

# Stromsburg Cov News

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December 2020

## Advent: a time to wait

Advent is a time that we wait – we wait for God to come again to us – and in the Matthew 1 story of the birth of Christ, we're told (1:23), **“the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him ‘Immanuel,’ which means ‘God with us.’”**

But the fact is, during 2020, Immanuel arrived on multiple fronts throughout the seasons. It started in early January, with a funeral service for a longtime parishioner. Terry Randell was remembered well, with a packed building, a poignant testimony from Terry's son, and a bagpipe player and a salute by the local American Legion providing added meaning.

During the winter, a Kids Club program was a fun Wednesday night option for some of our kids from church, with faithful volunteers making the ministry enjoyable. And while that was going on, our confirmation class was in full gear, with four students eventually finishing their two-year studies.

In March, something that wasn't so pleasant gave us a chance to see “God with us” in action. Co-Vid-19 came with a vengeance and affected the world markedly. But while larger cities were seeing hospitals packed with patients and the elderly succumbing to the virus, our county was relatively free of illness during the spring, even as schools closed off in-person learning and masks on faces became commonplace and diners decreased in attendance.

In June, we got a pleasant surprise in the midst of the pandemic that affected the world for much of 2020. The governor of Nebraska said that ball fields could be used for American Legion baseball and our local team was fortunate enough to play without incident for eight glorious weeks. We played well, our team had exemplary attitudes, and no one (no kids, no families, or umpires) got Co-Vid.

In mid-July, we traveled to Texas to celebrate the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my mother and father-in-law. Along with that, my mother-in-law blessed all of the grandkids and great grandkids at her home and they were powerful events that warmed my spirit even when we were forced to quarantine in our home following a family reunion and the positive test of a family member. And while we watched from our living room window the next week, our Vacation

Bible School went off without a hitch, as people from church and from other congregations took responsibility for a week that ministered to some 30 children.

In mid-August, we had a worship service and the family of two players I'd coached this past summer in American Legion showed up at church. Our service was especially meaningful and at the service's end, the mother of those players told me that – in experiencing what I'd experienced that morning – “her heart was full.” So was mine.

On the last Sunday in August, a painful bit of news had just come to my wife's phone and we were scrambling to figure out what to do. My mother-in-law was in the late stages of her life and Mary had returned from their home the night before and knew her mom might not be long for this earth. And in a span of 30 minutes, one person took responsibility for the following week's worship service, another person put gas in our car and a third provided money that aided our trip.

This fall, three Cross County Schools students warmed my heart while watching their exploits on the athletic fields and gymnasiums around here. Two of those students played football, brothers actually, and they were stellar – turning in top-notch performances during an unbeaten regular season after a period this summer where they may've doubted they'd even get to play. I felt, as I watched, that God seemed to just put a hedge of protection around our area's football and volleyball teams, allowing them to win District and Conference titles respectively, but even more, to allow kids who'd worked so hard to have a chance to see their work pay off.

The other student, my daughter, played junior high volleyball. She'd practiced all summer with a young lady across the street, made improvements, and felt good about her efforts. She even managed to earn a driver's permit this fall as well.

There's a big



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*Strengthen Faith, Cultivate Community, Care for Neighbors*



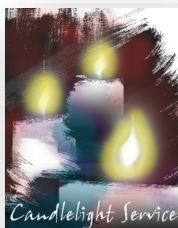
## Advent Services

**The Glory of Christmas:** The Skit Guys are going to be joining us for our Advent services. Each Sunday and Christmas Eve we will be showing a short video highlighting a different in the Christmas story. You don't want to miss this! Advent begins on November 29 and ends on Christmas Eve.



**Breakfast and Carols:** We will continue our tradition of having a light breakfast together and singing Christmas Carols the Sunday before Christmas, December 20, at 9:00 a.m. There will not be Sunday School that day.

**Blue Christmas Service,** Dec. 21, 7 pm: This has been a hard year for many of us. The Christmas season is especially difficult for many people who have experienced loss of some kind. If you are grieving the loss of loved ones, the loss of a job, or have struggled with depression, this worship service is for you. Come join us as we read scriptures, pray together, and lament our losses to the one that gives us hope.



**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:** We are hoping to do a less-contact Christmas Program on Christmas Eve. If you are interested in an acting role—no speaking—please let Judy Hanson (402-764-0123) or Pastor Mary (217-721-3846) know.

*Please invite friends, family and neighbors to join us, in person or watching online, for our Advent services. We are sure you will enjoy and be blessed by them.*



## New Sound & Video Equipment

As many of you know, we purchased new sound and video equipment from Midwest Sound. We are now streaming on our YOUTUBE channel instead of our Facebook page. It has taken a little bit of trial and error to get it all working properly but it does sound and look better. We would ask that unless you have been trained to use the sound system that you do not attempt to use it or the sound desk computer. We would love to train you! If you are interested in helping with the audio/visual for worship services please contact Dale Hennessy at 402-992-6173 or Pastor Mary at 217-721-3846. If you need assistance with the system also call Dale or Mary.



## DECEMBER Birthdays

Landon Everingham	Dec 1
Lori Rystrom	Dec 1
Braiden Lovgren	Dec 3
Jacob Nielsen	Dec 3
Emily Noyd	Dec 24
Zane Bowerman	Dec 29
Nichole Patrick	Dec 30



## December Dates to Remember

### Sunday, Dec 6: 2nd Sunday of Advent

Worship with Communion, 10:30 am

**Friday, Dec 11:** Youth Christmas Party, 6:30 pm at the Parsonage

### Sunday, Dec 13: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Lead Team Meeting, 6:30 pm

**Thursday, Dec 17:** Rescue Mission Meal, 5:30 pm

### Sunday, Dec 20: 4th Sunday of Advent

Breakfast and Carols, 9:00 am, Worship Service, 10:30 am

**Monday, Dec 21:** Blue Christmas Service, 7:00 pm

**Thursday, Dec 24:** Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service, 7:00 pm

**Friday, Dec 25:** Christmas Day!



## Ministry Partners

### Sunday, Dec 6—2nd Sunday of Advent

*Coffee:* Pat Everingham

*Scripture:* Judy Hanson

*Worship Team:* Dennis & Connie Nuttelman, Craig & Mary Pinley, Sue Rosenbaum

*Audio/Visual:* Dale Hennessy, James Hennessy

### Sunday, Dec 13—3rd Sunday of Advent

*Coffee:* TBD

*Scripture:* Pat Everingham

*Worship Team:* Craig & Mary Pinley, Sue Rosenbaum

*Audio/Visual:* Dale Hennessy, Kohen Hier

### Thursday, Dec 17—Rescue Mission Meal—Cheryl Erickson

### Sunday, Dec 20—4th Sunday of Advent

*Coffee:* Breakfast and Carols

*Scripture:* Dennis Nuttelman

*Worship Team:* Craig & Mary Pinley, Dianne Nielsen, Sue Rosenbaum

*Audio/Visual:* Dale Hennessy, James Hennessy

### Thursday, Christmas Eve, Dec 24:

*Worship Team:* Craig & Mary Pinley, Dianne Nielsen, Neeli Noyd, Sue Rosenbaum

*Audio/Visual:* Dale & James Hennessy

### Sunday, Dec 27

*Coffee:* TBD

*Preaching:* Rev. Ryan Cooper

*Scripture:* Eleanor Greenwall

*Worship Team:* Dianne Nielsen, Neeli Noyd, Sue Rosenbaum

*Audio/Visual:* Dale Hennessy, Kohen Hier

## Financial Update:

2020 Budget Summary (1/1/20 through 10/31/20)

Needed Income: \$107,308.33

Actual Income: \$ 78,328.08

Deficit: \$ 28,980.25

Budgeted Exp: \$107,308.33

Actual Exp: \$107,192.34

Under Budget: \$ 115.99

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

[www.stromsburgcov.org](http://www.stromsburgcov.org) and click on ONLINE GIVING.



## Ministry Team Leaders:

### Lead Team:

Dennis Nuttelman  
402-366-9803

### Worship Ministry Team:

Sue Rosenbaum  
402-560-6759

### Fellowship & Hospitality:

Pat Everingham  
402-764-0345

### Christian Formation:

Judy Hanson  
402-764-6681

### Outreach:

Dave Schram—402-710-8858  
Shayla Hier—402-764-0261

### Properties:

Kent Erickson  
402-765-6721

**Prayer Concerns?** Please contact Connie Nuttelman to have a request go out on the prayer chain or to be included in the bulletin. Connie's number is 402-366-9045 or you can send an email to [prayerchain@stromsburgcov.org](mailto:prayerchain@stromsburgcov.org).





## Advent (Continued)

difference between being omnipotent and available, isn't there? I think a lot of people can conceive of a big God, a God who's powerful, who can be at two places at once. I know that there are a lot of folks who curse God's name until there's a problem and then they're begging for help, which tells me they know He exists and that he has the potential to be awesome and life-changing. But a God that is THERE for them? Not Santa God that gives them what they want for Christmas, but God who comes to them when no one wants any part of their pain? That God is a little more difficult to believe.

But it doesn't make it any less true. Immanuel wants to be with us; the prophet Isaiah reminds us of this fact in chapter 61 of his Old Testament book using these words:

**"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness from the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."** (Isaiah 61:1-3)

I've seen "God with us" in other forms lately.

Parishioners going out of their way to comfort friends who've lost loved ones, acts of care to keep our church clean and to bring food to the needy, and the prayers that have been prayed to God on behalf of those near and far. And I've been part of a few poignant conversations where strangers helped provide clarity and hope to those who needed it. I need to continue to pay attention to those things as Advent commences, especially to the pain being felt by people as they've dealt with things this year.

With this in mind, we're coordinating a worship service to pay attention to that pain.

On December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m., we'd like to host a **"Blue Christmas,"** which acknowledges the difficulty some might have this year in celebrating the holidays. We'll also host a 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service, along with doing some special things at our 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship services on December 6, 13, and 20.

But we don't need staged events to see God in action. Via sickness and renewed health, in death and in the miracle of birth, through what we do in our building and especially what we do outside of it, God's presence will carry us through all of the ups and downs of the recent past. He will carry you and I through Advent season too.

In Christ,

Pastor Craig

He has sent me  
to bring good news  
to the oppressed ...  
to give them a







*garland*  
Instead of ashes.

ISAIAH 61:1, 3, NRSV



# December 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:00 pm BSF	2	3 9:30 am BSF (Stromsburg Free)	4	5
<b>6 2nd Advent Sun</b> 8:30 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship with Communion 11:45 Fellowship	7 6:30 pm Grief Share (Osceola UMC)	8 7:00 pm BSF	9	10 9:30 am BSF (Stromsburg Free)	11 6:30 pm  <b>CHRISTMAS PARTY</b>	12
<b>13 3rd Advent Sun</b> 8:30 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:45 Fellowship 6:30 Lead Team	14 6:30 pm Grief Share (Osceola UMC)	15 7:00 pm BSF	16	17 9:30 am BSF (Stromsburg Free) 5:30 pm Rescue Mission Meal	18	19
<b>20 4th Advent Sun</b> 8:30 Worship Team 9:00 Breakfast & Carols 10:30 Worship 	21 6:30 pm Grief Share (Osceola UMC) 7:00 pm Blue Christmas Service 	22 NO BSF THIS WEEK	23	24 7:00 pm  Candlelight Service and Christmas Program		26
27 9:00 Worship Team No Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:45 Fellowship	28 6:30 pm Grief Share (Osceola UMC)	29 NO BSF THIS WEEK	30	31 NO BSF THIS WEEK		