar, or grab a cone from Coldstone Cremery. As long as you are somewhere in earshot of the music, you will be all set. When you hear someone start singing, simply get up from where you are and join in. What fun! What joy! What purpose!

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2024 will mark Marco Lutheran Church's 50th Anniversary! Festivities are already being planned. There will be a dinner Celebration on February 17, 2024 and on the 18th, there will be a concert on the new organ that we purchased in honor of our anniversary. We are busy with our 50th Anniversary Cookbook and a Men's fashion Show sometime in the Spring. Both the dinner and concert will have limited seating, so mark your calendars!

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## GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS - 4 WAYS TO GIVE



All transactions are secure and confidential.

You can make a one-time donation or set-up regular weekly or monthly donations on our website

[www.marcolutheran.org](http://www.marcolutheran.org)

Questions? [financialsec@marcolutheran.org](mailto:financialsec@marcolutheran.org)

We appreciate your continued support!



**Our Daily Bread**  
Food Pantry

*A partnership of Our Daily Bread Food Pantry,  
the South Collier YMCA, and Marco Lutheran Church*



# LUNCH WITH FRIENDS OVER 60!

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023 AT 11:00 A.M.**

**at MARCO LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Seating is limited, you must RSVP**

**239-259-5188 or**

**[lunchwithfriendsmarco@gmail.com](mailto:lunchwithfriendsmarco@gmail.com)**



**MARCO LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
***Artist Series 2024***

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**Thanks to your overwhelming response - ALL Shows are SOLD OUT.**

**We have started wait lists for each performance and will reach out if tickets become available.**

**Please let us know if you purchased tickets and will not be using any of them.  
239-394-5579**

**The ticket desk will continue to be open Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10a.m. and 2p.m. and Sundays after service.**

**We will be closed the week of December 24<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>.**

# WOMEN OF MARCO

By Cindi Kramer

Prizes! Lunch! Entertainment! The Women of Marco enjoyed a wonderful Christmas luncheon earlier this month. Thank you to all who volunteered and attended!

Thank you to all who helped decorate our church—it looks fantastic! Thank you in advance for helping us undecorate it in January! Our volunteers enjoyed fellowship with pizza and beer after both events.

Our Cookbook is in production and should be available after the first of the year. Thank you to all who contributed recipes and cooking tips.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 2, 2024 for our Annual Rummage Sale! We need volunteers for the week leading up to the sale, and then of course, to work the sale. Sign up sheets will be available at the Ministry Desk after the first of the year.

Merry Christmas and Happy, Healthy New Year!!!



## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS!

We are once again selling poinsettias to create the Poinsettia tree in the sanctuary. The cost this year is \$20 per plant. Please sign up on the sheet at the Ministry desk.

## SMILE!

This season, we will be updating our photo directory, aiming to have a print version by February. If you would like to be included, please sign up at the Ministry desk, We will be taking pictures before worship beginning January 7, 2024.



# COOKIES! CANDY! SMILES!



**BOHC Annual Cookie Collection:** We are collecting cookies, candies and/or bars for distribution to our shut in, persons in need and identified local organizations that support our church.

Please donate at least 2 dozen and place in the church kitchen by December 13<sup>th</sup>. We will be packing and delivering the items on December 14<sup>th</sup> and are in need of help doing this.

## Acts 20:35


**"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"**

## Watch the Worship service anywhere and at any time with any device that connects to the Internet.



Services are streamed "live" and are archived for later viewing. Use your computer, tablet, mobile phone or smart TV.

On our website at: [www.marcolutheran.org](http://www.marcolutheran.org)

- 1 Click on  "CLICK HERE for our video page" to get to the page with the videos.
- 2 On The VIDEO STREAMING page, click on the worship image to start the video.

Recent and older videos are available to watch on the same webpage.

You can follow along with each Worship Service using bulletins that are always available located on the website's "What's Happening" page under "Publications /Forms."





## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| Judy Dukelow         | 12-02 |
| Paul Greene          | 12-02 |
| Carol Horne          | 12-03 |
| Susan Knox           | 12-03 |
| Nancy Kramer         | 12-05 |
| Margaret Pond        | 12-05 |
| Cindi Kramer         | 12-06 |
| Michele Sturzenegger | 12-06 |
| Fran Klein           | 12-07 |
| Jan Miniutti         | 12-09 |
| Carolyn Ohman        | 12-10 |
| Carol Gore           | 12-11 |
| Kevin Koenig         | 12-11 |
| Zachary Gremel       | 12-12 |
| Paul Gremel          | 12-13 |
| Dorothy Roberts      | 12-14 |
| Carole Meyer         | 12-15 |
| Andy Rozite          | 12-15 |
| George Leksas        | 12-16 |
| Dick Moody           | 12-22 |
| Jerry Wiens          | 12-22 |
| Donnie Rooksberry    | 12-25 |
| Lyle Sledge          | 12-25 |
| James Strosnider     | 12-25 |
| Kimberly Razavi      | 12-26 |
| Marjorie Witkop      | 12-26 |
| Jim Gilbertson       | 12-27 |
| Kayla Obrenski       | 12-27 |
| Robert Witte         | 12-27 |
| Katelyn Johnson      | 12-29 |
| Jaye Spencer         | 12-29 |
| Mabel Hollenberger   | 12-31 |

Jesus  
IS THE  
REASON  
FOR THE  
Season

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Robert and Shirley McLaughlin | 12-02 |
| Robert and Barbara Meyn       | 12-07 |
| Wade and Sue Keller           | 12-14 |
| Rodney and Carol Thole        | 12-14 |
| Dan and Christine High        | 12-20 |
| Jim and Audrey Gilbertson     | 12-21 |
| Dwight and Rita Stiehl        | 12-21 |
| Veli and Judy Lapinoja        | 12-23 |
| Barry and Ruth Noffze         | 12-23 |
| Andy and Anne Rozite          | 12-27 |
| Rodney and Dorothy Roberts    | 12-29 |

# YOGA



- gentle -

Mondays & Thursdays  
at 12:30 p.m.

- chair -

Mondays & Thursdays  
at 2:00 p.m.

\$10 per session beginning January 2024 - No registration required

*The Magic of Christmas is not in the  
presents but in His Presence.*



Join the  
fun with  
other  
active  
singles!

You do not have to be  
a member of the  
church to participate.

Sailing Solo is Marco Lutheran Church's singles ministry that meets on the 4th Sunday from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Join us for lots of good fellowship and fun!

## SAILING SOLO BOOK CLUB

By Betty Fry

Due to the busy Christmas bustle, our Book Club will not meet in December but suggests that you purchase a special book for the special people in your life. Christmas Blessings and we will be back in action on January 17, 2024!!!!



## ***Waiting .....With Anxious Anticipation***

We have entered another year of the joyous holiday season of Advent. A season to celebrate not only the birth of our Savior, but also anticipate His return.

Christ followers have been anticipating this prophesized return since Jesus rose into the clouds at the ascension. We, as followers, have had 2000 years to perfect the waiting.

So...what do you do while you wait?

Of course, as Christians, we are taught... follow scripture, make sure that our hearts are set on Him, that we are right with God and others, that we are baptized, repentant, and receive the Lord's Supper and we attend church. Is that enough?

Well Jesus gives us clear instructions to GO. *<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*" (Matthew 28:19-20a ESV)

Our lives are now full of the busy "going" that keep us always on our toes, keep us up at night and fill our heads and our notebooks with lists. I think that He had a very different form of "Go" in mind when he gave us this Great Commission.

This command might just be the most straightforward call to action that we will ever have. Jesus tells us to Go and make disciples, form relationships, teach them about His love, His mercy, His grace, and His sacrifice, and this is no simple task. This monumental lifelong command involves taking risks, being vulnerable, being faithful when it isn't convenient, and opening our hearts and minds to His lead.

We can fulfill His Great Commission while we wait for Him to return. We can use our time to reach out to other people, family, neighbors, and strangers. We can get involved and volunteer with ministry both in the church, and outside of the church.

We grow closer to our Savior when we spend time serving His children. We can be His hands and feet on earth and lead the way, reflecting His glory, and making disciples.

I can't think of a better thing to do while we wait in anticipation for our coming Savior this Advent season! Come - volunteer and get involved. This ministry... God's ministry... needs You.

~Betsy Sabbides, Director of Church Ministry



*From Thrivent to you and yours, wishing you a Very Merry Christmas and A Happy, Healthy New Year!*



**David Contessa**

**DECEMBER 10 THROUGH DECEMBER 24, 2023 | TWO WEEKS ONLY - ON DEMAND**

Home for the Holidays: A Virtual Christmas Concert Featuring Chris Tomlin

Join the Thrivent Member Network for **Home For The Holidays**, a Virtual Christmas Concert featuring Grammy® Award-winning artist, Chris Tomlin. Take some time to treat yourself to the sounds of this joyous season. Grab your friends and family and sing along to your favorite Christmas classics.

**RSVP** - <https://bit.ly/ChristmasWithTomlin>

**DECEMBER 30, 2023 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024 | ANYTIME For a Year!**

Have you used your Thrivent Action Team?

We all want to give back, but sometimes it's hard to know where to begin. If you're wondering how you can make a difference, we can help. Thrivent Action Teams are a great way to make a positive impact in your community. Simply gather a team of neighbors or friends for a fundraiser, educational event or service activity. Thrivent offers all the resources you need to get started, including up to \$250 in seed money. Your team provides the passion that brings your project to life.

Join us for this quick **12 minute video** (on-demand, watch when you can) to learn more about this member benefit and take you step by step on how to apply for your Thrivent Action Team!

**RSVP** - <https://bit.ly/TATVideo>

**DECEMBER 31, 2023 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024 | ANYTIME For a Year! -**

Get to know Money Canvas

Learn how Money Canvas, a free coaching service, can help you build healthier budgeting, saving, and spending habits. Through Money Canvas's 3 virtual sessions with a Money Guide, you will build confidence and learn to manage money mindfully. Join us for this quick **10 minute video** (on-demand, watch when you can) to learn more about this program and how you can connect for your free session!

**RSVP** - <https://bit.ly/ThriventMoneyCanvas>

*No products will be sold at our events. For additional disclosures, see [Thrivent.com/social](https://thrivent.com/social).*

Contact us at [SoutheastTMN@thrivent.com](mailto:SoutheastTMN@thrivent.com) or see what's happening at [thrivent.com/southeast](https://thrivent.com/southeast) or at [Facebook.com/SoutheastTMN](https://facebook.com/SoutheastTMN).

**For More Info Call Thrivent Financial Associate David Contessa at (239) 300-5139.**