

Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church
MONDAY MESSENGER
December 21, 2020

Pastor's Message:

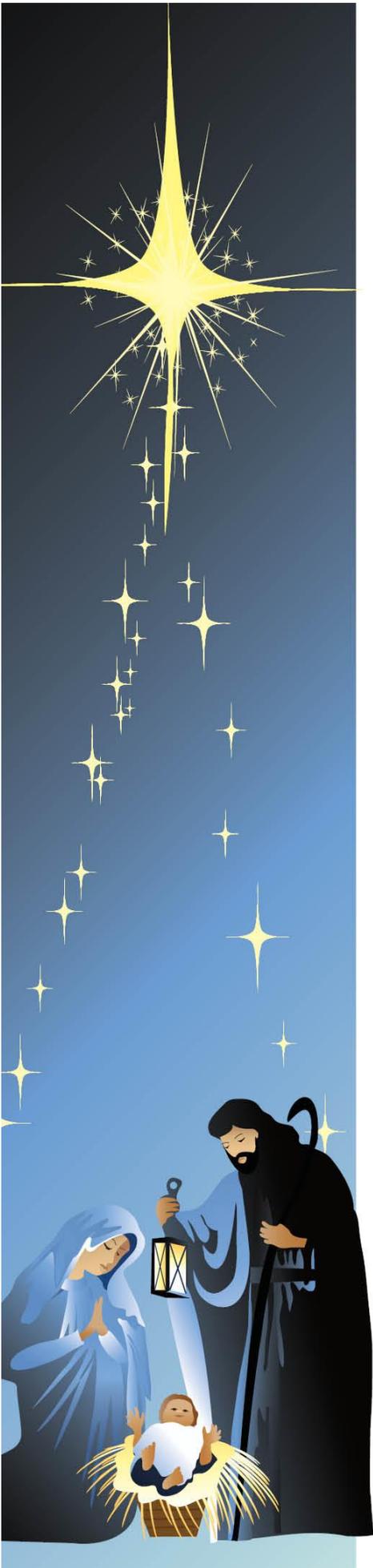
"For unto you is born this day,' that is, *unto us*. For our sakes he has taken flesh and blood from a woman, that his birth might become our birth. I too may boast that I am a son or daughter of Mary. This is the way to observe this feast - that Christ be formed in us." - (*Martin Luther, Martin Luther's Christmas Book, ed. Roland Bainton, copyright 1948, Westminster Press*)

Incarnation. The unity of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ. God-in-Flesh. The Maker of the Universe becoming one with Creation. The celebration of the birth of Jesus means worshipping a God who fully becomes "one of us" so that, through the life-death-resurrection-Holy Spirit-ing of Jesus, we can become one with God. Then, the Christ lives through us as we live into and live out His love and justice. As Luther says, Christmas is not complete until "Christ is formed in us," born through our presence and our deeds. Then God is "incarnated," i.e., embodied- in us.

I pray that you realize this more and more this Christmas and in the coming year. I give particular praise this Christmas for all the ways and all the times you have embodied Christ for me and for others this past year, even and especially through all the challenges and trials of the pandemic. You are amazing! You've been very patient and flexible with all the changes. When it would have been so easy to simply pull back and pull into yourselves, instead you continued to freely and joyfully give of your love and efforts on behalf of our mission and ministry. I am SO very grateful for your support and prayers for me, for Linda, and for our partnership together! It is one of the most precious

We may not know what things will look like for us after this is all over but I know what Christ looks because of *you*, and that brings confidence and hope that He will bring us out at the other end with strength and new possibilities!

Merry Christmas! Blessings on your New Year!
- Pastor Mark



JOINING OUR HEARTS FROM OUR HOMES

Sierra Lutheran Christmas Eve Worship

While we would much prefer to be together in person, this year we're pleased to be able to present a very special online Christmas Eve worship service that will be available for viewing on our www.selcaz.org website beginning December 24th at 4 pm and for 90 days after that. There will be some elements of this service that will be similar to past Christmas Eve worship services and some elements that will be different. We trust it will all offer a special Christmas blessing as we hear special instrumentalists and soloists, unique presentations of the Bible readings, Pastor's sermon, a Children's time, traditional hymns, and a Zoom candle lighting by fellow members as the singing of "Silent Night" concludes the service. You're also invited to light a candle at home as you watch. Perhaps you'd like to even take a photo of yourself with your candles to post on our "Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church" (@selcelca) Facebook page afterwards. Or on Instagram, "selcelca". Join in as we join our hearts from our homes or wherever we are to joyfully worship the Newborn King! (Note: No communion observed in this service).

SERVICE OF CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS - SUNDAY, 12/27, 10 am

Join us online again as we continue our Christmas worship this coming Sunday, livestreaming at 10 am (also available for viewing after that). We'll hear various Christmas Bible readings and join in singing many of our favorite Christmas carols. You're invited to share in Holy Communion at home as well.

(Note: No separate Christmas Day service offered this year)

WORSHIP SERVICE TIME CHANGE IN THE NEW YEAR

Please note that our Worship and Music Committee decided that SELC livestreamed-only worship will take place at **9:00 am, starting January 3, 2021**. This will better serve our Fellowship and Faith Formation ministries going forward. It is intended that we offer two worship services again after the pandemic is over.

2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES AND END OF YEAR GIVING

We are praising God for the continued faithful generosity of our members and friends as we conclude 2020 in the black financially! Thank you also to all who already picked up offering envelopes and the increased number who signed up for Vanco online giving. If you have yet to pick up your offering envelopes, they're available in the church office. If unable to pick up or for more information, contact Financial Secretary, Sandy Stephenson, 520-378-4678.

Reminder: Offerings need to be turned in by Dec. 29, 2020, in order to be counted for End-of-Year 2020.

HOLIDAY CHANGES:

- * Church Office closed Monday, Dec. 28, 2020
- * No Coffee Fellowship this coming Sunday, 12/27/2020
- * No "Monday Messenger" next week, 12/28/2020
- * No Confirmation or Youth Group until Jan. 6, 2021

FAITH5

Every Night In Every Home!

Our FAITH5 verse of the week is Luke
1:37-38:

“For nothing will be impossible with God.’
Then Mary said,
‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it
be with me
according to your word.’ Then the angel
departed from her.”

(Post or keep this weekly scripture in a handy place and every morning or evening share the following as a couple, or with family members in the home or even with a dear friend over the phone.)



Share your highs and lows of the day with one another.



Read the verse of the week and if time permits, the Bible story that pertains to the Scripture of the week.



Talk about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows of the day or how it's speaking to you.



Pray for one another's highs and lows and other prayer requests.



Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other's forehead or the palm of your hands and say something simple such as: “God bless you and keep you in His love and care!” Or feel free to make up your own blessing that incorporates a part of the FAITH5 verse of the week.

Be creative! Stay open to the Holy Spirit!

SUNDAY LECTIONARY DAILY READINGS

The readings are chosen so that the days flowing out from Sunday (Monday through Wednesday) reflect upon that Sunday readings. The days leading up to Sunday (Thursday through Saturday) prepare for the next Sunday readings.

Monday

Luke 1:46b-55
1 Samuel 1:1-18
Hebrews 9:1-14

Tuesday

Luke 1:46b-55
1 Samuel 1:19-28
Hebrews 8:1-13

Wednesday

Luke 1:46b-55
1 Samuel 2:1-10
Mark 11:1-11

December 22

Psalm 96
Zephaniah 3:8-13
Romans 10:5-13

December 23

Psalm 96
Zephaniah 3:14-20
Romans 13:11-14

December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

December 25

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

December 26

Psalm 148
Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15
Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

December 27

Psalm 148
Exodus 33:18-23
1 John 1:1-9