

## Gifts from the Heart

Share hope around the world and bring joy to your loved ones this Christmas with *Gifts from the Heart*.

The CLWR **Gifts from the Heart** catalogue is full of thoughtful and creative gifts that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need it most. Plus, each time you buy a Gift from the Heart, they will send you a beautiful card that you can give to your friends and family, letting them know about the special gifts you chose for them.

### Start choosing gifts today!

#### 1. Shop online

Browse all our gift options and donate online today — [www.clwr.org/GFTH](http://www.clwr.org/GFTH)

#### 2. Call the CLWR office

Call the toll-free number 1-800-661-2597 to learn more about our gift options and to make a donation over the phone.

#### 3. Pick up a catalogue at the church

# A glance at December Ministry Happenings....



- December 1** - First Sunday in Advent
- December 3** - Women's Joint Advent Service with Southwood United Church women - 7 pm
- December 4** - Sandwich Making - 7:30 am
- December 5** - Midweek Advent Worship - 7 pm
- December 6** - St. Nicholas Party - youth
- December 7** - Men's Breakfast - 8 am  
Advent Tea - 1 - 3 pm

- December 8** - Centering Team Mtg. - 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
- December 10** - Confirmation - MENTOR NIGHT - 5 pm  
'Cultivating Authenticity' - 7 pm - see larger ad - pre-register
- December 12** - Midweek Advent Worship - 7 pm
- December 14** - Cantare Concert - "The Magnificat" - 7:30 pm
- December 19** - Midweek Advent Worship - 7 pm
- December 22** - "Who Will Save Us" worship - 10 am
- December 24** - Christmas Eve Worship - 4 pm & 6 pm
- December 25** - Christmas Day worship - 10 am
- December 29** - Service of Lessons and Carols - 10 am



## In this Month's Issue

*Love the Lord your God with.....*

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## Lutheran Church of the Cross

10620 Elbow Drive SW Calgary, AB

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[churchofthecross@shaw.ca](mailto:churchofthecross@shaw.ca)

Pastors Laura & Phil Holck

Minister of Music—Catherine Glaser-Climie

Office Administrator—Dianne Fortier

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### Mission

Gathered by God to worship and grow.  
Empowered by Spirit to love and care for each other  
Living Christ's love by witnessing to all.

### Vision

To be a vibrant and growing congregation unified in sharing  
the love of Christ through words and actions.

## The Real 12 Days of Christmas



Image: Pillar1984 / Flickr

Celebrating Christ's birth with saints of the faith during the actual Christmas season.

EDWIN AND JENNIFER WOODRUFF TAIT | POSTED AUGUST 8, 2008

© Christianity Today

Sometime in November, as things now stand, the "Christmas season" begins. The streets are hung with lights, the stores are decorated with red and green, and you can't turn on the radio without hearing songs about the spirit of the season and the glories of Santa Claus. The excitement builds to a climax on the morning of December 25, and then it stops, abruptly. Christmas is over, the New Year begins, and people go back to their normal lives.

The traditional Christian celebration of Christmas is exactly the opposite. The season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, and for nearly a month Christians await the coming of Christ in a spirit of expectation, singing hymns of longing. Then, on December 25, Christmas Day itself ushers in 12 days of celebration, ending only on January 6 with the feast of the Epiphany.

Exhortations to follow this calendar rather than the secular one have become routine at this time of year. But often the focus falls on giving Advent its due, with the 12 days of Christmas relegated to the words of a cryptic traditional carol. Most people are simply too tired after Christmas Day to do much celebrating.

The "real" 12 days of Christmas are important not just as a way of thumbing our noses at secular ideas of the "Christmas season." They are important because they give us a way of reflecting on what the Incarnation means in our lives. Christmas commemorates the most momentous event in human history—the entry of God into the world he made, in the form of a baby.

The Logos through whom the worlds were made took up his dwelling among us in a tabernacle of flesh. One of the prayers for Christmas Day in the Catholic liturgy encapsulates what Christmas means for all believers:

*O God, who marvelously created and yet more marvelously restored the dignity of human nature, grant that we may share the divinity of him who humbled himself to share our humanity.*

In Christ, our human nature was united to God, and when Christ enters our hearts, he brings us into that union.

The three traditional feasts (*dating back to the late fifth century*) that follow Christmas reflect different ways in which the mystery of the Incarnation works itself out in the body of Christ. December 26 is the feast of St. Stephen—a traditional day for giving leftovers to the poor (as described in the carol "Good King Wenceslas"). As one of the first deacons, Stephen was the forerunner of all those who show forth the love of Christ by their generosity to the needy. But more than this, he was the first martyr of the New Covenant, witnessing to Christ by the ultimate gift of his own life. St. John the Evangelist, commemorated on December 27, is traditionally the only one of the twelve disciples who did not die a martyr. Rather, John witnessed to the Incarnation through his words, turning Greek philosophy on its head with his affirmation, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14, KJV).

# LEAD ... love God with all your heart

On December 28, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Innocents, the children murdered by Herod. These were not martyrs like Stephen, who died heroically in a vision of the glorified Christ. They were not inspired like John to speak the Word of life and understand the mysteries of God. They died unjustly before they had a chance to know or to will—but they died for Christ nonetheless. In them we see the long agony of those who suffer and die through human injustice, never knowing that they have been redeemed. If Christ did not come for them too, then surely Christ came in vain. In celebrating the Holy Innocents, we remember the victims of abortion, of war, of abuse. We renew our faith that the coming of Christ brings hope to the most hopeless. And, in the most radical way possible, we confess that like the murdered children we are saved by the sheer mercy of Christ, not by our own doing or knowing.

In the Middle Ages, these three feasts were each dedicated to a different part of the clergy. Stephen, fittingly, was the patron of deacons. The feast of John the Evangelist was dedicated to the priests, and the feast of the Holy Innocents was dedicated to young men training for the clergy and serving the altar. The subdeacons (one of the "minor orders" that developed in the early church) objected that they had no feast of their own. So it became their custom to celebrate the "Feast of Fools" around January 1, Christ's circumcision on that day feasts of the Virgin Mary, and is Catholics).

The twelve days of Christmas saw turvy and the unruly. A "Lord of mas and ruled the festivities until ally chosen as bishop on December all the functions of bishop until Hoson also sometimes saw the "Feast donkey traditionally present at the supposed to bray like a donkey at would normally say "Amen."

It is easy to dismiss all these customs of them are), or at best as irrelevant-medieval church frowned on most of the 16th century finished the job of suppressing them. But perhaps there's a message here worth pondering —that in the words of the horrified pagans of Thessalonica, the message of Christ turns the whole world upside down. In the birth of Jesus, God has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

Nothing will ever be safe or normal again. In the words of Michael Card, we are called to "follow God's own fool." And yet, paradoxically, this greatest of revolutionaries was not a rebel. The one who revealed the surprising meaning of God's Law and turned the tables on human traditions nonetheless submitted to be circumcised according to the teaching of Moses.

Finally, on the eve of Epiphany (January 5), the celebration of Christmas comes to an end. "Twelfth Night" (as all lovers of Shakespeare know) is the ultimate celebration of Christmas madness (Shakespeare's play features one of his many "wise fools" who understand the real meaning of life better than those who think they are sane).

Epiphany commemorates the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel—Christ's manifestation to the nations, as shown in three different events: the visit of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus, and the turning of water into wine. In the Western tradition, the Magi predominate. But in the Eastern churches, Jesus' baptism tends to be the primary theme.



often in conjunction with the feast of (which was also one of the earliest today celebrated as such by Roman

similar celebrations of the topsy-Misrule" was often elected at Christ-Epiphany. A schoolboy was traditionally 6 (the Feast of St. Nicholas) and filled ly Innocents' Day. The Christmas sea-of the Ass," commemorating the manger. On this day, people were the points in the Mass where one

toms as pagan survivals (which many vant and harmless follies. Indeed, the of these practices, and the Reformers

# LEAD ... love God with all your heart

In the Bucharest subway, children leading lambs walk through the trains in commemoration of the Lamb of God to whom John pointed. Orthodox Christians traditionally have their homes blessed with holy water on or around this day. Nowhere is Epiphany celebrated more joyously than in Ethiopia. Pilgrims from all over the country converge on the ancient city of Aksum, where they bathe in a great reservoir whose waters have been blessed by a priest.

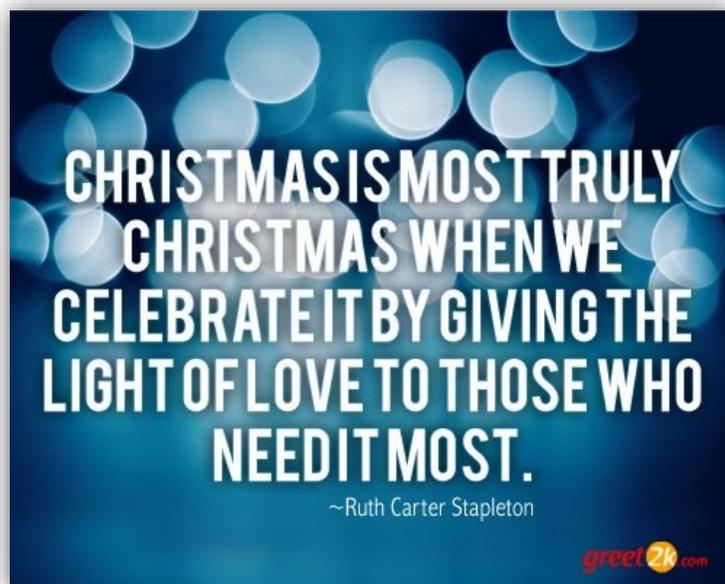
Epiphany is often a forgotten festival (although, by the accident of Edwin's mother's birthday falling on January 5, his very un-liturgical family preserved the ancient tradition of keeping the Christmas decorations up until Epiphany). As the true end-point of the Christmas season, however, Epiphany sends us into the world to live out the Incarnation, to witness to the light of Christ in the darkness. Following Jesus, we have been baptized into his death and resurrection. Whether we are called to martyrdom, or to prophetic witness, or simply to faithful living in the joys and sorrows of our daily lives, we live all of our days in the knowledge of our dignity, redeemed through Christ and united to God.

We are part of the strange society of people whose world has been turned upside down, and we go out to witness to this topsy-turvy truth: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: and we beheld his glory... and of his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace" (John 1:14, 16).

A great way to celebrate the 12 Days of Christmas is to plan acts of generosity, merriment, and devotion.

Think of the organizations whose service to the community is important to you. During the 12 Days of Christmas, give generously to their ministries. Include the church in your giving, thinking of the ministries at church that benefit people outside our community: We Care School Kits and Quilts, Bible Give Away, Affirming Ministry, sandwich making, Calgary Alliance for the Common Good, Clothing Giveaway, Stampede Breakfast.... Help your church's active participation in the community!

Set aside time to visit friends, family, neighbours, and church friends. Put some space in your holiday calendar to enjoy the people close to you.





On the last day of Christmas, come to church and celebrate with frivolity. As we remind ourselves once again that we are called to follow "*God's fool*" (Jesus the revolutionary presence of God in weakness, humility, and self-sacrifice), we "act the fool" too. The last day of Christmas is about experiencing power topsy-turvy, worshipping the God who "levels the playing field," and celebrating the wonder and joy of life together in the kingdom of God, where all things have been made new by the God who came as a little baby to lie in a pile of straw. Some of the activities of Twelfth Night:

- Mega-sized mini-golf (snow permitting)
- Annual Crokinole Tournament, complete with prizes for the losers
- Ice luminarias
- Outdoor fire
- Hotdog roasts & smores
- Epiphany verse hunt for the kids
- Photo booth where you can be Herod, Pilate, Caesar, or another sort of "king"
- Conversations about crazy things that cause community and creative ways of self-sacrifice
- Festive Twelfth Night food and drink, including King's Cake

Come in costume, if you like. Twelfth Night is the traditional night to dress as your alter-ego, or to reverse roles with someone who has either more or less social or political power than you. The crazier and more satirical the better! If you'd like to dress up when you arrive, the costumes in ACTS 2 will be available.

**Our Twelfth Night celebration will immediately follow Sunday worship on January 5.**

Bring a finger food to share and **sign up for the Crokinole Tournament any time in December by calling the office.** Don't have a partner for Crokinole? We'll find you one!

**Are you sad, grieving, or dreading Christmas?**

## **Blue Christmas Worship**

The Advent and Christmas seasons are seasons of hope, joy, and excitement. They are often marked by merriment and happiness as the church celebrates the promise of the coming Christ child. But what about the pain and hurt people may be experiencing because of what's going on in the world or in their individual lives? What about people who are grieving, in pain, or simply not feeling "the Christmas spirit"?

On Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, Church of the Cross will host a "Blue Christmas" or "Longest Night of the Year" service. On the evening of the winter solstice (the longest night of the year), we will gather with our concerns, worries, pain, and grief, acknowledge our struggles before God, share the sacraments and a time of healing, and look to the coming Christ child for our hope.

Amid the hustle and bustle of the season, this is tremendous witness to those who are struggling in our community. This service is a witness to everyone that the Christ child comes as a sign of hope in the face of despair. And it's a witness that we are intentional about upholding members of our community in whatever season of life they may find themselves. This service is part of the ministry of Church of the Cross Prayer and Care.

**The Longest Night of the Year Service: Sunday, December 22, 7 pm**  
**Hors d'oeuvres will be served following the service.**



# LEAD ... love God with all your heart

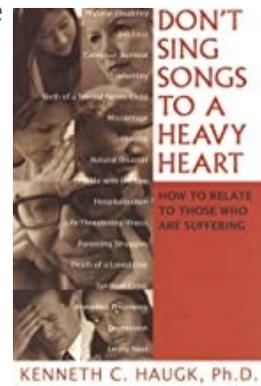


**Caring Conversations** will meet for four Tuesdays beginning on January 7th. We will be part of **Faith Formation** 5-7pm. **Please bring potluck to share.** Everyone is welcome.

We will be discussing the book **“Don’t Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart”** by Kenneth Haugk. This book will help us learn how to relate to those who are suffering, from the ups and downs of life.

Please pre register in the office or call me at # 403-208-6747.

Prayer and Care  
Wendy McCulloch



## Cause of the month for December Families In Need

Donations for Families In Need will enable us to purchase food/gift cards for families who are struggling to meet their needs during the Christmas season. Your continued support is much appreciated.

Stuff a pair of **SOCKS for the MUSTARD SEED.** There are socks available in the narthex or buy and stuff your own pair.

### LIST of items needed:

Personal hygiene (ie. Soap, toothbrush and paste, deodorant, lip balm, skin cream, shampoo, comb, tissues), chocolate bars, candy treats, pen and writing pad, bus tickets, gift card (eg. Tim Hortons).

**December 15<sup>th</sup> is the final day for collection.**



# LEAD ... love God with all your soul

## GIVING TUESDAY - December 3rd, 2019

<https://wp.givingtuesday.ca/app/uploads/2013/09/GivingTuesday-Wide.jpg>

Did you know that 30% of all charitable gifts given in Canada are given in December? Giving Tuesday is a chance to participate in what could arguably be called “Canada’s giving month.”

Giving Tuesday is a global movement to support the charitable work of organizations in the world that provide relief, research, community, and vital services to people all over the world. Following the consumer craze of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday helps us turn our hearts towards those in need. On **Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**, give an extra charitable gift to an organization whose work you value. Here’s how you can give on Giving Tuesday:

Go to [www.givingtuesday.ca](http://www.givingtuesday.ca) Click “*Get Involved,*” then “*Give to any charity.*”

Search for your favorite charity and give a one-time gift online. We and all of our organizational partners can be found online.

**Church of the Cross also needs your Giving Tuesday gifts.**

**Can you make an extra end-of-the-year gift to the church?**

**You can give to Church of the Cross on the Giving Tuesday website, or on ours:**

Visit [www.churchofthecross.ca](http://www.churchofthecross.ca) Click on “**Donate**” in the upper right corner of the website. Give your gift using your credit card. Don’t have a credit card or online access? Drop an extra gift in the offering plate on **Sunday December 1 or 8**. Mark your envelope: “***Giving Tuesday.***”



# LEAD ... love God with all your soul

## 2019 Advent Worship at Church of the Cross

### Waiting for Salvation

**Advent** (*the four Sundays before Christmas*) is a time of waiting...

#### Sunday Mornings

During our Advent season this year, we will spend time dwelling in some of the times in the life of God's people, when they waited for deliverance, restoration and freedom:

**Sunday, Dec. 1** – Waiting in Egypt

**Sunday, Dec. 8** – Waiting in Babylon

**Sunday, Dec. 15** – Waiting in our homeland

This season of waiting will culminate in our worship on **Sunday, Dec. 22 with the drama, *Who Will Save Us?***

#### Thursday, Midweek Advent services

In addition to our Sunday morning worship, there will also be mid-week **Advent Services at 7pm**, Thursday nights. These service will use the *Behold the Light* liturgy with time spent reflecting on the words of the prophet Isaiah.

#### Blue Christmas, Sunday, Dec. 22

The Christmas season can be a hard one. On Sunday, December 22, Church of the Cross will host a "Blue Christmas" or "Longest Night of the Year" service. On the evening of the winter solstice (the longest night of the year), we will gather with our concerns, worries, pain, and grief, acknowledge our struggles before God, share the sacraments and a time of healing, and look to the coming Christ child for our hope.

**Christmas Eve Worship - 4pm & 6pm, Dec. 24 with Holy Communion**

**Christmas Day Worship - 10am - Dec. 25 with Holy Communion**

**December 29th** - Service of Lessons and Carols



## *Advent/Christmas Program*

*10 am, Sunday, Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Lutheran Church of the Cross*

*Presented by BLAST,  
Confirmation, Choir and other  
members of Church of the Cross*



*In the gospel of Matthew, the nativity (birth) story of Jesus is rather abbreviated. Much of what we consider to be part of Jesus' birth comes from the Gospel of Luke. The shepherds, the sky full of angels, the census, the traveling to Bethlehem, no room at the inn, and the birth in the manger all come from Luke's account. The emphasis in the gospel of Matthew is Jesus as the fulfillment of Jewish hopes of a Messiah. The overall structure of Matthew is that of a "Pentateuch" (five books) which Jewish readers would connect with the first five books of the Bible attributed to Moses. **Moses** was the one whom God sent to deliver the Hebrews from the hand of the Egyptians. So also, the gospel writer of Matthew believed that **Jesus** was the one sent by God to save God's people as they lived in a land occupied by the Romans. This drama was written by Pastor Phil to highlight the parallels of Moses' and Jesus' birth stories and to lay the foundation of reading Matthew's gospel of Jesus in the coming year.*

### *Casting Call for WHO WILL SAVE US?*

Pastor Phil is in the process of assigning the roles for people in the drama. There are roles for people young and old, singing and non-singing... even some *dancers!* We will be using some time during BLAST to learn the story and to learn songs that the younger children will be singing. There will also be lots of set design and other support roles.

If you or anyone from you family will be here on Sunday, Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> and would like to have a part in the play, please contact Pastor Phil at [philholck@gmail.com](mailto:philholck@gmail.com).

## AFFIRMING MINISTRY TEAM

### LCOC AFFIRMING FAITH LIBRARY IS OPEN FOR LENDING

Your Affirming Ministry team has put together a library of books that speak to affirmation and inclusiveness ---from story books, to young adult and adult fiction, to memoir and personal experience. Look for the book table in the narthex on Sunday. There will be a three week lending period.

We will enrich our library with additional books, and we have a wish list, <https://tinyurl.com/y48reony>

If you find a book you'd like to donate, you will be given the option of having it shipped directly to the church when you order.

Most important, though -please borrow and read. We're hoping some of you will feel inspired to write book reviews. We also hope there will be the opportunity for some book discussion groups.



### SAVE THE DATE

National Affirming Day!

Celebrate PIE Day! on

March 15, 2020

Public, Intentional, Explicit

Inclusion of

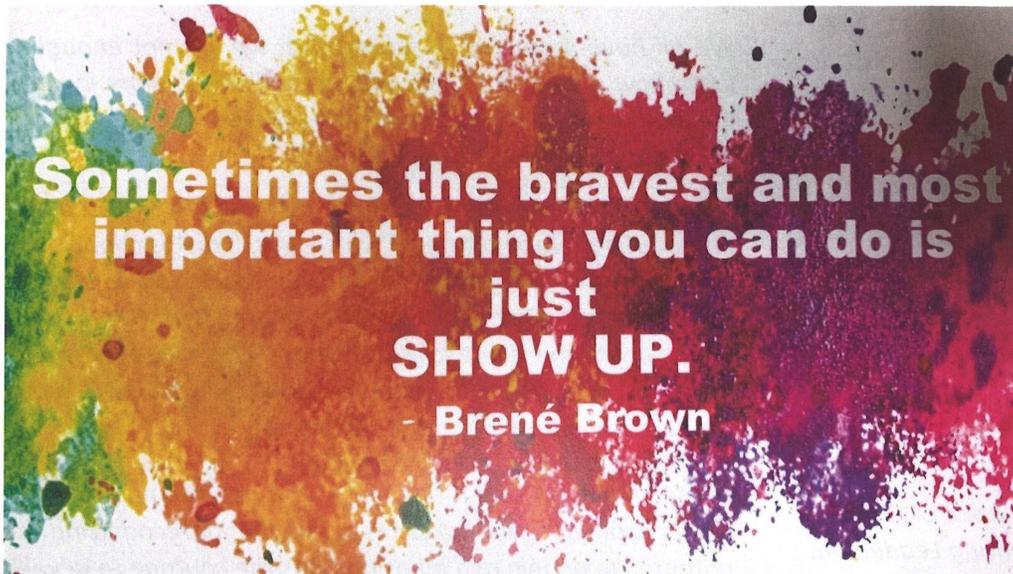
LGBTQ2SIA+ People



Affirming PIE Day!



[www.pieday.ca](http://www.pieday.ca)



Workshops are stand alone - \$50 each  
 Introductory Session - \$10  
 Tuesdays 7:00 til 9:30  
 Purchased as a bundle today for \$225 save \$25

Hosted and sponsored by The Lutheran Church of the Cross 10620 Elbow Dr SW, Calgary, AB Calgary, Alberta  
 Questions? Contact Deanna 403-680-3060  
 Register on Eventbrite today look for the link below or search on the event name.

<p><b>November 19, 2019</b>                  Finding Courage to Create the Life You Want                  \$10</p>	<p><i>Every day we face uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure. This is the opportunity to access our inherent courage? Where would you like to be more brave? Lecture and introduction to the series of 5 workshops.</i>  <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/76235216585">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/76235216585</a></p>
<p><b>December 10, 2019</b>                  Cultivating Authenticity and Letting Go of What People Think                  \$50</p>	<p><i>Every day we are inundated with messages about how we are supposed to act, what we are supposed to look like, and who we are supposed to be. Come reconnect with your authentic self and break free of being controlled by what other people think.</i>  <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/79297704569">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/79297704569</a></p>
<p><b>January 14, 2020</b>                  Cultivating Creativity and Letting Go of Comparison                  \$50</p>	<p><i>So many of us have been harmed by the lie that we are not creative people or by the belief that our creations don't measure up. Come light the spark of your own creativity, recognize what you uniquely bring to the world, and release harmful patterns of comparison that douse your internal flame.</i>  <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/79298364543">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/79298364543</a></p>



**Lutheran/United Church Women's  
Advent Celebration to be held at  
Lutheran Church of the Cross!**

**Tuesday, December 3, 2019**

**Time: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

**This year we host our neighbours from  
Southwood United Church for a "Service of Light"**

Take time to pause and contemplate Advent.  
This shared fellowship event has been in place since 1972!

Advent meditation service - led by the Lutheran women  
Fellowship & entertainment - led by the United Church women

**Church of the Cross women are asked to please bring  
a plate of sandwiches or appetizers to share.**



## Ladies Advent Tea

**Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**1 pm – 3 pm**

In the *fellowship hall* of Church of the Cross

10620 Elbow Drive SW

Women of all ages are welcome. There will be time for tea, Christmas baking, fancy sandwiches, entertainment and conversation to enjoy as we make the Advent and Christmas season purposefully sacred.

There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex—please sign up so we know the number of ladies to expect.



**Guest Artist:**

Jonah Janzen

**Offering to CLWR “We**

**Care” Kits**

# LEAD ... love God with all your mind

## No More Lying About Mary

It's Advent, and the same old lies about Mary are slipping over pulpits and out of parish letters, Christmas cards, public prayers, TV holiday movies, and late night comics' jokes.

The subjugation of Mary, the maligning of her as meek, mild, and mindless, has been harmful to millions of women over many centuries.

Hiding within the wonder of Christmas are a thousand years of doctrinal female subjugation, doctrines that, like tinsel, are dripped all over the season of Christmas. In the midst of the celebration of Wonderful Life, these malicious ideas keep women from feeling empowered, invited to be strong, and urged by God to imagine new ways to live, as Mary of Nazareth did, who mothered God's redemption of the human world.

Luke's is the only gospel in which Mary's story appears, and in his account there is nothing submissive nor immature about her. According to Luke, the Angel approached her with words of great honor: *Hail Mary, full of grace*. Many artists paint the angel kneeling, in recognition of the honor given to her. The angel is explicit; the honor is for the grace that is distinctly hers. This is a courtship scene. the angel is wooing her, on bended knee, a suitor – not a constable bringing a decree.

It is Mary's grace that has attracted God's attention. And what is this grace? It is what Luke shows us in her conversation and her actions – courage, boldness, grit, ringing convictions about justice. Not submissive meekness. Grace is not submission. And the power of God is never meek.

Yes, she is startled by the presence of the angel. So were Gideon, Jacob, Jonah, and the shepherds of Bethlehem, to name a few, they who, like Mary, questioned the angel in wonder, doubt, and even resistance. They are noted for their reluctance. Why not she? *What sort of greeting is this?* she asked. And the angel obliged her with an explanation. Later, she challenged the angel: *How shall this happen to me, when I have no husband?* God chose a spunky woman.

Many women in biblical stories appear in domestic settings. Sarah is in her tent, baking cakes. Rachel is drawing water at the well. Bathsheba is taking a bath. Martha is fussing around in the kitchen. The woman who lost a coin is sweeping the house. But with Mary, there is no evidence of any domestic work on her part. We never find her cooking, cleaning, washing

up. The evidence offered us is her love of adventure. What we find her doing, over and over, is traveling, in journeys that involve risks and an element of danger.

Her recitation of the Magnificat is a political manifesto, delivered fairly publicly, in the home of an official temple priest, who is married to her cousin Elizabeth, who is also pregnant, with John the Baptist. In Mary's manifesto there is evidence of deep thought, strong conviction, and a good deal of political savvy.

None of this gibes with the idea that she is a young teenage girl. The Greek word Luke uses for virgin is an unusual one, a very specific word that means she has not yet born a child. Its precise meaning does not indicate sexual innocence. So let's be clear: the focus is on her uterus. The state of her hymen is not at issue here.

Luke does not assign her a specific age. And to insist she is under sixteen is to ascribe to God a pedophilic attraction to underage women. Such details twist Mary's story and burden Christian women with a sense of selfishness if they postpone childbearing, a psychic demand to put childbearing first in their hearts, for God who seems to want nothing from them but pregnancy.

Mary is unmarried when the angel comes. The angel's invitation and her independent decision tell us Mary does not need permission of clergy – or her parents – to become pregnant. God knows Mary owns her own body. And there is no shame in her decision. Mary is good news for unwed mothers everywhere.

Mary, wanted by God, according to the angel, for her bold, independent, adventuresome spirit, decides to bear a holy child – for a bold agenda: to bring the mighty down from their thrones; to scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts, to fill the hungry with good things and send the rich empty away. This is Mary: well-spoken, wise, gritty.

Traveling alone, like every prophet before her, she sets out on her first journey, to her cousin Elizabeth's house, to declare her agenda. There will be more journeys: to Bethlehem; to Egypt and back; to Jerusalem when Jesus is twelve; to Jerusalem when he is crucified.

She gives birth in a barn, lies down animals, and welcomes weathered shepherds in the middle of the night. She is determined, not domestic; free, not foolish; holy, not helpless; strong, not submissive. She beckons women everywhere to speak out for God's justice, which is waiting to be born into this world.



# LEAD ... love God with all your strength

Calgary



## Actions you can take for the climate

#fortheclimateyyyc

Climate change is a complex challenge that can seem overwhelming. The solutions don't have to be. Collectively, Calgarians are making a difference. What actions will you start taking today? **1** to **5** shows the level of impact you can make.



### Home

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>1</b> Open/close window coverings seasonally             | <b>1</b> Use toaster oven for small meals           | <b>2</b> Upgrade to ENERGY STAR appliances            |
| <b>1</b> Draft-proof home                                   | <b>1</b> Install induction stove                    | <b>2</b> Install high efficiency furnace              |
| <b>1</b> Program thermostat 17° C (night/away), 21° C (day) | <b>1</b> Install low flow shower head               | <b>2</b> Install geothermal exchange system           |
| <b>1</b> Use fan instead of air conditioning                | <b>1</b> Install faucet aerators on taps            | <b>2</b> Install energy efficient windows             |
| <b>1</b> Install drain water heat recovery system           | <b>1</b> Leave grass clippings on lawn              | <b>3</b> Insulate home                                |
| <b>1</b> Install tankless on-demand water heater            | <b>1</b> Use a solar or push lawn mower             | <b>4</b> Install solar energy and photovoltaic system |
| <b>1</b> Wash clothes in cold water                         | <b>2</b> Use a French press instead of coffee maker | <b>4</b> Retrofit building envelope                   |
| <b>1</b> Hang clothes to dry                                | <b>2</b> Change lightbulbs to LEDs                  | <b>5</b> Buy green power                              |

### Transportation

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1</b> Do not idle vehicle                  | <b>3</b> Take public transit to work/school |
| <b>1</b> Carpool or carshare                  | <b>3</b> Bike or walk to work/school        |
| <b>1</b> Keep vehicle maintained, drive smart | <b>3</b> Telecommute                        |
| <b>3</b> Drive an electric vehicle            |   |



### Lifestyle

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1</b> Grow own food, participate in community garden | <b>2</b> Switch to vegetarian or vegan diet                 |
| <b>1</b> Buy local                                      | <b>3</b> Vacation locally (instead of international flight) |
| <b>1</b> Turn off computer and monitor each day         | <b>4</b> Work and play close to where you live              |
| <b>1</b> Use reusable water bottle and coffee mug       |   |



Learn more at [calgary.ca/climateaction](http://calgary.ca/climateaction)

## Volunteer/Service Time & Activity Log

An invitation to register the time and energy you give to the Church in December.



We work hard keeping track of how we spend our congregation's financial resources but we don't always keep track of how we are spending our congregation's people resources. In order to diagnose, recognize, and celebrate our people resources, we are inviting everyone who gives of their time supporting and leading ministry activities of the church to log their hours. Our goal is to get an accurate picture of the time that people are giving and the time that is needed to have our congregational community work. You may log your time (or your group's/team's/committee's time) by signing in on this Log kept in the Office or by emailing hours given with the appropriate description to Dianne at [churchofthecross@shaw.ca](mailto:churchofthecross@shaw.ca).

**Blue Christmas Service:**  
**An Evening of Worship &  
Reflection**

Friday, December 20th  
7:00 p.m.

Advent Lutheran Church  
(11 Scenic Acres Gate N.W.)

Refreshments & Fellowship to follow

**cantaré**  
CHILDREN'S CHOIR

December 21, 7:30 PM Knox United Church

**THE STARS  
POINT THE WAY**

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

Logos for Foundation for Arts, CALGARY, and ROZSA FOUNDATION.

**SPECIAL PERFORMANCE**

**cantaré**  
CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Kim  
Andre  
Arnesen

**MAGNIFICAT**

Lutheran Church of the Cross  
December 14 7:30PM



December 2019 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

*May grace and peace be yours in abundance (1 Peter 1:2a).*

Hanging in my office is the beautiful image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, also known as the Virgin of Guadalupe. The image is a reproduction of an original painting by a Roman Catholic Priest, Father Salvador, who my wife, Cathy, and I, and several other adults visited in 2001 in the community he served in the Parish of the Holy Spirit and St. Mary of Guadalupe in Ecatepec, Mexico.

According to tradition, an indigenous peasant, Juan Diego, had a vision of the Virgin in 1531. As he was walking among the hills, he heard a song which sounded like birds singing - a song soft and beautiful. He wondered if he was dreaming but he followed the sound and was met by the Virgin Mary who appeared to Juan Diego as she does in the painting - as an indigenous woman dressed in royal garments. She spoke to him in his native tongue calling his name and asking him to go to the bishop and tell him to have a shrine built in her honor on the place where she had appeared to Juan Diego. He went to the bishop and with great difficulty was finally able to see the bishop who responded with great skepticism to Juan Diego's request.

The Virgin appeared a second time and Juan Diego begged the Virgin to send someone more important. "I am insignificant," he said, "a piece of rope, the last rung of a ladder." She responded, "My child, the smallest, the least, I send you. I have many messengers, but I have chosen you." She said that she wanted a building to be erected where she could show and give love, compassion, help and defense to the inhabitants of the land; a place where people could listen and find solutions to their miseries, pain and sufferings. The bishop responded to Juan Diego insisting that he needed a sign.

A third time the Virgin appeared to Juan Diego this time asking him to collect roses which were nearby (very rare flowers not grown in the area) and to take them to the bishop as a sign. Juan Diego gathered the roses in his cloak and when he opened his cloak to show the bishop, out fell the flowers and imprinted on his cloak was the image of the Virgin. The bishop immediately fell to his knees and asked Juan Diego for forgiveness at not having listened to him. A church was built on the site where the Virgin had appeared and today, on this site, hangs the cloak and its image of the Virgin in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe - a worship site visited by more people each year than the Vatican in Rome.

One of the things that intrigued me about this story is that from the margins - the fringe - of his world, Juan Diego, an indigenous Mexican, was prodded awake by God's presence in the world through the appearances of Mary. Like many before him, Juan Diego was a reluctant prophet begging the Virgin to entrust the mission to someone of importance. But she would not take no for an answer, and Juan Diego's awakening to his mission would precipitate the awakening of all of Mexico to God's love through Christ.

As we journey this Advent and Christmas season, listen carefully - listen closely to how often God will chose someone on the margins to carry an important word: Mary - who gave birth to the Savior of the world; Zechariah - who, serving in the temple, is unable to speak until his son John the Baptist was born; Elizabeth - who gave birth to the one who would prepare the way for the Messiah - John the Baptist; and shepherds in the field - who were chosen to welcome and announce the birth of Jesus.

This Advent - this Christmas - listen carefully - listen closely - for God at work through the poor, the lowly, those on the outside, those on the edge and then ask the very Lutheran question: "what does this mean?"

*The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).*

In Christ Jesus –  
Shalom,  
+Larry

The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Bishop  
Synod of Alberta and the Territories  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



**Synod of Alberta and the Territories**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

# December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p><b>Cause of the Month</b> Families in Need</p> </div>						
<b>1</b> Bible Study - 9 am Worship - 10 am Advent Tea planning Mtg. - following worship BLAST SWCG - 1 - 3 pm	<b>2</b> Kodaly - 9:15 am AA - noon Staff Mtg. - 2 pm Kodaly - 4 pm Cantare Children's Choir - 6-9	<b>3</b> Coffee @ Tim Hortons - 10 am Women's Advent Service - 7 pm Confirmation - 7 pm - SC Mall	<b>4</b> Sandwich Making - 7:30 am Bible Study - 9:30 am AA - noon -1 AHS Caregivers - 1:30 Cantare Children's Choir - 6-9	<b>5</b> Kodaly - 10 am - 2:45 pm Advent Worship - 7 Choir - 7:30 pm	<b>6</b> Office Closed Youth Service Event SWCG—7 pm	<b>7</b> SWCG - 4 pm Advent Tea - 1 - 3 pm Private Rental - 5 - 10 pm
<b>8</b> Bible Study - 9 am Worship - 10 am BLAST SWCG - 1 - 3 pm	<b>9</b> Kodaly - 9:15 am AA - noon Staff Mtg. - 2 pm Kodaly - 4 pm Cantare Children's Choir - 6-9	<b>10</b> Coffee @ Tim Hortons - 10 am Confirmation - 7 pm - Mentor Night	<b>11</b> Bible Study - 9:30 am AA - noon -1 Cantare Children's Choir - 6-9 SWCG—7 pm Council Mtg. - 7 pm	<b>12</b> Kodaly - 10 am - 2:45 pm Advent Worship - 7 Choir - 7:30 pm	<b>13</b> Office Closed Cantare rehearsal - 6 - 9 pm SWCG—7 pm	<b>14</b> SWCG - 10:30 am Cantare Concert - 7:30 pm
<b>15</b> Bible Study - 9 am Worship - 10 am BLAST SWCG - 1 - 3 pm	<b>16</b> Kodaly - 9:15 am AA - noon Staff Mtg. - 2 pm Kodaly - 4 pm	<b>17</b> Coffee @ Tim Hortons - 10 am Private Rental - 7 pm	<b>18</b> Bible Study - 9:30 am AA - noon -1 SWCG—7 pm	<b>19</b> Kodaly - 10 am - 2:45 pm Advent Worship - 7 Choir - 7:30 pm	<b>20</b> Office Closed SWCG—7 pm	<b>21</b> SWCG - 4 pm
<b>22</b> Worship - 10 am BLAST Showcase SWCG - 1 - 3 pm "Longest Night" Service - 7 pm	<b>23</b> Staff Mtg. - 10 am AA - noon -1	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Worship- 4 & 6 pm	<b>25</b> Office Closed Christmas Day worship - 10 am AA - noon -1 SWCG—7 pm	<b>26</b> Office Closed	<b>27</b> Office Closed SWCG—7 pm	<b>28</b> SWCG - 4 pm
<b>29</b> Worship - 10 am - Service of Lessons & Carols SWCG - 1 - 4 pm	<b>30</b> Office Closed AA - noon -1	<b>31</b> Office Closed				