



# Mt. Calvary Messenger

JANUARY 2024

## Pastor, Tell Us What You Really Think.?

### It's Still Christmas

I've been reading articles and watching spots most of my life lamenting the earliness of Christmas-ish stuff every year. It doesn't just seem as if the pre-Christmas shopping season has gobbled-up all dates and times preceding it. The shopping season *has* done exactly that.

In the foggy early reaches of my growing memory, I recall days before there was a Black Friday shopping spree. The phenomenon appeared in the 1980s. I'm quite certain there was consternation in the decades before 1980 over the encroaching commercialization of Christmas. Those earlier and earlier mercantile sales dates scheduled on their way toward Black Friday weren't welcome then either.

We, Christians, habitually grouse about symptoms. It's as if symptomatic abatement cures the underlying illness. Christmas cheer getting sucked up before "the holidays" is a symptom, not the illness.

The illness is this: we are seeing civic festivals and pagan consumerism crossing the boundaries into the life of the church. Instead, let's reset those boundaries, and get our minds around the days of the church. Dear Christians, we are to be in the world, but not of it.

Halloween, Thanksgiving, and New Year's are not church festivals.

Halloween falls on the official church day of All Hallows Eve, October thirty-first. Lutherans more commonly celebrate Reformation Day on the same day, commemorating Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg castle church, sparking the reformation.

All Saints' Day is November First. Christians will often observe All Hallows Eve/Reformation and All Saints' Day by shifting the former back and/or the latter forward to the nearest Sunday. Both days fall within the season of Trinity (Pentecost on the Pope's lectionary) just ahead of the end of the church year.

Thanksgiving is the fourth Thursday of November and can fall between November twenty-second and twenty-eighth. That makes for seven variable relationships between Thanksgiving and Christmas, between twenty-seven and thirty-three days apart. 2024 will be an infrequent occasion with

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Thanksgiving falling before the last Sunday of the church year. Thanksgiving is still always before the beginning of the new church year.

New Year's Day is more importantly the appointed day for the Circumcision and Naming of Our Lord. It is the eighth of the twelve days of Christmas. The new church year began five weeks before.

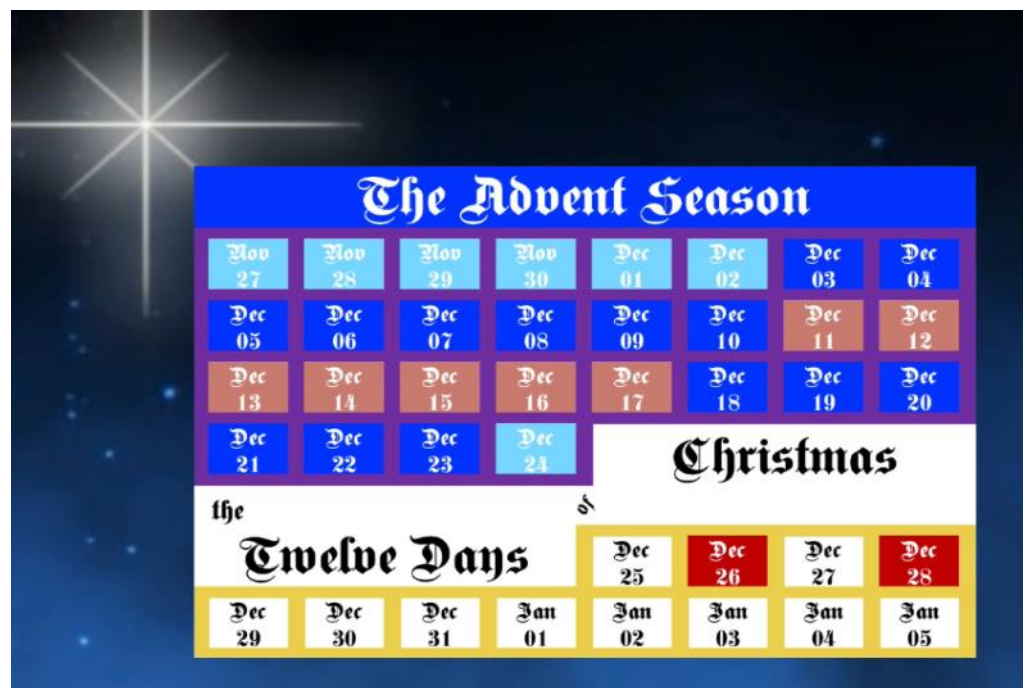
The pagan world would have us believe all of those holidays are part of the Christmas season. They are not. Those days and commemorations are not even in the same church year as the seasons of Advent or Christmas.

The church year ends with the last Sunday of the church year and the week following it. The day can also be called Ultima Sunday, after the last syllable of a Koine Greek word, or Christ the King Sunday, commemorating Jesus's second Advent at the end of days. The last Sunday of the church year is always the fifth Sunday before Christmas Day.

After the first two civic holidays, the church year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, always the fourth Sunday before Christmas. Advent can consist of between twenty-two and twenty-eight days. It begins between November twenty-seventh and December third, always containing four Sundays. Advent contains three or four Wednesdays. The three Wednesdays are slightly more common, occurring in four of the seven variations, excluding Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve is a day of Advent. It is not typically celebrated as a Wednesday of Advent, when falling on Wednesday. When the fourth Sunday of Advent is December 24<sup>th</sup>, like this year (2023), we observe *Rorate Coeli* (Advent 4) in the morning **and** Christmas Eve in the evening.

The celebration of Christmas Eve is a direct parallel to the Easter Vigil on Saturday before Easter. By the Jewish reckoning of time, tomorrow begins at sundown. So, we start celebrating Christmas that night. "There was evening and there was morning," the Christmas Day.

This means that those cute, premade, every-year advent calendars are seldom actually right. It's a lot of fun to open the doors for the little prizes. But, Advent rarely has exactly 24 days. So, a better Advent calendar would have 28 days, with six indicated as days that may not be in Advent (2023 & 2028), or may be in Advent (2022 & 2033). The same calendar could include the twelve days of Christmas, making an even 40 days, encouraging us to celebrate Christmas in its time. Perhaps something like this:



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Like the Advent Calendars, Christians used to decorate progressively. By adding a bit each week heading into Christmas, it adds to the excitement of preparation. This is opposite of the Christmas fatigue caused by all decorations going up the day after Halloween or Thanksgiving, before Advent even started.

The twelve days of the Christmas feast **begin** on December 25. They can contain two Sundays, but more commonly just one. The days of Christmas are December twenty-fifth through January fifth. On December twenty-sixth, we also celebrate the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr. We celebrate the feast of St. John, the only apostle to die a natural death, on December twenty-seventh. December twenty-eighth marks the feast of the Holy Innocents, killed by Harrod upon the magi's visit to Bethlehem. The celebration of the Circumcision and Naming of Jesus on January first is also a named feast within the twelve days. Christmas ends on Twelfth Night, preceding the Epiphany of Our Lord, which is celebrated on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Epiphany really is Christmas for us gentiles. Jesus was first revealed to Mary and Joseph. He was witnessed by the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna. A couple of years later, the Magi came to see the child, bearing gifts. That's the beginning of the revealing of Jesus to the nations. The celebration of Gentile Christmas runs from January 6<sup>th</sup> until Ash Wednesday.

It is suitable for Christians to decorate and sing seasonal hymns beginning on Christmas Eve. In decades past, we would have it no other way. Now, it may be impossible to forego all of the civic festivities around us. We should at least save the bulk of our revelry for the actual celebration of the incarnation of our Lord. We should not allow the pagan world to suck all of our Christmas cheer before we've even begun the Christmas feast.

This year and in years to come, spend some time in thought and prayer concerning the harrowing of the End of Days, the preparation of our hearts in Advent, and the joyous gift of Christmas (the whole season of Christmas). There's more to it than the Christmas shopping season. Beyond just thought and prayer, avail yourself of the Lord's house, receiving His gifts for you.

Blessèd Christmas celebration!

- Pastor



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It was a beautiful day for visiting the shut-in members of Mt. Calvary and singing seasonal Christmas carols.

Sing praises  
to the **LORD**,



you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks  
to his holy name.

PSALM 30:4, NRSV

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# Caroling

A stylized illustration of four bells hanging in a row. Each bell has a small bell-shaped clapper. Musical notes are floating around the bells, suggesting a melody.

## The Chief Stewards of Humanity: Mom and Dad

St. Paul tells the Ephesians that the first commandment with a specific promise attached to it is, “Honor your father and mother so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the land” (Eph. 6:2). This promise is one indication of the importance of this commandment. The other thing that highlights the special nature of this commandment is its placement within the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are clearly organized in two big categories. The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. This category is called the First Table of the Law. The last seven commandments, the Second Table of the Law, tell us how we should relate to other people. These two tables correspond to what Jesus calls the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37–39).

The order of the Second Table of the Law is also important. Murder is a greater sin than adultery, which is a greater sin than stealing, or lying, or coveting. But why is the Fourth Commandment first in the Second Table, ahead of “you shall not murder”? Is disobeying your parents really worse than murder? Or maybe we should give up on thinking these command-

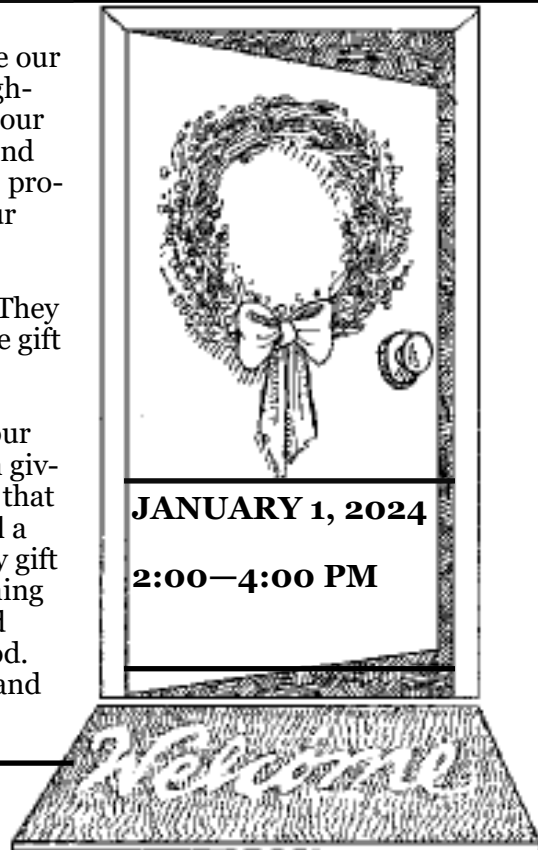
ments are ordered?

The overall effect of this order is to get us to see our parents as a connection point between our neighbors and our God. Throughout our upbringing our father and mother stand between us and God and deliver His gifts to us: God clothes us, feeds us, protects us and teaches His Word to us through our parents.

So, parents have a very high calling from God. They are called to be stewards of the greatest gift: the gift of life.

Parenting thus gives us a keen insight into all our stewardship. Parents know that they have been given a great treasure in their children, a treasure that does not belong to them, yet for which they feel a great deal of responsibility. Truth be told, every gift we have been given is like this, because everything we have — whether our own personal skills and powers or our wealth and time — is all from God. He entrusts it all to us so that we can use it all and take care of it all for His great purposes.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship)



**OPEN HOUSE**  
— *at the* —  
**PARSONAGE**



# For Your Information



During the month of November 2023, the Amen Food Pantry served 401 families (1,204 individuals). In comparison, in November 2022, the Pantry served 288 families (840 individuals), while in November 2021 the Pantry served 249 families (678 individuals).

As you can see from the above statistics, the need continues to grow. Sincere thanks for your generous donations to help AMEN serve the families in our community struggling to put food on the table. For 2023, we collected 1,622 pounds of food and \$2,730 in monetary donations at Mt. Calvary. These totals include the two major gatherings – Souper Bowl Sunday and Thanksgiving Sunday, the monthly items collected at the Mary Martha Guild meetings, as well as the donations left in the plastic bin throughout the year. These totals do not include any donations that Mt. Calvary members may have delivered directly to the Pantry.

Mt. Calvary Volunteers will next work at the Food Pantry on Tuesday, February 20, 8:15-10:30 am shift. We can always use additional volunteers. Please contact Stell, 979-966-2319, or Beverly, 979-250-1718 if you have any questions.



The Happy Scrappers will resume their regular weekly quilting schedule beginning at **9:30 AM on Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>** in the Blue Fellowship House. Everyone is invited to join in service and fellowship. A light lunch is enjoyed by all following quilting.

## LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Your kindness is reaching our neighbors in need in every distant corner. **In the past 25 years** LWR quilters and kit makers have spread God's love across the world in incredible ways.

**9,191,127 QUILTS**  
**493,141 KITS**

These would cover 11 square miles or 5324 football fields.  
This is more than the populations of Minnesota, North & South Dakota and Nebraska combined.

**95 COUNTRIES**

Nearly half the world.

When you make quilts and kits for neighbors in need, you are the hands and feet of Christ in the world. "We will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might and the wonders that he has done." Psalm 78:4 NRSV

## THE MARY MARTHA GUILD MINUTE

Tuesday, January 2nd

### Multipurpose Room

Fellowship Time—5:30 PM  
Business Meeting—6:00 PM

**Welcome**  
**Devotion**  
**Pantry Item**  
**Mite Prayer**  
**Hostesses:**  
**Business Meeting**  
**Project/Activity**

Beverly Albers  
Janice Teinert  
Bag of dried beans—1 or 2 lb. size  
Marilyn Spillane  
Marilyn Spillane & Debbie Wilson  
Call to Order: Minutes, Treasurer Report, Standing Committee Reports  
Review 2024 Yearbook Information  
Memorial for deceased members  
Schedule extra Mite Box collections



**BIRTHDAYS**  
**ANNIVERSARIES**

(19) Karen Fitch; (29) Marilyn Spillane  
(2) Debbie Wilson

Everyone is invited to attend the Guild Meetings in the Multipurpose Room at 5:30 PM the first Monday of the month (except July & December). All volunteers and the support of our projects are greatly appreciated. Contact our Member Development Committee Chairman, Karen Fitch, or any Guild member or feel free to call the church office at 968-3938 for more information.

## CAMP LONE STAR JUNIOR STAFF WORKSHOP

JANUARY 19—21, 2024

- Calling all potential & returning Junior Staffers — you are invited to attend our **Junior Staff Workshop**! This event will include fellowship, work projects, and growth in God's Word. Bring a friend and come learn about the summer roles and responsibilities of Junior Staff!
- Check-In | Friday at 8 PM
- Check-Out | Sunday at 10:30 AM
- Parents are invited to join us on Sunday at 9:30 AM as we wrap up the weekend with a Q&A session, where you're invited to ask any questions you might have about the Junior Staff program. Then we'll enjoy a time of worship together before you depart!
- You must be between the ages of 15-18 and will have completed 9th grade by June 1, 2024 to participate in the workshop and to serve as a Junior Staff in Summer 2024.
- Contact the Registrar at 979 968-1657 for more information.

## CAMP LONE STAR WOMEN'S RENEWAL

FEBRUARY 2 -4, 2024

- Ladies, join us for our annual **Women's Renewal** retreat! Invite your friends to come along with you to this life-giving weekend as we enjoy time set aside to reflect on God's Word, be in fellowship with other sisters in Christ, and explore His creation.
- Each year, this fun-filled weekend includes opportunities for hiking, archery, tomahawk throwing, crafts, canoeing, star gazing, prayer walks, campfire devotions, conquering the climbing tower, and more!
- Join us and be renewed physically and spiritually as we experience the love Christ offers, while also growing in relationship with new and longtime friends!
- Contact the Registrar at 979 968-1657 for more information.

## MEN'S CLUB PIT STOP

Next Meeting: Monday, January 8, 6:00PM@BBQ Pits

In case of bad weather, please meet in the Blue House.

Team 4 will be cooking for the meeting meal:

Randy Albers  
Lummus Hannes  
Glenn Altwein  
Neal Lochte  
Jason Von Minden  
Jarrod VonMinden

Election of 2024 Officers:  
President—Donald Roensch  
Vice President—James Lehmann  
Secretary—August Pietsch  
Treasurer—Randy Albers

Psalm 78:72 "With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand".



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**2024 SECOND CHANCE WORK SCHEDULE**  
**SHARED LUTHERAN MINISTRY/MT. CALVARY LUTHERAN**

**JANUARY:** 9 – Coord meeting 11 – Bd. meetings (Crosspoint Comm. Baptist)  
23, 24, 25, 26, 27 (9-3), and Jan. 29 (9-12) 29 – all coords purge

**FEBRUARY:** SLM/MCLC not scheduled to work 26 – all coords purge

**MARCH:** 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (9-3) and March 11 (9-12)  
12 – Coord meeting 14- Bd meetings (St. James Episcopal)  
30 – Closed (Holy Saturday)

**APRIL:** 1 – all coords purge  
16, 17, 18, 19, 20 (9-3) and April 22 (9-12)  
29 – all coords purge

**MAY:** 7 – Coord meeting 9 – Bd meetings (New Life Methodist)  
27 – closed (Memorial Day) 28, 29, 30, 31 (9-3)

**JUNE:** 1 (9-3) , and June 3(9-12) 3 – all coords purge

**JULY:** 9 – Coord meeting 11 – Bd. meetings (Mt. Calvary Lutheran)  
9, 10, 11, 12, 13 (9-3) and July 15 (9-12)  
29 – all coords purge

**AUGUST:** 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 (9-3) and August 26 (9-12)

**SEPTEMBER:** SLM/MCLC not scheduled to work  
3- all coords purge 10 – Coord meeting 12 – Bd. meetings (Sacred Heart)  
30 – all coords purge

**OCTOBER:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (9-3) and Oct. 7 (-9-12) 28 – all coords purge

**NOVEMBER:** 12 – Coord meeting 14- Bd. meetings (St. Paul Lutheran)  
12, 13, 14, 15, 16 (9-3) and Nov. 18 (-9-12)  
25 - all coords purge 28, 29, 30 – Closed

**DECEMBER:** SLM/MCLC not scheduled to work  
23 – all coords purge 25, 26, 27, 28 - Closed





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**Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church and Preschool  
2024 Officers & Board Members**

PRESIDENT August Pietsch  
VICE PRESIDENT Beverly Albers  
SECRETARY Robbie Cole  
TREASURER Ron Glaiser

**BOARD OF EDUCATION/BOARD OF YOUTH MINISTRY**

Coni Mouton  
Lori Hollek  
*Shannon Herbrich*

**BOARD OF ELDERS**

David Cole  
Jason Lehmann  
Zach Zahradnik  
Aaron Muniz  
Lummus Hannes  
Bruce Lesikar  
Clayton Wolf  
Justin Hollek

**BOARD OF MISSIONS, OUTREACH, & EVANGELISM**

Brenda Rainosek  
Lee Herbrich  
Brenda Fischer  
Janice Teinert  
Linda Streicher  
Amy Lochte  
*Karen Fitch*

**BOARD OF PRESCHOOL**

David Cole  
Sylvia Hebert  
Tish Muniz  
Becky Von Minden  
Janice Teinert  
Jordan Von Minden  
*Linda Streicher*  
Mandy Kaspar

**BOARD OF FINANCE**

Martha Pietsch  
*Randy Albers*  
Kathy Fischer  
Geraldine Teinert  
Susie Polasek

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

*Daniel Fischer*  
James Herbrich  
Joe Johnson  
Justin Hollek  
Mark Wilson  
August Pietsch  
Heath Hunger  
Ray Pietsch





*Faith Lutheran High School of Central Texas seeks to engage young adults in a Christ-centered environment where faith and knowledge grow as one.*

HOME OF THE FALCONS!  
Better Together—Romans 15:5-6

### **Thank you! Thank you!**

There have been so many people, organizations, groups, and churches who have contributed to the success and growth of FLHS this past semester and in these first few years. We are so incredibly blessed! THANK YOU!!

### **End of Year Giving**

Thank you for your support of Faith Lutheran High School during our End of Year giving. If the holiday season was just too busy or you simply forgot, we are still accepting donations to support the ministry at FLHS. **Matching funds are currently available** to us from some gracious private donors, so please help us take advantage of this opportunity. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mrs. Kueck at (979) 242-2889.

### **Raffle Items**

The Spring Raffle is just around the corner. The Board of Directors is currently looking for valuable items or monetary donations to be used in the raffle. Please contact Nikki Kueck if you have something to donate.

### **Shadow Days**

Shadow days are a great opportunity for prospective students to follow us for a day and experience what FLHS is all about. Parents, call us (979) 242-2889 today to set up a shadow day for your child.

### **Scholarship Program**

Have you ever had this thought? "Faith Lutheran High School sounds great, but my family can't afford it." We firmly believe that EVERY family desiring a Christ-centered education for their children should have the opportunity to attend FLHS. We have a Tuition Scholarship Program with funds available, and EVERY family who applies (through TADS) will receive some assistance. We'll do everything in our power to make sure that money isn't the reason you don't choose FLHS.

### **Wish List**

FLHS has created a wish list on Amazon, containing ongoing needs. The easiest way to get to it is by clicking on the link on either the FLHS Facebook page or website. Thank you for your generous support!

### **Thrivent Action Team Grants**

If you are a Thrivent member willing to submit an application for a \$250 grant to be used on projects at Faith, please contact us. Help us to be able to take advantage of these funds for the good of our school.

### **Share the Gift of Love**

Faith Lutheran High School has a unique role in combining knowledge and God's love in a student's high school experience. We are partnering with families at the intersection of education and faith development. Faith is looking for individuals or families who share in our commitment to Lutheran Education and asking that you would support our ministry through a on-time gift, establish a monthly giving plan, or set up an enduring gift. To learn more about these options, please contact Mrs. Nikki Kueck.

### **Follow Us On Facebook**

Stay up to date with all the exciting things happening at FLHS on a daily basis! By "liking" our Facebook page and "sharing" our posts, you will be in the loop on all the great things happening and sharing Faith with your friends as well. If you're not on social media, head to our website (faithlutheranhighschool.com) which is updated regularly as well!

### **Athletic Program Underway**

The FLHS website has up-to-date schedules for both our boys basketball team (and cheerleaders), and our archery program. Please come support our amazing student-athletes. The Falcons return to play on Tuesday, January 9, at 5PM, at St. Paul Shiner. Come support us!



# JANUARY

## GEMS

(Girls Embracing Mission Service)

The Post Oak GEMS will meet again at 2:00 PM on Sunday, January 28th, at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

We will be planning fundraisers for the summer convention, "Hold Fast: Christ is our Anchor", which will take place in Corpus Christi from June 13-15, 2024.



## IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

### Christmas Poinsettias were given in memory of:

- Randy & Beverly Albers (our parents)
- Elva Bohot (Victor Bohot, Calvin Bohot, Edward & Lydia Creppon Bunte, Gerhardt & Hulda Lorenz Bohot)
- Daniel & Brenda Fischer (Jimmie Lehmann, Edward & Lorine Fischer)
- La Verne & Karen Fitch (George Jago)
- Martin & Karen Koopmann, Judy Zuhn (Werner & Louise Koopmann)
- Garland & Stell Midgett (Sheila Kappler, Rachel Midgett, Sheila Mae Roberson)
- Randy & Karen Pietsch (Eugene & Faye Winkler, Kelsey Pietsch)
- Vernell Sagebiel (William Sagebiel)
- Doug & Sharon Teinert (Paul Teinert, Susan Kana)
- Gladys Teinert (my loved ones)
- Lee & Janice Teinert (Katie Teinert)
- Dale & Dorothy Witt (Alva & Lena Behrens, brothers/sisters, O.N.D. & Clara Jones)
- Judy Zuhn (Jim Zuhn, William & Hilma Zuhn)

### Given in honor of:

Gladys Teinert by Doug & Sharon Teinert

### Given to the Glory of God:

- David & Robbie Cole
- Pastor & Mandy Kaspar
- Belinda Mangum
- B.J. Ullrich

## FLOWER CHART OPENINGS

Don't forget that we have a Flower Chart on the bulletin board in the narthex hallway. You can sign up to provide flowers for a special occasion or simply to the glory of God.

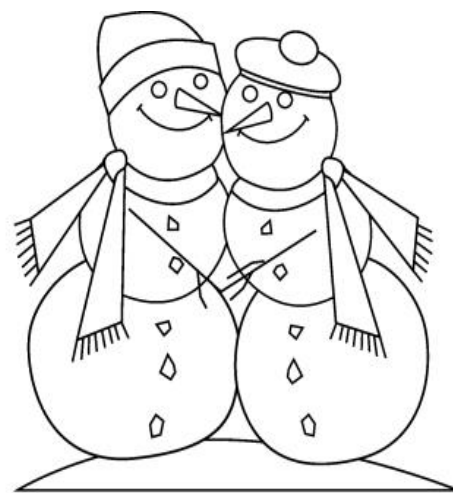
Call the church office if you would like more info.

## BIRTHDAYS

- Emma Herbrich
- Neal Lochte
- Jonathan Cook
- A.J. Lehmann
- David Boening
- Lee Teinert
- Joyce Boening
- Harvey Bohot
- Luke Huelsebusch
- Daryl Kinsey
- Luke Zahradnik
- Heath Hunger
- Douglas Ahlschlager
- Karen Fitch
- Charlene Stelzig
- Josh Zuhn
- Reece Kollaja
- Glenn Schneider
- Pastor Kaspar
- Kathy Pietsch
- Marilyn Spillane

## ANNIVERSARIES

- Mark & Debbie Wilson (42)



## JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

## Remembering

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of all those who have lost a loved one. May the Lord give you peace and understanding during this trying season.

We thank our Father in heaven for the rain we have received, and we pray for a generous outpouring again.



# Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church & Preschool

800 N. Franklin St.  
La Grange, Texas 78945

Change Service  
Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
STANDARD PERMIT #50  
LA GRANGE TX

“Committed to Reaching Out With The Love Of Jesus”

Please join us  
for the  
installation of

Reverend  
E.B. Holschuh

as the Sole Pastor of

Epiphany Lutheran Church  
Of Bastrop

Saturday, January 6, 2024  
1 o'clock in the afternoon\*

Bastrop State Park Refectory

Light reception to follow

RSVP [secretary@epiphanybastrop.org](mailto:secretary@epiphanybastrop.org)

\*Participating clergy are asked to vest in white  
& arrive thirty minutes prior to the service.