

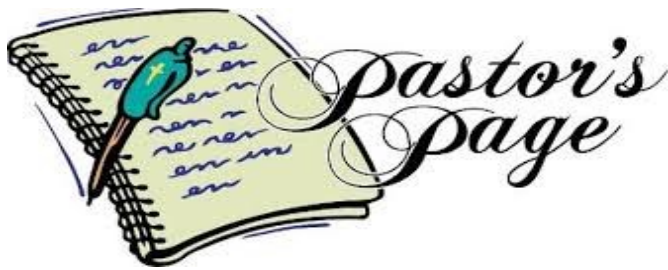


*December 2023*  
*Calvary Caller*

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14





## **Just a Bit Out of Sync**

We're entering what many people call the "most wonderful time of the year"--decorations, shopping, feasting, visiting friends and family, gifting, re-gifting, and huddling up around warmth wherever we can find it. Meanwhile, the traditional church calendar is hitting the reset button and stubbornly insisting that no matter what's going on "out there," Christmas is still almost a month away, and when it arrives it'll be twelve days long through Epiphany, just like the famous song with the partridge in a pear tree.

There's a part of me that, by training, by upbringing, and by my own contrary nature, wants to insist, "Hey! Christmas isn't here yet! It's Advent! Be patient!" And yet so many of us have spent the last few years, quite understandably, avoiding places with lots of people that a different part of me wants to say, "Let's get out and celebrate any way we can!" And for those who can't get out, let's find ways to bring the celebration to them.

Around this time last year, I learned that as much as some people get annoyed by others decorating for Christmas in November, we've got nothing on the Philippines, where Christmas celebrations are already underway every September, and last until several weeks into January. That's right: the whole country spends over a third of the year in "Christmas mode." You can

look it up – "Christmas in the Philippines" has its own Wikipedia article!

It turns out that celebrating something for longer doesn't actually make it less special, and Filipinos find plenty of spare capacity for other celebrations during their long Christmas season. Sometimes a word of hope and a word of joy is exactly what we need, especially for folks who can't get out like they used to. So we'll spend the next few weeks celebrating both Advent and the approach of Christmas together. It's not like we're going to sing most of those traditional Advent carols once Christmas is here!

Christmas is indeed coming, and it's worth celebrating that, as well as the promise that Christ came not just once two thousand years ago as a baby in a small town ninety miles west of the Jordan River, but also promises to come again in a majesty and mystery that we cannot quite imagine. And we are also promised in the meantime that Christ enters our hearts whenever and wherever we share a gift, a smile, a hot mug, or a song with others. May you and yours have a blessed Advent and indeed a Merry Christmas!

Pastor Jon



# It's That Time of the Year

As I'm writing this, I've turned on Pandora to jazzy Christmas tunes. Part of my brain says, "Thanksgiving is over so bring on the Christmas music!" I grew up around my mom listening to Mannheim Steamroller around the holidays. It's a matter of time before I get the urge to listen to some Mannheim Steamroller Christmas songs. It's in the air. It's that time of the year, folks. Andy Williams made these lyrics popular, "It's the most wonderful time of the year" in his Christmas song released in 1963. The words were written by George Wyle & Eddie Pola.

And it is true. It's also a time to carefully walk the line that Pastor Jon refers to in his article. We know that our greatest Christmas gift, wrapped in a manger, has not yet been born among us and so, for us, we are in a time of Advent, a time of waiting. But also we want to enjoy everything around us in society that says, "Christmas is here!" All you have to do is turn the radio on or walk in a store to hear Christmas music. So we can enjoy the music, enjoy the parties, enjoy the Christmas cookies, and enjoy bringing Christmas cheer to others and also walk with a heart open with wonder and expectation as we enter this time of waiting.

But it is often very different being that time of the year for those who are mourning or grieving the recent, or not so recent, loss of a spouse, family member, close friend, or not living near any family, or even estranged from family. The list can go on. The holidays can be a hard time of the year for some. It can truly be an empty, sad, blue Christmas for some.

So how do we partake in what our hearts tell us is natural to enjoy leading up to Christmas, but also be sensitive to those we know who are struggling with the holidays? How do you walk with someone who is having a Blue Christmas? Do you need to have the right words? Do we need to pretend to not have Christmas joy when we're around someone who is struggling? Should you feel guilty being joyful when you know they're in pain?

## **A few suggestions**

- Friends, listen to the hurt...just listen
- There are probably no right words...sometimes silence says what needs to be said
- Be present...be available so they know they're not alone
- Ask them what they need and want...give their voice of control power
- Show them love...Christmas is about love
- Together find a new meaning to this time of the year...create new meaningful rituals
- Do the things that brings your heart Christmas joy...your joy might bring them new joy



This December, may you have the wonder and anticipation of Advent, but also fulfill the excitement that allows cookies, carols, wrapping presents, and decorations to bring you Christmas joy. And may you be more attuned to those who you know who are suffering from grief and mourning, those who find a different meaning or are still seeking any meaning at this time of the year. Let us all find ways to walk together in Christian community listening and waiting for the hope of the season yet to come.

In Advent hope,  
Sister Jennie Myers



## FROM THE COUNCIL:



December and the Christmas season have arrived. At this time of year, we have so many opportunities to celebrate together as we await Christmas Day. In fact, Advent is a time of preparing and waiting. This is a time of contemplation and reflection, a time to pause and ponder the themes of Advent; Hope – Isaiah 9:2-6, Peace -Isaiah 40: 3-5, Joy – Isaiah 12:2-6, and Love – Luke 1:46-55.

At Calvary we begin to see the decorations, the Advent candles, the Christmas tree, the poinsettias, and the Nativity in the narthex. We have chance to celebrate both within our church and out in our community, too. Our annual church Christmas Gala is coming up on Dec. 10, our youth and children will be presenting a Christmas celebration on Dec. 17, and, as always, our church has opportunities for us to give gifts to those in need in Grants Pass as a whole. Our Christmas celebration will culminate with our Christmas Eve services on Dec. 24. This is such a beautiful time of year for us to remember all the blessings God has given us.

As I personally reflect, I am grateful to have been able to serve you, and this congregation, over the past two years as Church Council President. When Dave Matheny came knocking at my door (and yes, that's another funny story) in October of 2021 and asked if I would consider this position, through prayer, I felt God speak to me. My goal was to successfully lead Calvary through our interim period from the time Pastor Dave retired until Pastor Jon and Sister Jennie arrived and established their ministry. I desired that our church would remain Biblically-focused, emotionally, spiritually, and financially healthy. I believe that, together, we achieved those goals. I am grateful for the relationships I have built along the way, the individuals whom I was able to work closely with and learn from, and for those who supported and helped me. I have learned, have grown spiritually, and I am blessed by this congregation. Thank you for allowing me to serve in this capacity at Calvary.



*Merry Christmas and Blessings to you and your family,  
Lisa Jaroslow  
Council President*

# Inter-Generational Ministry with Parish Ed Team

## Telling the Christmas Story Through Song and Drama

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered..."

This is one of the familiar Gospel beginnings of Jesus' birth story, this one specifically is how Luke begins his telling of the story of Jesus' birth. The Parish Education Team is excited to invite you all to an **Intergenerational Christmas Drama on Sunday, December 17, during morning worship.** There will be costumes, carols sung, instrumental music played, adults, youth and kids together, all guided by the words given to us in the book of Luke helping to tell the story of Jesus born into our world...into our lives! Please mark your calendars and hear yet again about the word made flesh in our lives, in our worship space, as we continue to await the Christ child.



December 17 will be a day full of hearing the story and joy of Christmas in worship but also bringing that joy to our friends in the community at Countryside Village. Specifically, we invite you to be a part of our **Cocoa & Carols at Countryside Village at 1:00 p.m. on December 17** as we bring the joy of singing and hot cocoa to our Calvary members and residents at Countryside Village. The Countryside kitchen will be serving the cocoa. Caroling songbooks will be available for residents and carolers so all can participate. We'll even have a pianist to play with us and keep us on key using the Baby Grand Piano that sits in their activity room on the first floor. All you need to do is come ready to sing and have fun spreading some Christmas joy!

We hope that as you look to the month of December and live into the season of Advent in your lives, a time of waiting, a time of looking for hope fulfilled in the birth of the Christ child, that among all the things that you can do to prepare, that you make the festivities of December 17 a part of your plans!

Advent Blessings to you and your families,  
*Sister Jennie Myers and the Parish Education Team*

*You're Invited!*



*Sunday, December 17 during worship*

# Calvary Happenings in December

## The Annual Congregational Meeting is on December 3rd following worship.

The Friendship Bible Study group will not be meeting in the month of December. They will resume on January 10, 2024. Contact JoAnn Smith for questions.

Wednesday, December 6th: **Music and Worship Team** meeting! For questions, talk to Wendy Ross.

### OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS!

The Angel Tree for gifts for children in foster care is now up in the narthex. We would like to express our thanks to the congregation for their response.



### 2023 Calvary Gala Giving Tree

This year, Calvary's Giving Tree will benefit the GPHS Student/Family Liaison Center. The Liaison Center was recently created to work with the homeless youth who are doing their best to stay in school and get an education to improve their situation. Many of these youth are entirely on their own. Please consider a monetary donation to support the Center. Please make checks payable to Calvary Lutheran so we may present them with one check for the total amount collected. Let us bless others as we have been blessed. Thank you.

Calvary's Walking  
❄️ Small Group

Saturday, December 23 @ 10 am  
Meet at Ruckman Memorial  
Nature Trail (by RCC)

❄️ prayer reflection conversation ❄️

How about a walk in the snow?

(If its really snowing, we will cancel)

❄️ Interested or need directions? Talk to Sr. Jennie ❄️

## Christmas Gala

December 10th at 4:00 P.M.

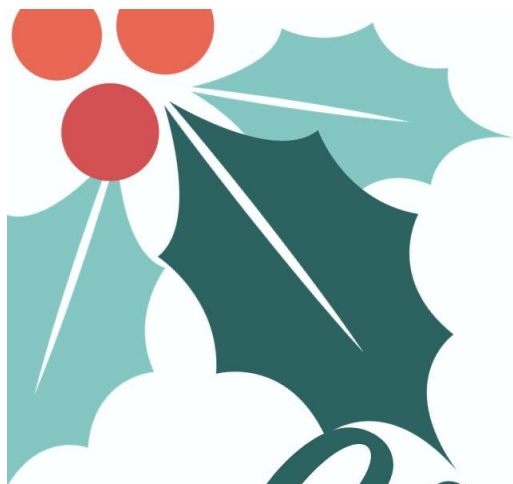
Christmas dinner and  
entertainment

Tickets are \$30 each

The last Sunday to purchase tickets is  
December 3rd  
(before and after worship)



Parish Education Invites Everyone



# Cocoa & Carols at Countryside



Join us on Sunday, December 17, 2023 @ 1:00 p.m.  
as we spread some Christmas cheer to the  
residents at Countryside Village!



*Interested or curious?  
Talk to Sister Jennie  
or Parish Ed members!*



# Calvary High School Events

## High School Youth Christmas Party



Sunday, December 10 @  
1:30 p.m. at Tommerups!

Wear your favorite Christmas  
clothes: Pj's, Ugly Christmas  
Sweater, socks etc!



Smore's around the fire &  
fun Christmas party games!



Let Sister Jennie or Kelly Tommerup know if you can come!



# Hearts & Hands

## ***GRATEFUL, THANKFUL, BLESSED***

Our annual sale will be celebrated with a gigantic win!

We are GRATEFUL for all the shoppers, the bakers, and the labor that made it happen. Extra thanks to Scott Christopherson for setting up the Square, Mike and Danny for so much help with set-up and clean-up, and Dave Williams for freezer storage and transportation.

We are THANKFUL for the amount raised - over \$5,600!! We are BLESSED to have the support from our congregation; it would not have happened without you! Together we can share our proceeds with local charities to serve our community with the light of our Lord.

Please look for the table in the narthex with (left-over) items. They make great Christmas gifts!  
Grateful, Thankful, Blessings!

*Mary and all the Hearts & Hands Team*



## **Hearts & Hands “Greens Arrangements” Sale on Dec 10th**

Hearts and Hands is having a fresh “Greens Arrangements” sale on Sunday, December 10th following worship. These are table arrangements and such.

Please contact Evelyn McFarland or Mary Quick if you have questions.

# GRANTS PASS HIGH SCHOOL (GPHS)

## DECEMBER UPDATE



Now that December is here, our thoughts turn to Christmas. Just imagine not having a proper home to decorate or a place for a Christmas tree. That's the reality for many of our GPHS students.

Catherine Deley is putting together Christmas dinner bags for these students and their families. The bags have been donated, and the GPHS staff have given money for her to purchase hams. What we can do to help is provide some of the extras to complete the dinners, such as stuffing mix, instant mashed potatoes or rice, canned vegetables, apple sauce and, perhaps, some little mini pies or hand pies. In addition, beans, hand warmers, gloves, and heat-and-eat meals are always welcome. Maybe we could throw in some Dutch Bro gift cards, too, as a special treat.

Thank you, Calvary Family, for your generous support.  
Merry Christmas!

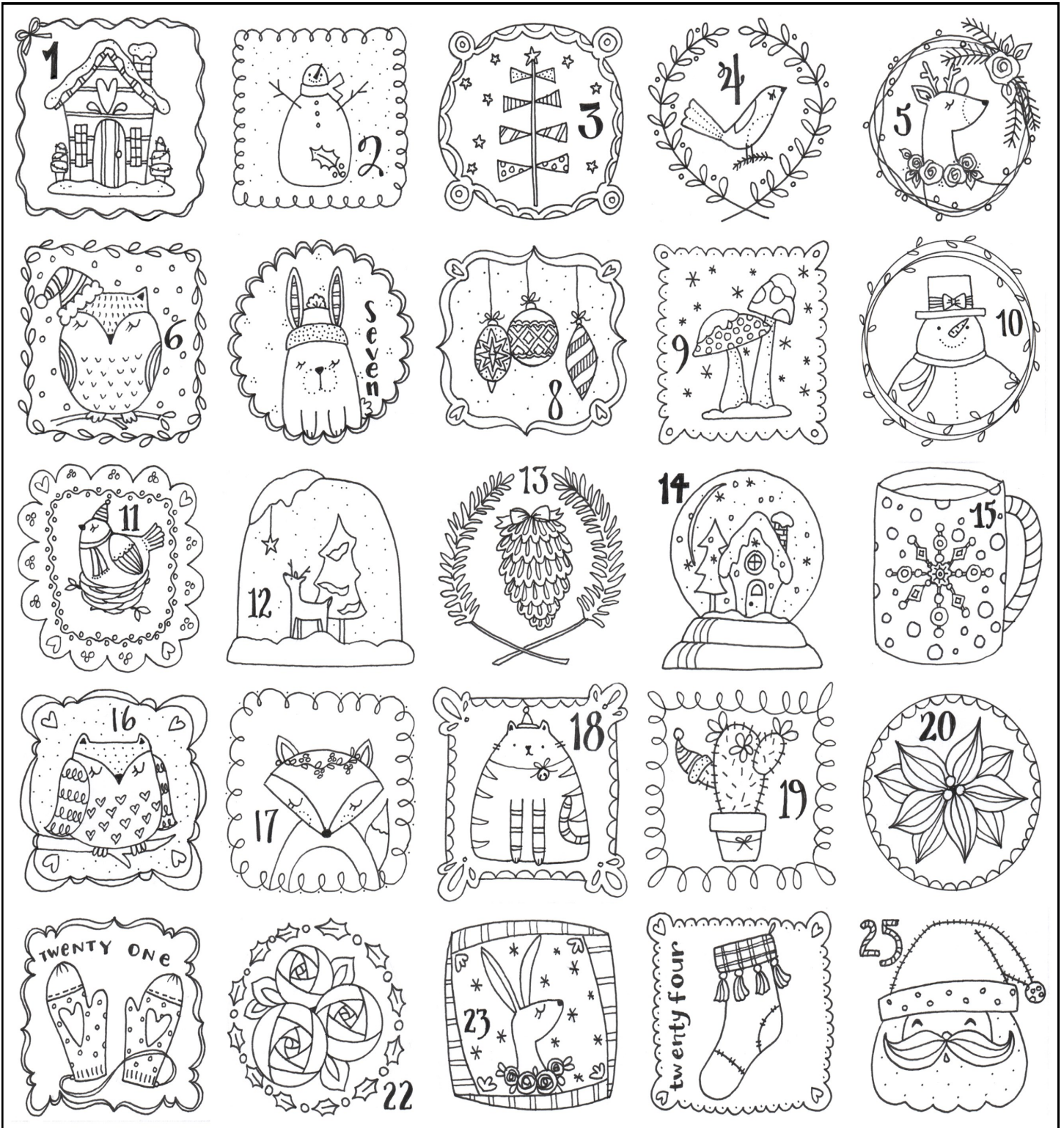
Karen Stevens Mastel  
Hearts & Hands Team





# Family Advent Calendar

Color one picture each day starting with the Sunday, December 3 as you prepare and get excited for Baby Jesus to be born in our world this Christmas!





# Calvary's Children, Youth & Family

**Our November Bunco Afternoon** was such a fun afternoon. There was dice rolling, fun competition, snacks, and prizes to win. But most importantly, lots of laughter and getting to know each other!

Thank you to everyone who participated or helped with planning or leading the fun game afternoon.



Calvary's youngest ones caught on quick!



The Grand Bunco Winners!



The Prizes up for grabs!





# Calvary's Children, Youth & Family



*The Bunco Pumpkin!*



**Our youngest 4-year-old player himself at home at the Winners Table!**





|                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>DECEMBER 18</b> | <b>Tom &amp; Suzanne Wicklin</b>  |
| <b>DECEMBER 22</b> | <b>Roberta and Richard Marsh</b>  |
| <b>DECEMBER 23</b> | <b>Ryan &amp; Amy Thompson</b>    |
| <b>DECEMBER 28</b> | <b>Martha &amp; Donald Porter</b> |
| <b>DECEMBER 29</b> | <b>Milton &amp; Jean Scherpf</b>  |
| <b>DECEMBER 31</b> | <b>Karen &amp; Brian Nantais</b>  |

*Happy Anniversary*



**BLESSINGS  
ON YOUR  
BIRTHDAY**

|               |                           |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| <b>DEC 2</b>  | <b>BETH SIMON</b>         |
| <b>DEC 5</b>  | <b>NOEL HOBACK</b>        |
| <b>DEC 5</b>  | <b>JR RAYSIN</b>          |
| <b>DEC 6</b>  | <b>MARJ MORTENSEN</b>     |
| <b>DEC 6</b>  | <b>CHAD RODRIGUEZ</b>     |
| <b>DEC 6</b>  | <b>LEE SMITH</b>          |
| <b>DEC 7</b>  | <b>AUDRA MYERCHIN</b>     |
| <b>DEC 7</b>  | <b>MILTON SCHERPF</b>     |
| <b>DEC 8</b>  | <b>MARY SLATER</b>        |
| <b>DEC 11</b> | <b>WHITNEY BIXLER</b>     |
| <b>DEC 12</b> | <b>DARLENE AVISE</b>      |
| <b>DEC 16</b> | <b>DONALD PORTER</b>      |
| <b>DEC 17</b> | <b>HOLLY ROUNSAVILLE</b>  |
| <b>DEC 21</b> | <b>JANET CAPETTY</b>      |
| <b>DEC 22</b> | <b>ROGER STEINBRENNER</b> |
| <b>DEC 26</b> | <b>KARIN LANAHAN</b>      |
| <b>DEC 27</b> | <b>IAN TOMMERUP</b>       |
| <b>DEC 28</b> | <b>DICK BUTLER</b>        |
| <b>DEC 29</b> | <b>RENATE DIEHL</b>       |



# ***Serving the Lord...***

## **COMMUNION ASSISTANTS**

**12/3** Pastor Jon/Sister Jennie  
Crystal Zimmer & Melinda Eide

**12/10** Pastor Jon/Sister Jennie  
David & Tanya Haight

**12/17** Pastor Jon/Sister Jennie  
Gary Blom & Carol Wilson

**12/24 @ 9:30:** Pastor Jon/Sister Jennie  
Carol Wilson/Melinda Eide

**12/24 @ 4:30:** Pastor Jon/Sister Jennie  
Crystal Zimmer, Linda Johnson,  
Carol Wilson, Gary Blom

**12/31** Pastor Jon/Sister Jennie  
Crystal Zimmer & Melinda Eide

## **ALTAR GUILD**

**12/3** Anna Gorskaya  
**12/10** Evelyn McFarland  
**12/17** Anna Gorskaya  
**12/24** D. & M. Angstadt / D. Rodriguez  
**12/31** Denise & Madeleine Angstadt

## **LECTORS**

**12/3** George Straka  
**12/10** Linda Johnson  
**12/17** Jennifer Voris  
**12/24** Crystal Zimmer / Marcia Lembcke  
**12/31** Joan Hathaway

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Pastor Jon Myers  
Lisa Jaroslow  
Karen Blom  
Matt Eide  
Karen Mastel  
Gary Blom  
Judi Bliss  
Bill Bianchi  
Jackie Matheny  
Audra Myerchin

## **HOSTESS COMMITTEE**

April Marshall  
Bonnie Stucke  
Nancy Higgins  
Amy Thompson  
Kelly Tommerup

## **VIDEO/SOUND**

Gary Blom  
Larry Weaver  
Janine Nave  
Dean Schwerdt  
Jim Sweeney  
Monte Zeller

## **USHERS**

Paul Hoadley  
David Williams

## **ACOLYTES**

**12/3** Deserae  
Gindlesperger  
**12/10** Kimberly  
Gindlesperger  
**12/17** Kayden  
Gindlesperger  
**12/24** CJ Myers  
**12/31** Allie Myers

## **ALTAR FLOWERS PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD BY:**

**12/3** Jack & JoAnne Nahmias  
**12/10** Linda Hurd  
**12/17** Tom & Suzanne Wicklin  
**12/24** Kimberly White  
**12/31** Bonnie & Mike Lawler

# December

# 2023

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT



1  
12:00 pm  
Lunch With  
Friends

2  
10:00 am Hiking  
Group: Limpy  
Creek



3  
9:20 am Pre-  
Service / 9:30 am  
Worship  
No Sunday School  
Congregational  
Meeting following  
worship  
Kids' Activities-  
Upper Room  
Angel Tree up in  
narthex

4

5

6  
6 am Men's  
Breakfast  
  
9:30 am Hearts &  
Hands  
  
10:00 am Music &  
Worship Meeting  
  
3:30 pm Choir  
4:00 pm Praise  
Team

7

8

9

10  
9:20 am Pre-  
Service / 9:30 am  
Worship  
  
10:30 Adult & Youth  
Sunday School

11

12

13  
2:00 pm Parish  
Ed meeting  
  
3:30 Choir Team

14

15

16

2:00 pm  
Countryside  
Service

4:30 pm Council  
meeting

17  
9:20 am Pre-  
Service/9:30 am  
Worship  
10:30 am Kids &  
Youth Christmas  
Party  
1:00 pm P. Ed  
Christmas  
Program: Cocoa &  
Carols at  
Countryside

18

19

20  
9:00 am—2:00  
pm Red Cross  
Blood Drive



3:30 Choir Team

21

22

23  
10:00 am Walking  
Small Group:  
Ruckman  
Memorial Trail



24  
9:20 am Pre-  
Service / 9:30 am  
Worship  
No Sunday School  
4:30 Candlelight  
Service

25

**OFFICE CLOSED**



26  
No Outreach  
Meeting today

27

3:30 Choir Team

28

29

30

31  
9:20 am Pre-  
Service / 9:30 am  
Worship  
  
No Sunday School







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

**Jon Myers, Pastor**

**Sister Jenny, Deaconess**

**Wendy Ross**, Director of Choirs

**Kimberly White**, Administrative Assistant

**Sundays:**

9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

10:30 a.m. Sunday School