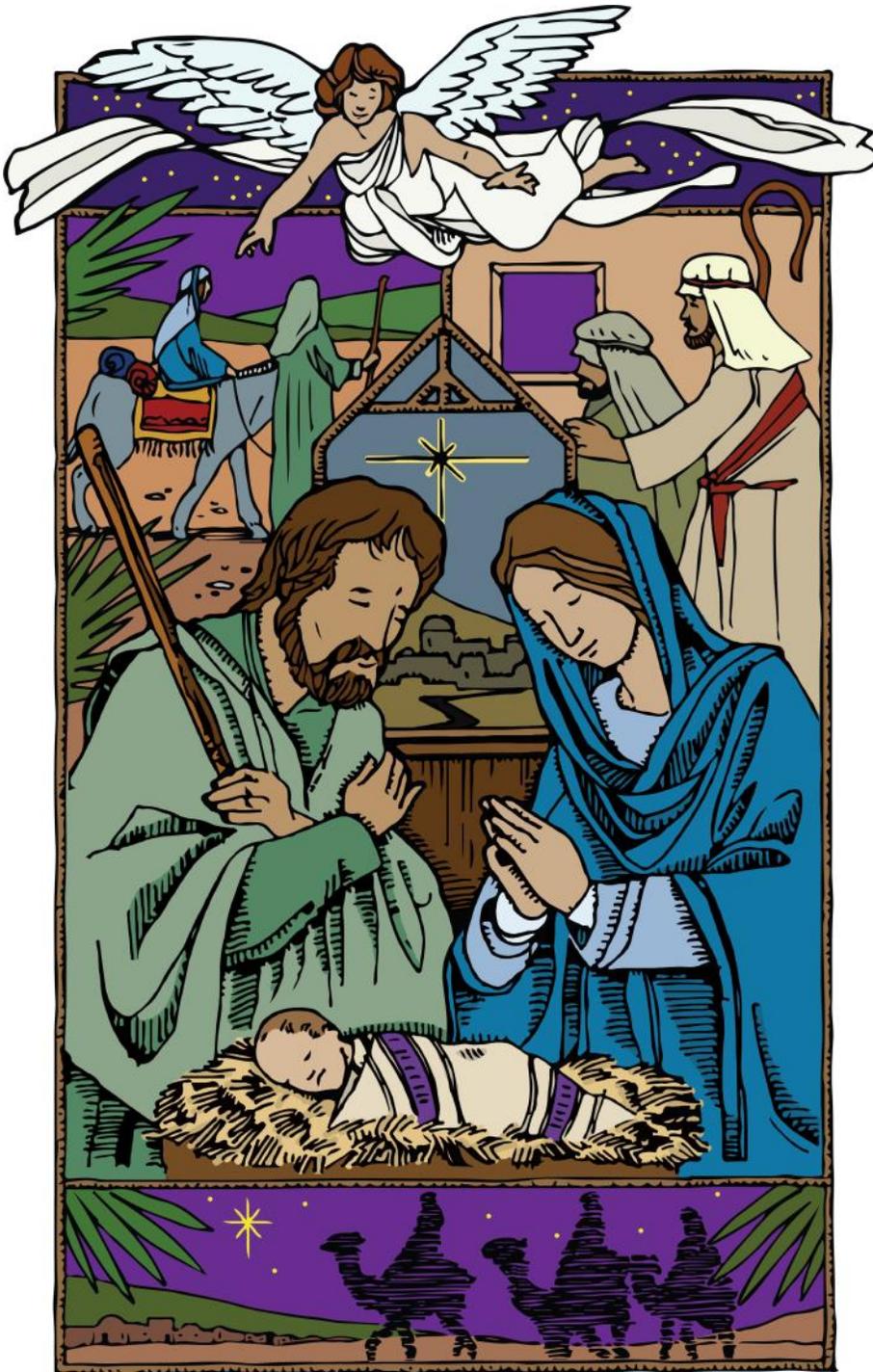


MARTIN LUTHER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

# LUTHER LINES

JAMES ISLAND, SC 29412

DECEMBER 2022



#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Martin Luther Church is the only ELCA Congregation on James Island*
- *Martin Luther Church was organized on February 5, 1961.*
- *273 Disciples call Martin Luther Church their home church.*
- *Eight Pastors have shepherded Martin Luther disciples since its organization.*

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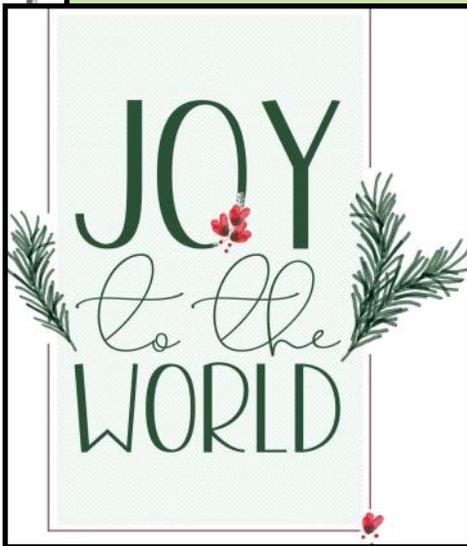


# JOY TO THE WORLD

Life's tough these days. That's no secret to anyone! Just because we're going into the Christmas season which is supposed to be *"the most wonderful time of the year"*, that does not mean that life will be any easier! It's easy to dwell on our troubles and stress out, especially during what are expected to be joyful times with our families and friends.

+ + +

Timothy J. Smith tells us this interesting and inspiring story of one young man. He was often sick as a baby. He was always small, puny some would say. As a youth he was always frail and delicate. He was not able to play sports with the other boys his age. Eventually he entered the ministry. But his health was so fragile, he was unable to serve his growing congregation.



Amazingly, he did not dwell on his troubles. In fact, his spirit soared. His only real complaint was the poor quality of the hymns of his day. He felt they did not convey hope and joy. Someone challenged him to write better ones. He did. He wrote over 600 hymns, most of them hymns of praise.

When his health collapsed completely in 1748, he left one of the most remarkable collections of hymns the world has ever known. His name was Isaac Watts.

In a few short weeks we will be singing one of his most famous hymns, "Joy to the World!" Isaac Watts discovered joy in his life because he knew that God would never desert him. He was able to live his life with all sorts of health problems feeling close to God and Jesus. He had joy deep in his heart.

+ + +

Timothy Smith advises: *"Don't dwell on your Troubles! Consider the Joy!"* And he's right! We cannot totally escape the burdens and stresses we face in life, even during these hopefully care-free and joyous holidays. But we can talk to other people who will listen to us, pray with us, walk with us, and help us change the situation and relieve the stress. We can do our best to not dwell on our troubles, and let God's joy fill us.

After all, that's one of the main reasons the baby who's birth we are preparing to celebrate came to us! Jesus came to bring God's Joy to us in the midst of our Troubles! That's why he wants us, each and every day, to dwell on him!

I wish all of you a Spirit-filled and uplifting Advent season, and a joyous and Merry Christmas!

*Pastor Tom*



# ADVENT

*A Season of Preparation*

JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY  
EVENINGS AT 7 PM

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Join Martin Luther Church and Faith Church for our mid-week Advent Services. Sadly, we will not be sharing a meal this season, but we will be joyfully preparing for Christmas with the

“Holden Evening Prayer”.

Meet us at Faith Church on November 30 and December 14 and  
at Martin Luther on December 7 and 21.

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*Christmas Eve Services*

*Martin Luther at 5 PM - Faith Church at 8:30 PM*



**BRUNCH**

## SUNDAY

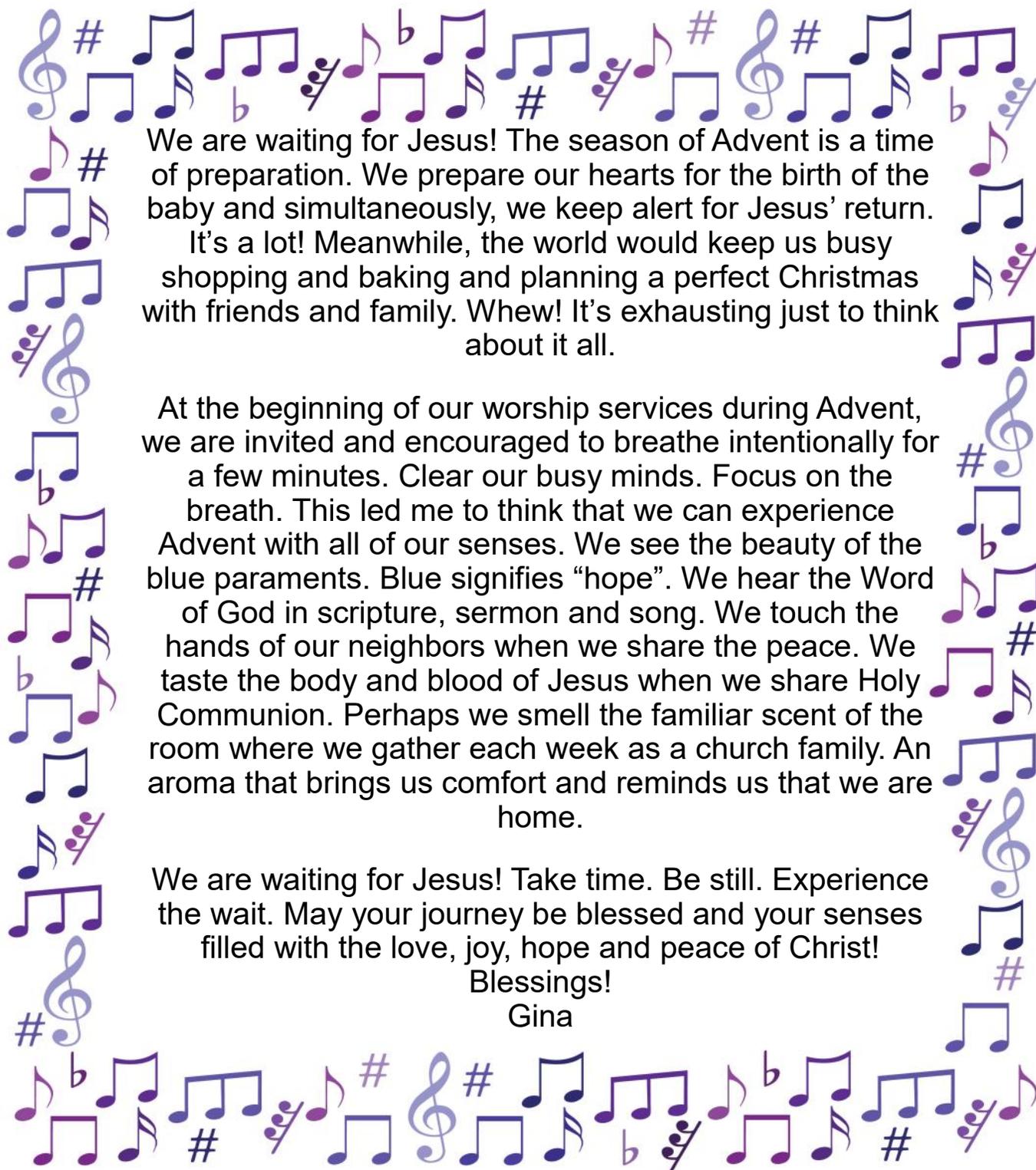
December 4

*Our next wonderful First Sunday of the Month Fellowship Brunch will be held on Sunday, December 4 immediately following the 9 AM Worship Service. We are really looking forward to being together for this special time of laughter, feasting and fellowship!*

***BRING YOUR FAVORITE FRUIT,  
CASSEROLE, BISCUITS AND GRAVY,  
CEREALS, MEATS, ETC!!!!***

***ALL ARE WELCOME!***

# MUSIC NOTES



We are waiting for Jesus! The season of Advent is a time of preparation. We prepare our hearts for the birth of the baby and simultaneously, we keep alert for Jesus' return.

It's a lot! Meanwhile, the world would keep us busy shopping and baking and planning a perfect Christmas with friends and family. Whew! It's exhausting just to think about it all.

At the beginning of our worship services during Advent, we are invited and encouraged to breathe intentionally for a few minutes. Clear our busy minds. Focus on the breath. This led me to think that we can experience Advent with all of our senses. We see the beauty of the blue paraments. Blue signifies "hope". We hear the Word of God in scripture, sermon and song. We touch the hands of our neighbors when we share the peace. We taste the body and blood of Jesus when we share Holy Communion. Perhaps we smell the familiar scent of the room where we gather each week as a church family. An aroma that brings us comfort and reminds us that we are home.

We are waiting for Jesus! Take time. Be still. Experience the wait. May your journey be blessed and your senses filled with the love, joy, hope and peace of Christ!

Blessings!

Gina



**We're not having a Blue, Blue Christmas,  
We're having a Red, White and Blue Christmas!**

Martin Luther is going to show our love and support to Veteran Families in need this year by having a "Veteran Angel Tree". We will have the tree set up in the fellowship hall for you to select your angel.

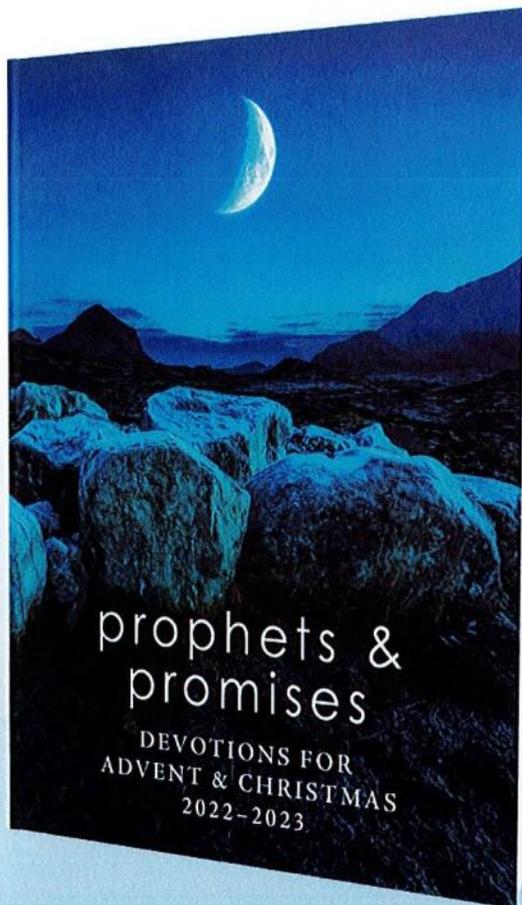
The Tricounty Veteran Network Angels can use Visa or Mastercard gift cards in increments of \$25, \$50 or \$100. If you would rather donate cash, you can turn the money into the office and we will get the funds to Tricounty Veteran Network and they will purchase the gift cards.

We will be collecting until Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, so we can turn all cards in for distribution. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Laura Jordan at 843-480-8287.

Deadline to turn in gift cards or money is  
**Sunday, December, 18<sup>th</sup>**—not Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.

# prophets & promises

DEVOTIONS FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS  
2022-2023



ISBN: 978-1-5064-8802-8

In ancient times prophets announced God's promises of a deliverer to the Hebrew people. As you read this devotional, look for these ancient promises, even in the Gospel of Matthew. Also watch for the different ways in which Joseph, the magi, and King Herod respond to the arrival of Jesus. Marvel at the power of God's promises, and the mystery of God with us in a newborn child.

*Prophets and Promises* continues the Christian tradition of setting aside time to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth and to anticipate his return. The Advent season of preparation then unfolds in the joy of the twelve days of Christmas and the day of Epiphany. You will find daily devotions here for the first Sunday of Advent (November 27, 2022) through Epiphany (January 6, 2023). Each devotion features a scripture reading (many from Matthew), accompanied by a photo, a quote to ponder, a reflection, and a prayer. The book also offers household blessings and prayers (see pages 86-94) to enrich your preparations and celebrations.

**This wonderful devotional booklet will be available in the Narthex  
—one per family please—beginning November 20.**

## *We Love to Tell the Story!*

About 25 years ago, I attended an event for an organization I belong to here in Charleston. One of the members was there who had not been able to attend over a year. She and her husband owned a company that made choir robes and other religious garments. The reason for her absence was due to the fact, that her husband was diagnosed with a terminal illness and between taking care of her husband and running their business, she had little time for anything else.

Eventually, her husband passed away and this event we both attended was the first one in a year and a half for her. I was wearing a hat and as we talked, she complimented me on it and asked where I had purchased it. She said she was planning on going somewhere that required her to wear a hat. When I returned home, I boxed up the hat and sent it to her with a note saying this was not a loan, it is a gift. Of course, she called to let me know she was surprised and grateful for the gesture. The next month when we attended a meeting, she presented me with a wrap that had been made for me at her shop. It had religious symbols in the design is "GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME". I am sure the hat is long gone, but I still have the wrap and the wonderful feeling I get when I look at it. By the way, the lady's name is Faith.

GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME

Linda Leone



After my recent knee surgery, my most difficult time was at night. I had trouble falling asleep and staying asleep. Most nights, I ended up sitting in the recliner in the living room in the early morning hours reading or just waiting for sleep to come. I was a little depressed and just agitated that I couldn't get a good night's sleep. Even though it was only October, I decided I was going to put up my artificial Christmas tree. I know it was way too early to put up a tree – but didn't care. I decided, well – I won't decorate it just yet, just enough to have the lights to look at – I always loved looking at the pretty lights and it helped to calm my anxiousness – and, at this point, I thought 'whatever it takes' to help me relax a little.

So I had my brother bring the box into the living room and I thought I would take my time and get it up over the next couple of days. The day my brother brought the box into the living room, he came in and told me I had a package on the front porch (which of course he brought in with him). I couldn't imagine what it was – for once I hadn't done any recent online shopping and wasn't expecting anything.

I had a friend, Evelyn, that I used to work with around 25 years ago back in Virginia and we had kept in touch over the years, but she passed away in August. A couple weeks prior to her passing, her sister, who I never met, called to tell me that she was in bad shape and in ICU. At that time, I decided to take a quick trip up to Virginia and see her. When I got to her, I wasn't sure she knew I was there – she was mostly unresponsive, but I was still glad I made the trip and met some of her family.

The package was from this sister who said in a beautiful note to me how much Evelyn had talked about me and cherished our friendship. So the sister wanted to send me a few 'trinkets' from Evelyn's apartment. I was very touched that the sister would think of me and send me some things. Imagine my surprise to see several Christmas ornaments in the package.

Once I got that package, I had to go ahead and put up the ornaments from Evelyn – she loved snowmen. I felt this 'God wink' telling me all was good with Evelyn, and now I can relax and enjoy the friendship we shared through His blessings.

Peggy Oxendine

Hi! So a little long but cool story – also a little personal but here we go

In 2008, I was a single parent of a 2 and 3 year old. In 2007 I had finally gotten the guts to walk away from a bad situation with their father. I was a full time employee in a high volume real estate law firm; working 75 hours a week, juggling a house payment, day care, car payment – all the bills with no child support or interaction from their father. I don't have any family in Charleston, so my sweet children often had to come back to work with me after I picked them up from daycare. I was a Christian, but did not go to church regularly. I taught the children the Lords Prayer with a book that was given to them at their baptism earlier that year. I was slowly starting to feel close to God again.

Christmas was coming and although my children would not have known any better, I was struggling with what I would do for gifts since there was no extra money anywhere in sight. My mother and sister offered to help buy stuff and bring it down to me to make a Christmas morning surprise, but we were having trouble with timing. I was praying for a way to make Christmas special for them with what I had and came up with all kinds of ideas, but still felt a little stressed – I knew they would go back to daycare after Christmas, and all of the new toys would be at school and lots of talk of what Santa brought and that worried me that they would feel left out or missed. I kept faith that I would figure something out and really started thinking about the true meaning of Christmas and what I wanted my kids to think about. I never said anything to anyone but God. I was embarrassed and felt inadequate, so I kept a smile on my face for the “world” .

A few days before Christmas, when I got to my desk, there was a card addressed to me and it was from Kathe Young at my work. She was one of my friends who I also considered an “office mom”. I opened the card and there was \$150.00 and it said this is for you, I hope you have a wonderful Christmas. I was stunned, shocked, overwhelmed, over joyed – I didn't know what to think or do. She was a normal person just like me and that was a lot of money! I thanked her over

and over again and asked her why?! I told her how I was struggling and so stressed and this changed everything! She told me God put it on her heart and so she did it. I couldn't believe it. I had not mentioned my situation to anyone outside of my family but God.

It sounds funny, but it changed my life. It changed how I saw prayer, it changed how I saw others, it changed how I saw being a servant of God, it changed ... everything. It wasn't the fact that I could buy the kids things for Christmas – my mother and sister could handle that and help. It was that God saw me – me ... a person who had made bad decisions in their past, strayed but came back more than once ... me – a person who felt absolute no worth other than the overwhelming gift of my children.

I tell the story of Kathe often. Years later in 2016, Eddie and I had her read at our wedding. It was very important to me that she read John 15:9 -13. After I came to Martin Luther, she came to Bridge Church with us a couple of times. Her home church is SeaCoast. She is still very active there.

Kathe kick started me back to the path that seemed so far away to me and I haven't looked back since. Her gesture has stayed with me all of these years and last year, I had the chance to listen to God and give a struggling single mom a gift.

As for my children – they are still none the wiser about that year. I will tell them one day. They know Kathe is special and she thinks they are special too. I have always said and always will, I don't know why God picked me to be their mother but they are the greatest gift of my entire life – second to God's Mercy and Grace and the Love of Christ Jesus. People often used to asked me “how do you do it with such young children and no help?” I always replied, God made them special – they are good because of Him, not me.



**Laura Jordan**

June 11, 2015

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”

I entered the quiet sanctuary on the hot Thursday afternoon to pray. As I approached the altar, and my eyes focused on the cross, an unfamiliar sight surprised me. Just above the beautiful, large wooden cross that adorns our sanctuary was a sprawling weed. My first inclination was to go and find some device to take that weed off the cross. But as I prayed and the more I focused on the cross, I found that I developed an appreciation for the “vine” growing on the cross. Obviously, the vine came from the vegetation outside the rear of the sanctuary. This made me acutely aware of how I live and thrive “outside” of the church, but my true self need to be connected to the cross just as the “vine” came out of the world and into the church. It could have been anywhere else in the church, but the vine grew on the CROSS.

I have been struggling lately with my connection with God and my faith has grown dim. This little vine has given me hope that with the Cross, I can abide in Christ and with him, I can bear much fruit. I am where I need to be just as the vine grows as it does. Granted, someone will be here soon to remove the vine from the cross and the sanctuary but I will not be removed from the source – God.

Jesus tells us “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.”

Sherry Fowler



WE LOVE THESE STORIES  
AND THE WILLINGNESS  
TO SHARE THEM IS  
POWERFUL. PLEASE  
SEND A STORY TO SHARE  
TO THE CHURCH OFFICE  
SO WE CAN SEND THEM  
OUT EACH THURSDAY!



**PARENTING CLASS:  
RAISING HEALTHIER AND  
HAPPIER CHILDREN**

*Simple & Practical Approach:*

*Confident Parents =  
Confident Children*



**Christine Donovan**

PCI® Certified Parent Coach



**January 8, 15, 22, 29**  
**6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**  
Dinner served at 5 p.m.



**Lutheran Church of the Redeemer**  
714 Riverdale Drive  
Charleston, SC 29407

**\$40 Per Family**  
(RSVP by Jan. 1)

**\$50 Per Family**  
(After Jan. 1)

**Childcare Provided**

- Nursery to Age 4
- K to 5th Grade

Register Online: [redeemercharleston.net](http://redeemercharleston.net)  
 For More Information — Call: (843) 571-6655 • Text: (843) 509-1286 • Email: [info@SEL4SC.org](mailto:info@SEL4SC.org)

## PRAYERS



The family of Leslie  
Carter at her death on  
November 7

Eda Laughlin

Judy Alcorn

Margaret Balzano

Joyce Guffin

Emily Schroeder

Paul Bauersfeld

Claire and Buddy  
Diffenderfer

Harriet Brunson

Polly Sutton

Myrl Kluge

Carl and Judy Simmons

Mary and Jack Cooper

Bill Mariorenzi

Joe Sproles

Joe Coates

Robert Suarez

Tim Frear

Jacob DuPree

Bobby Webb

Harold McMillan

Evan McMillan

Karen Ezell

Anna Bailes

Josiah Parnell

Yvonne Thompson

Sylvia Stroud

Peyton Sullivan

Fran Williams

Mary Stevens

Joyce Salters

Mark Hair

Mikalynn Burke

Charlie Smith

Helena Bradford

Connie and Walt Wurster

Annie Flanders

Roger Nelson

Anita Sloan

Chieko Jordan

Larry Miller

Whitney Greene

Jamison Ford

Mary Stevens

Joyce Salters

Dwight and Susan Hartsell

Fran Williams

Rodney Fowler

Lucille Mullis

Michele Wallis

Marvin Sims

Fran Lingenfelter

Autumn Young

Trey Crayton

Carlton Hartis

Johnny Hallman

Cyndie Hartsell

Alice Vendrick

Mary Ann Graff

Linda Miller

Betty and Paulwyn Boliek

Will Coleman

Ramona Horres

Becky Cook

Sherry Cook

Carolyn Swittenberg

Mildred Woods

Ned Vendrick

Chip Guffin

Wendy Thomas

Ann Smith

Anna Hiott

All those suffering with  
the COVID-19 virus.

All those who serve in the  
military and those who  
protect our country,  
state, and communities.

The Citizens for Ukraine  
for their safety and for  
the end to the conflict  
between Ukraine and  
Russia.

# Let MLLC Youth help you wrap your Christmas gifts!



One gift  
for \$3.00

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Three gifts  
for \$6.00

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Five gifts  
for \$10.00

*This is a fundraising event for the Martin Luther Lutheran Church Youth group. A portion of the money raised will be donated to Pet Helpers on James Island. Gifts for wrapping can be dropped off or picked up from you. They will be ready for pick up at 4PM. If you are interested, please contact us at [Lpjchas@gmail.com](mailto:Lpjchas@gmail.com) or 843-480-8287. We will accept Venmo, cash or check!*



**December 11th**  
**11 am - 4 pm**  
**1605 Harborview Rd.**

# NEWS FOR YOU TO KNOW

## **Martin Luther Church is gladly accepting online contributions through Tithe.ly.com.**

Anyone can access this new App through the MLLC website. Just go to the green Giving Option Button on the opening page! If you need some assistance, please give Sherry a call in the church office! Now you can give, even when you are out of town!!! Tell your friends and family that they can give to MLLC **online!!!**

## **ELCA World Hunger**

Working with and through our congregations in the U.S., Lutheran churches around the world, and other partners, [ELCA World Hunger](#) is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. From health clinics to microloans, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.

## **BLESSING OTHERS**

The Cub Scouts have designed and mounted a Blessings Box to assist the hungry in our midst. They encourage all to take what you need and give what you are able. Along with the Blessings Box, two "Little Libraries" have been mounted beside the Blessings Box. One library is for children's books and one is for adult readers.

## **RESPIRE CARE CHARLESTON**

Upcoming Respite Care  
Charleston Support Group  
Meetings at MLLC

**Dec. 6, 13, 20 and 27 at 10 AM  
— Tuesday Morning Respite  
Group**

**Dec. 13 at 6 PM—Tuesday  
Support Group**

**Dec. 7, 14, 21 and 28 at 10  
AM—Wednesday Support  
Group**

**Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 at 10  
AM—Friday Morning Respite  
Group**

If you know of anyone who might benefit from any of these groups, please invite them to join us!

**Sara Perry**

**Executive Director RCC**

**843 647-7405**

## **VETERAN MINISTRY**

Do you know a veteran or a military family in need?

*Education... Housing... Health Benefits... Basic Needs... Assistance... Employment... Homelessness... Peer Support... Financial Crisis Management*

Please contact or refer them to:

Tri-County Veterans Support Network  
843-276-2840

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

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

**DECEMBER**

**BIRTHDAYS**

Marty Richard 12/01  
 JB Bradley 12/01  
 Polly Sutton 12/04  
 Aaron Armstrong 12/05  
 Haley Swittenberg 12/07  
 Brian Shaddrix 12/12  
 Chuck Gillette 12/15  
 Laura Richard 12/15  
 Greta Waters 12/18  
 Charlie Harris 12/19  
 Joyce Guffin 12/23  
 Michael Gillette 12/26  
 Amanda Burke 12/26  
 Pam Gillette 12/27  
 Joni Suggs 12/28  
 Steve Shaddrix 12/29  
 Wayne Rhea 12/30

**ANNIVERSARIES**

Pam & Chuck Gillette 12/09  
 Heidi & Gary Frear 12/12  
 Nancy & Bruce Carter 12/18  
 Marcia & Russell LaFrance 12/24

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

**JANUARY**

**BIRTHDAYS**

Jacob Hamill 1/03  
 Margaret Balzano 1/06  
 Sammie Burke 1/13  
 Jim Tuten 1/15  
 Ralph McLaughlin 1/16  
 Beverly Weed 1/19  
 Madeline Gillette 1/21  
 Carl Simmons 1/26  
 Brooke-Lynn Burke 1/31

**ANNIVERSARIES**

Connie & Lou Gibson 1/5  
 Pam & Charlie Harris 1/29



**We're On Facebook**

**Worship Assistants for December**

	<b>Lesson Reader</b>	<b>Prayer Leader</b>	<b>Communion Assistant</b>	<b>CPOD</b>	<b>Usher</b>	<b>Video</b>
12/4	Charles Pingree	Charles Pingree	Mary Lou Hoover	Mary Lou	Hoovers	Peggy Oxendine
12/11	Laura Jordan	Laura Jordan	Torren Thomas	Laura Jordan	Ricky Suggs	Tracey Arthur
12/18	Mary Baldwin	Mary Baldwin	Heidi Frear	Nancy Haynsworth	Gary Frear	Heidi Frear
12/24 Christmas Eve			Maria Namie		Richard Fowler	Sherry Fowler
12/25	Sherry Fowler	Sherry Fowler	Sherry Fowler	Peggy Oxendine	Jimmy Knight and Richard Fowler	Sherry Fowler



MARTIN LUTHER EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1605 Harbor View Road  
Charleston, SC 29412

843 795-4855  
Email: mllc@knology.net

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.MARTINLUTHERCHURCH.ORG](http://WWW.MARTINLUTHERCHURCH.ORG)

**“A CARING FAMILY OF  
GOD”**

## STAFF AND CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

### STAFF

Pastor  
**The Reverend Thomas  
Cassem**

Director of  
Congregational Ministries  
**Sherry Fowler**

Director of Music  
**Gina Shuey**

Office Hours are  
Monday—Friday  
9 AM to Noon

### CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

*Officers*

*President—  
Peggy Oxendine*

*Vice President—  
Nancy Haynsworth*

*Secretary—  
Heidi Frear*

*Treasurer—  
Janice Knight*

*Financial Secretary—  
Vacant*

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

*Worship Team Leader—  
Brenda Burke*

*Service Team Leader—  
Laura Jordan*

*Evangelism Team Leader—  
Vacant*

*Learning Team Leader—  
Pam Peterson*

*Congregational Care Team  
Leader—Mary Lou Hoover*

*Property Team Leader—  
Wayne Rimer*

*Youth (one year term) -*



### **Are you on Facebook?**

If you are, then join us  
on Sundays at 9 AM for  
our Facebook Live  
streaming of the  
Worship Service from  
Martin Luther  
Lutheran Church.