

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David
a savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11*



December 2023

Mt. Calvary Messenger
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church
1372 W. Fremont Street
Galesburg, IL 61401
309 342-7083



December 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

					1	2 10am Children's practice
3 8:45am Bible Class/SS 10am Worship 11:30am Confirmation 11:30am Elders Meeting	4 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	5 10am Bible Study	6 10am-12pm Crafters 4pm Midweek 5pm Advent Dinner 6pm Advent Service	7 12pm LWML Potluck	8 4-7pm Hy-Vee grocery bagging	9 10am Children's Practice 10am -12pm Christmas Houses Pick-up
10 8:45am Bible Class/SS 10am Worship 11:30 Building Comm. 11:30 Decorate church 1:30-4pm Caroling	11 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	12 10am Bible Study	13 4pm Midweek 5pm Advent Dinner 6pm Advent Service	14	15	16 10am Children's Practice 10am-3pm Gift wrapping
17 8:45am Bible Class/SS 10am Worship 11:30am Confirmation Silent Auction Ends!	18 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	19 10am Bible Study	20 4pm Midweek 5pm Advent Dinner 6pm Children's Christmas Service	21	22	23 10am Children's Practice
24 8:45am Bible Class/SS 10am Worship 5pm Christmas Eve Service	25 10am Christmas Day Service <i>Office Closed</i>	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27	28	29	30
Pastor and family out of town						
31 8:45am Bible Study/SS 10am Worship	Jan. 1 <i>Office closed</i>	Jan. 2	Jan. 3 Preschool resumes	Jan.4	Jan. 5	Jan. 6

Happy Birthday

- 1- Lyla Sebben
- 3- Oliver Koch
- 9- Kylie Fike
- 9- Jacie Kersh
- 11- Jacque Henry
- 14- Matthew Knussman
- 14- Missy Montgomery
- 15- LeRoy Shoop
- 20- Jon Schlake
- 20- Emmie Kersh
- 25- Alexandria Pitman
- 30- Judy Woolsey

Happy Anniversary

- 12-Justin & Jacque Henry
- 26-Tom & Jeanie Whittle

Attendance for November

Date	Worship	Communion
11/5	92	66
11/12	85	68
11/19	93	49
11/22	58	—
11/26	74	55

Baptism Birthdays

- Margaret Wright
- 12-1 Lori Kugler
- 12-3 Robert Ramage
- 12-6 Kim Noe
- 12-9 Mark Meeker
- 12-10 Kathy Schlake
- 12-13 Kathy Martinie
- 12-18 Marc Kugler
- 12-18 Jillian Shipp
- 12-19 Douglas Havens
- 12-22 Wendy Havens
- 12-22 Oliver Koch
- 12-24 Kylie Fike
- 12-24 Madeline Gonzalez
- 12-24 Natalie Gonzalez
- 12-29 Matthew Knussman

In Our Prayers

Health concerns:

Joyce Wolfe	Dan Brackett
Theresa Clark	Anita Reinertsen
Janalee Gutierrez	Mitch Jacobs
Bob Donley	Guy Hood
Deb Lescallett	Ethan Meeker
Natalie Gonzalez	Dale Matheny
Rebecca Smith	Jen Baughman & sister
Julie & Steve Brandt	

Eva Jean, Ruth's sister
Justin, Dean & Darla's son
Tom, Brittany's dad, cancer
Eileen, Kadin Stokes' grandmother, cancer

Others:

Pastor Meeker, Deaconess Lorna, Kenya Mission
Pastor Omolo and Hope for the Destitute
Our Armed Forces: Sgt Kaleb Karsen

Whoever believes and is
baptized will be saved.
Mark 16:16a



A very blessed
Merry Christmas
to you and your family
from Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church & Preschool staff!

During the Advent season, we prepare our hearts to focus on Jesus being born as a humble human baby. He is both son of Mary and Son of God, the ultimate son of Adam who fulfilled the Law and Prophets. Through Him, we take on our identity as children of God, heirs to heaven and made new in baptism.

Dinners served at 5:00pm. Dinners: Dec. 6th (Stewardship– baked potato bar); Dec. 13th (LWML– soups); Dec. 20th (Youth– spaghetti).

Services will be at 6:00pm on Wednesdays: Dec. 6th, Dec. 13th, & Dec. 20th.

Join us for our Christmas Services:

Children's Christmas Service– Sunday, Dec. 24th at 10:00am

Christmas Eve Dec. 24th: 5:00pm

Christmas Day Dec. 25th: 10:00am

New Year's Eve Service Dec. 31st: 10:00am



Sunday School Christmas Service

will be on Sunday, December 24th at 10:00am.

Come join us to hear our children tell of Jesus' birth!

Practice times will be on Saturdays at 10am (Dec. 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd) and on Sundays during Sunday School time!



LWML

Will have their Christmas Potluck on Thursday, Dec. 7th at 12 noon here at church in the gym. We hope you can come join us– bring a guest (or two!), a dish to share and a gift for the silent auction.

LWML is gathering items for Safe Harbor this Advent season!

Until Dec. 17th they are collecting unwrapped toys and games for any age, cold weather clothing (boys coats, scarves), hygiene products, toiletries, cleaning supplies, paper products. Place your donations in the entryway box.

LWML will deliver everything to Safe Harbor the week before Christmas! Thank you!

Come help us spread some **Christmas Caroling** cheer to nursing homes and our church shut-ins. **Dec. 10th from 1:30pm-4pm.**

We will meet at church and carpool to area nursing homes, then return to church for hot chocolate and goodies. Nursing homes are requesting that masks be worn due to increased exposure and sickness.

Everyone is welcome to come sing!

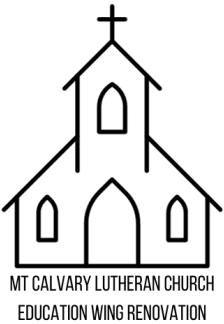


2024 Offering Envelopes

The new Offering Envelopes for 2024 will be available for pickup in your church mailbox soon! As you know, in addition to the weekly envelopes, there are envelopes for designated purposes. As a review, here is how the various envelopes are used:

- **Initial Envelope** is used to offset the cost of the boxed envelopes.
- **Mission Offerings** is given to LCMS to disburse to LCMS Mission projects.
- **The Lutheran Hour/Lutheran Television** are given to Lutheran Hour Ministries in St. Louis to further their preaching of the Gospel.
- **Lutheran Witness Subscription** is for members who would like to subscribe to the Lutheran Witness Magazine.

**If you do not receive envelopes and wish to, please let Leah in the office know and she will assign you a offering envelope number.



Both the Beef Raffle and John Deere Pedal Tractor Raffle end on Dec 17th! Winners will be drawn and notified by phone on Monday, Dec. 18th! Please keep selling your raffle tickets! Money and ticket stubs can be returned to Leah in the office. If you are unable to sell your tickets, please return them to the office. If you need more tickets– please see Leah. All tickets must be returned to the office by Saturday, December 16th! Thank you for helping support our efforts for the Education Wing Renovation Project fundraising!



Bagging groceries at Hy-Vee!

We will be out at Hy-Vee on N. Henderson St. from 4-7pm on Friday, Dec., 8th bagging groceries for tips! Come out, get your shopping done and support our renovation Project!



We are offering gift wrapping! Get your Christmas gifts wrapped without all the work! Dec. 16th from 10am-3pm. Sign up in the office for a time to bring your present while you wait.. Or go run errands and come back to get them! All money raised goes towards the Education Wing Renovation!

We will be decorating the sanctuary for Christmas on December 10th after our Worship Service.

If you are able to stay and help, it would be greatly appreciated!



Hats of Love WILL NOT MEET in December. You can bring your items to church on Sundays for Rose to collect. Thank you!

CHOIR (and other joyful singers) will sing Sunday, Dec 17th & Sunday, Dec 24th at 5pm on Christmas Eve. Rehearsal times:
Wednesday, Dec. 13th at 5:20pm
Sunday, Dec. 17th at 11:30am
Wednesday, Dec. 20th at 5:20pm. We'd love to have you join us!



Preschool News

In November we enjoyed field trips to Pizza House and the Library. Galesburg Hospital Ambulance Service also came to visit us. We collected paper products and toiletries for Safe Harbor. Our school families are always so generous. Our mini feasts were great! We have much to be thankful for!

This month we are preparing for the birth of our Savior! We are practicing programs, decorating, making gifts for parents, sending grandparent cards and baking. We will collect non perishable food items for the rescue mission.

Thank you for your participation in the PTO's Jen's Candles sale. We raised over \$2,400 for field trips, the Scholarship Fund and classroom needs.

Thank you to Family Tree Photography for our beautiful school pictures! Christmas break will be Dec. 21st – Jan 2nd. We will you all a blessed Advent and joyous Christmas season!

FLOWER CHART

A flower chart for 2024 has been posted in the mailroom. We are once again going to use the flowers for two weeks.

The cost is \$70 for flowers. Make the check payable to **Mt. Calvary** and give it to Leah in the church office along with the desired dedication. If you have any questions talk to Leah.



Pastor and family will be out of town the week after Christmas, returning for services on New Years Eve.

Leah will be in the office Dec. 27– Dec. 29.

The office will be closed on Dec 25th & 26th and Jan 1st.

For Emergencies please contact your Elder.



Annual Christmas Houses Decorating:

Saturday, Dec. 9th house pick up 10am-12pm

Please register for your house by Dec 3rd. Cost is \$10 each.

This year houses are pick up only– no decorating at Mt. Calvary.

Register here: <https://forms.gle/592ycjE8zF9mAVnd6>

(more information on the entryway table)

Thank you for supporting our youth!



Crafters will meet on Wednesday, December 6th from 10am-12pm.

Come enjoy fellowship while working on your own project, or come get help with a project!



LCMS Stewardship Ministry – December 2023

The Measure of Our Generosity

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8–11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?



The Silent Auction Baskets benefitting our youth will be available for viewing and bidding in the gym from Dec 3rd through Dec. 17th

(ending at the beginning of Sunday School).

Winners will be notified on Dec. 18th (or soon after) for pick-up.



Mt. Calvary Youth hosted circuit youth in November and Bible verse stickered over 800 pairs of socks that were distributed between the churches to be delivered to local area shelters! Thank you for your donations and support of this mission!

In December youth will be assisting/participating in many of the activities happening around church and will be hosting the Christmas Houses and Silent Auction. Youth will host the Advent dinner of spaghetti on Wednesday, Dec. 20th!

“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart...” Luke 2:19

Christmas captures the imagination of children. Most folks carry wonderful memories of decorating the Christmas tree, seeing it shimmering with light glistening from tinsel and reflecting off the beautiful bulbs. Many decorated sugar cookies and strung popcorn with a needle and thread, or clung to the roof reaching under the house eaves to hang a strand of outdoor bulbs. As a child, it was thrilling to see the presents under the tree magically emerging by the time we returned home from Christmas Eve church services.

I powerfully remember having the ladder removed while hanging lights from the roof. Brother number three insisted I jump into the snow to get down. It turned out OK, but was a memorably, frightening experience.

Christmas is a great time to build memories that will last a lifetime. Long after we move far from family and loved ones, and even when loved ones are no longer present to share our Christmas joy, we hold them in our hearts and ponder the days long past.

This Christmas, as you bask in the memory and ponder the miracle of God becoming man and lying in a manger, I encourage each family to make the Christ Child the center of this season’s memories. That isn’t as difficult as it may seem. Each night after dinner or before bed time pull out a Portals of Prayer and read a little devotion, using the recommended Bible readings and prayer. Make your own Advent wreath using candles (three purples or blues and one pink) for each of the four weeks leading up to Christmas, with a Christ candle (white) to light on Christmas Eve and throughout the 12 days of Christmas.

Light the candles before you do your family devotions (add one each week, pink during third week of Advent and Christ candle after Christmas Eve). If you have small children, you can even read a children’s Arch books. If you’re older you can pray morning or evening prayer from the hymnal, speaking or singing, and use the prayers in your catechism. What wonderful memories to share with your family, and these are guaranteed to make a deep spiritual impact as the Holy Spirit works through His Word. On Christmas Eve and morning read through the nativity account from Luke chapter 2:1-20 and Matthew 1:18-25. Celebrate the twelve days of Christmas by singing favorite carols and prayerfully giving thanks for the gift of the Christ Child. These are wonderful family rituals that can blossom into a year and lifelong practice of daily delving into the depths of Divine doctrine.

Our Advent services on Wednesday evenings provide a great opportunity to gather with our fellow Christians to sing, pray, and hear the Word together. It’s a great blessing to gather around His Word. Remember these Advent evenings begin at 5pm with dinner being served (on Dec. 6th, 13th, 20th) and the service itself will be at 6pm.

Children’s Christmas Service practice will begin on Saturday mornings in December, as well as learning songs in Sunday School. Watch the bulletin for practice schedules. One of the most powerful memories of Christmas comes when the children learn and practice for their opportunity to tell the story of Jesus’ love. Bring your young people, and if you have little ones in the neighborhood that don’t have a church invite them along. If you bring them to practice, they would be a blessed addition to the program. The kid’s program will be on Dec.24th this year at our 10am worship service. There will one candlelight service on Christmas Eve at 5pm. Christmas Day service is at 10am.

I pray that God would richly bless your preparations for celebrating the birth of His Son. I also pray that you would remember this month and always the unfathomable love God has for you that He sent His Son to be born into our world, live a perfect life in your place, die on the cross, and rise from the dead to save you. May God fill your heart with joy as we prepare to sing the glorious Good News of God’s Greatest Gift – Jesus our Savior!

Have a Very Blessed and Merry Christmas! *Pastor Steve Sommerer*