

A Word From the Pastor

One of my favorite Christmas stories is “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens. I’ve seen it done dramatically in children’s theaters, a few regional playhouses and Chicago’s Goodman Theatre. I’ve also watched an old black and white video of it and most recently a computer animated film starring Jim Carrey as the dark and miserly Ebenezer Scrooge.

If you haven’t read or heard the story, “A Christmas Carol” is about a businessman who has no Christmas spirit. He pays his colleague a pittance and doesn’t give a rip about his family. He is such a cold person that he can work in a freezing office, hardly using the coal he has to warm his building. He’s unwilling to give to charity, unaware of the needs around him, and unable to change his habitual dour demeanor. The story goes that he is visited by three spirits as he tires to get a night’s rest.

Visitor 1 is The Ghost of Christmas Past. He gives Scrooge a look at his childhood and at a couple of key turning points in his young adulthood. Scrooge came from a tough background, but he met a mentor that gave him an opportunity to see the world differently. He meets a young woman that offers him a chance to change his perspective. But he misses the opportunity.

Later in the evening, Visitor 2 arrives, The Ghost of Christmas Present. This spirit reminds Scrooge of what is currently occurring right under this nose. He gets a small glimpse of a few people that might benefit from a little compassion and intervention from him, people that could find a place in their hearts for Scrooge if he gave them an opening.

Finally, Visitor 3 arrives, The Ghost of Christmas Future, who shows Scrooge a tombstone that offers—ironically—hope. This time has not come yet, the final word hasn’t been written on the grave, it might change. When Scrooge is awakened on Christmas morning he knows that he must not waste his second chance. And in the final scene, the changed man does something WAY out of character; he makes an apology to his closest family member, one who had tried to show kindness to him many times and was rebuffed over and over. He also makes restitution with his colleague and pays him what he’s worth.

Along with recommending a viewing of “A Christmas Carol” this season, I’d like you to consider learning from this story. Scripture tells us that, like the Dickens tale, three visits by spirits were vital to the Advent Season. The first (Gabriel) came to a man named Zechariah (Matt 1:5-25; 57-80). The angel told him his elderly wife Elizabeth would give birth to a son that would announce the way for the Messiah. Zechariah didn’t believe the angel and God muted him so that he could not speak until his son was born.

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DECEMBER SERMON TEXTS

Dec. 1: 1st Sunday of Advent

Matthew 25:36-44

Guest Preacher Bob Johnson

Dec. 8: 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10

Dec. 15: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Matthew 11:2-11

Isaiah 35

Dec. 22: 4th Sunday of Advent

Matthew 1:18-25

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Dec. 29: Guest Preacher Jeff Randell



A WORD...(CONTINUED)

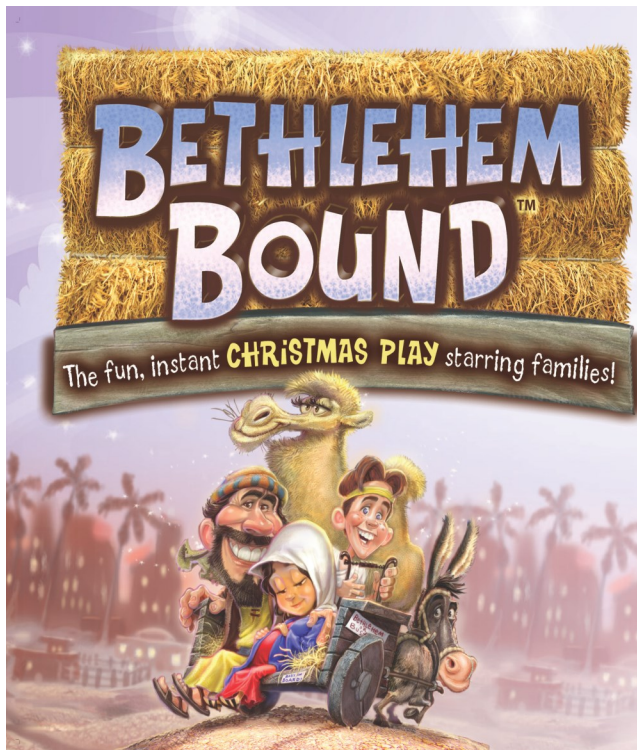
Gabriel's second visit was to a virgin named Mary. She would soon marry a man named Joseph (Matt 1:26-56). Her response was different from Zechariah's. When Mary was told about her role in the birth of the Savior she said, "May it be to me according to your word." She was ready to play her part and I hope you are to this season. The fact is, you may have a part to play as Christ's instrument in your community as the Christmas story is told. Perhaps it's in reconciling with a family member. Maybe it's in showing love to the outsiders in your sphere of influence. Or could it be that you will be asked for something else from God?

Finally, a third spirit-filled vision came to shepherds in the fields (Matt 2:1-20). When God's glory shone, they were terrified, but when the incredible story of the Messiah was told, they hurried off to worship this baby. And when they saw, they told others and they were amazed. Why? Shepherds were lowly people, dirty, uncouth, not well thought of. But their story was so compelling it didn't matter WHO told it. "God With Us" showed up and the shepherds were affected forever. It didn't matter how they were perceived; they HAD to worship the babe and they were willing to go to great lengths to do so.

How badly do you want to worship the Christ this season? We all have busy lives with family and holiday planning and parties and fun things going on. I challenge you to put Jesus before all of that, making worship a priority, not just at Christmas but every day of the year.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Craig



Join Marty and Ramona and their band as they journey to Bethlehem for the Bethlehem Star Search where Ramona hopes to become famous. As they travel they meet angels and various others who point them to the real Star of Bethlehem.

When: Dec. 8, 2019

Time: During the Worship Service
at 10:45 a.m.

Bring a Neighbor!!!

CHURCH FAMILY



Landon Everingham	Dec 1	Harley Martin	Dec 5
Lori Rystrom	Dec 1	Stacy Nuttelman	Dec 16
Samantha Nuttelman	Dec 2	Colton Nuttelman	Dec 16
Braiden Lovgren	Dec 3	Emily Noyd	Dec 24
Jacob Nielsen	Dec 3	Zane Bowerman	Dec 29



Terry & Jan Randell Dec 17

DATES TO REMEMBER:

"Bethlehem Bound" Christmas

Program: Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019

(In collaboration with the Methodist Church.)

9:30 am—Methodist Church Performance

10:45 am—Covenant Church Performance



ELEVATE Youth Group Christmas Party and

White Elephant Gift Exchange: Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019
at 6 pm. Youth from 7th—12th Grades welcome.



Cookie Baking Party: Fri, Dec 13 7-9 pm and
Sat, Dec 14 1-5 pm
(details on page 4)



Holiday Babysitting: Saturday, Dec. 21, 2019
9 am—5 pm
(details on page 4)

Breakfast and Carols: Sunday, Dec. 22, 2019
9:00 am.



Caroling at Midwest Covenant

Home: Monday, Dec. 23, 2019—6 pm.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Lessons and
Carols: Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2019. 7:00 pm



DECEMBER MINISTRY PARTNERS

Sunday, Dec 1

Nursery: TBD

Greeters: Dennis & Connie Nuttelman

Coffee Time: Bob & Cindy Orsborn

Scripture: Jeannie Ahlquist

Audio/Visual: Dale Hennessy
Kohen Hier

Sunday, Dec 8

Nursery: TBD

Greeters: Bob & Cindy Orsborn

Coffee Time: TBD

Scripture: Pat Everingham

Audio/Visual: Dale Hennessy
Dennis Nuttelman

Sunday, Dec 15

Nursery: Shayla & Korah Hier

Greeters: Dave & Julia Schram

Coffee Time: TBD

Scripture: Eleanor Greenwall

Audio/Visual: Kohen Hier

Thursday, Dec 19

Rescue Mission Meal: Pat Everingham

Sunday, Dec 22

Nursery: TBD

Greeters: Brian & Shayla Hier

Coffee Time: Kent & Cheryl Erickson

Scripture: Jan Randell

Audio/Visual: Dale Hennessy
James Hennessy

Sunday, Dec 29

Nursery: TBD

Greeters: Mark & Judy Hanson

Coffee Time: TBD

Scripture: Mary Wadell

Audio/Visual: Dale Hennessy
Dennis Nuttelman

OUTREACH



Cookies and Carols: The youth and adults are having a cookie making party!

Baking: Youth and adults who want to share their recipes come and bake Christmas cookies together Fri, Dec 13 from 7-9 pm and Sat, Dec 14 from 1-5 pm.

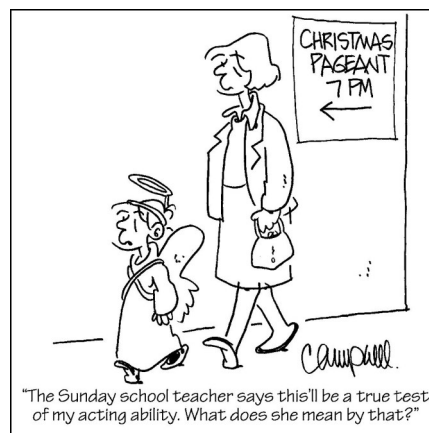
Decorating: the Sunday School kids will decorate the cookies on Sun, Dec 15 and will make cards for the residents of Midwest Covenant Home.

Caroling: Kids, youth and adults are invited to deliver the cookies and go caroling at Midwest Covenant Home on Mon, Dec 23 at 6 pm.



Holiday Babysitting:

Our youth will be babysitting at church from 9-5 for parents who want to go Christmas shopping without their children. Ages Pre-K—Grade 5 welcome. Lunch and snack will be provided. The money the youth earn will go toward camp or CHIC fees. Watch for details in the bulletin and facebook page.



"The Sunday school teacher says this'll be a true test of my acting ability. What does she mean by that?"

FINANCIAL UPDATE:

2019 Budget Summary (1/1/2019 through 10/31/2019)

Income:	\$77,279.79
Budget:	\$106,286.66
Difference:	(\$29,006.87)
Budgeted Exp:	\$106,286.66
Actual Exp:	\$98,231.23
Difference:	\$8,055.43

FINANCIAL REPORT



ONLINE GIVING: To make a one time or scheduled reoccurring gift to our church, please visit:

www.stromsburgcov.org and click on ONLINE GIVING.

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Lead Team Chair:
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Worship Team:
Sue Rosenbaum
402-560-6759

Fellowship & Hospitality:
Eleanor Greenwall
712-307-0476

Christian Formation:

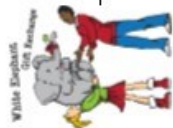

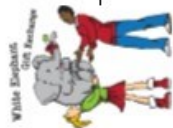





Johanna Nielsen
402-764-0086

Outreach:
Julia Schram
402-710-9561

Properties:
Kent Erickson
402-765-6721



DECEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1st Sunday of Advent 8:45 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service 11:45 Fellowship 6pm Christmas Program Character Practice	2 	3 6:30 pm BSF 7:00 pm Prayer	4 9 am—Mom's in Prayer 10 am—Ladies' Coffee 6 pm—Christmas Program Character Practice 7pm—Confirmation 7:30 pm—Worship Team	5 9:30 am—BSF (Free) 6:00 pm—Christmas Program Practice (All Cast)	6 	7 9:00 Dress Rehearsal for Christmas Program (All Cast)
8 2nd Sunday of Advent  9:30 Methodist Church 10:45 Covenant Church 6 pm—ELEVATE youth Christmas Party	9 	10 6:30 pm BSF 7:00 pm Prayer	11 9 am—Mom's in Prayer 10 am—Ladies' Coffee 7:30 pm—Worship Team	12 9:30 am—BSF (Free)	13 7-9 Cookies and Carols Baking	14 1-5 Cookies and Carols Baking 
15 3rd Sunday of Advent 8:45 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service 11:45 Fellowship		17 6:30 pm BSF 7:00 pm Prayer	18 9 am—Mom's in Prayer 10 am—Ladies' Coffee 7:30 pm—Worship Team	19 9:30 am—BSF (Free) 5:30 pm Rescue Mission Meal	20 	21
22 4th Sunday of Advent 8:30 Worship Team 9:00 Breakfast and Carols 10:30 Worship Service	23 6:00 pm—Caroling at Midwest Covenant Home 	24 7:00 pm 	25 	26 	27 	28 
29 8:45 Worship Team No Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service 11:45 Fellowship	30 	31 				

