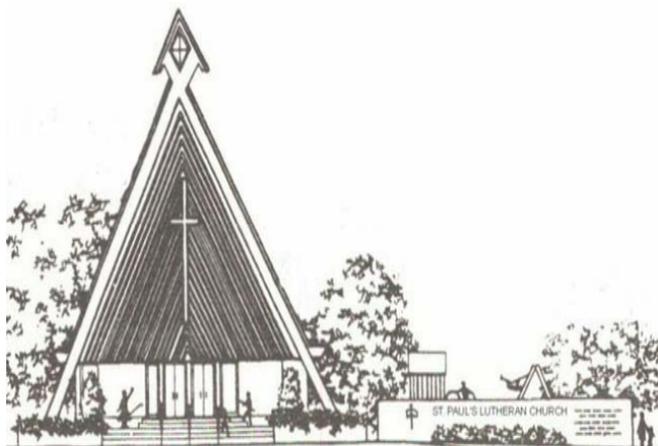


ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

DECEMBER 2011~JANUARY 2012



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Office Phone: 703/573-0295 Pastor's Direct Line: 703/573-6008

Sunday services are held at 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Worship in Mandarin is held at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School and adult classes are held at 9:30 a.m.

Pastor — The Rev. Mark Shaltanis

Assistant/Chinese Pastor — The Rev. Xinhong (Chris) Yang

Pastoral Assistant — The Rev. Wayne Lehrer

Director of Music — Laurel Benson Brown

Preschool Director — LuAnn Carrig

Director of Youth — Stacy Blake

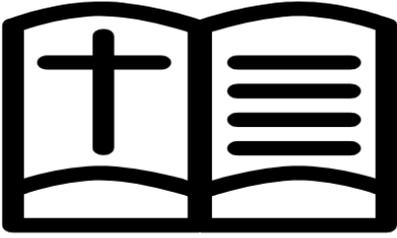
Director of Education and Family Life — Melissa Hecht

Secretary — Susan Irwin

Business Manager — Bill Gratz

Newsletter Editors — Marcia Baumgartner,
Linda Orvedahl, Theresa Shaltanis, Kim Williams

Church is located at the intersection of
Route 7 (Leesburg Pike) and Idylwood Road.



Pastor's Corner

"Comfort Ye"

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." So went the command of God to His prophet Isaiah centuries ago, and so goes His command to us today.

Many of us hear these tender words of God from the beginning of Isaiah 40 and think immediately of the great oratorio *The Messiah* by George F. Handel. Handel wisely began his masterful, 53-movement work on the life of Jesus Christ with this prophecy. God was bringing the greatest of all comfort to His people in the person and work of His Son. When the tenor hits those opening notes of the first recitative announcing this comfort, we get a small yet surely significant sense of that great comfort given us by Jesus. Our warfare is over, our iniquity pardoned, and we receive from the Lord double for all our sins. So saith the Lord. Awesome!

During our Advent midweek services this year, we will examine the entire opening prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 40. Handel stops after an aria based on v. 4 and the glorious chorus of v. 5, but God's opening word extends for six more powerful verses. Here He shares about the voice crying: *"Prepare the way of the Lord."* He reminds us that the *"grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever."* He tells about the *"herald of good news"* and the Lord *"tending His flock like a shepherd."* Truly those are remarkable promises of God and *"extend the utmost comfort amid the most challenging of life's circumstances."*

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Our congregation recently had a very challenging week in which we lost three dear saints to death's grasp. All three of these folks were prepared to die and did so in great faith, but the loss we feel is significant nonetheless. The comfort of God's promised care and the resurrection to come make all the difference as we mourn. God cared for these children of His in their passage from life in this world to life in the next, and He cares for us in our sadness and struggle as we go on.

The Christmas season is now upon us and provides its own challenges. There are pressures to get everything done, to make things special, and to meet everyone's expectations. There are feelings of loss, loneliness, and sadness to work through. There is the balancing act of putting much into the season without somehow feeling that less would have been more. God's word of comfort soothes our souls.

And then there are the many people around us who don't get it, or are angry at us who do, or are simply drowning in their own problems. Here is where we, who know the "comfort," need to hear the "speak ye tenderly" directed to Isaiah. What an opportunity we have to share the good news of God's comfort as experienced in Jesus Christ.

Please plan to join us for Advent midweek services, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. With Christmas on a Sunday, we've decided to meet also on that Wednesday beforehand, giving us one more Advent service than usual this year. Evening services at St. Paul's are a real treat for most of us and give us additional glimpses into the blessings of worship, so we hope you decide to come. Advent is the perfect preparation for Christmas and so much more. Come and reflect with us on the great words of God through Isaiah, His prophet, and be renewed, comforted, and prepared for all the seasons beyond.

In Christ (Messiah),
Pastor Mark Shaltanis

Midweek Advent Services

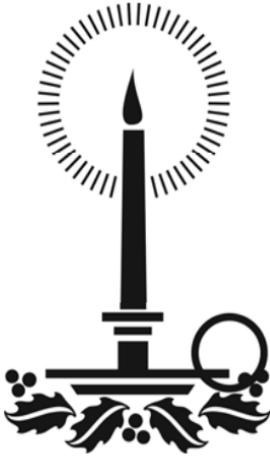
7:30 p.m.

November 30

December 7

December 14

December 21



*Theme: Isaiah 40,
"Comfort, Comfort My People"*

Christmas Worship Schedule

Preschool Christmas Program

Friday, December 16, 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School Children's Service

Sunday, December 18, 11:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship

Saturday, December 24

5:00 p.m. – Candlelight Service for Families

7:30 p.m. – Music of the Season

8:00 p.m. – Candlelight Service (Holy Communion)

Christmas Day Worship

Sunday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Celebration of Christ's Birth

(English & Mandarin Chinese; Holy Communion)

St. Paul's Youth Homeless Service Project

St. Paul's Youth is collecting hats, scarves, gloves, and socks for the homeless. Theyouth will also prepare brown bag lunches during their lock-in on December 9. On Saturday, December 10, they will go into D.C. and distribute the collected clothing and the lunches.

Labeled boxes that you may place your items in are located outside the Youth Room, in the narthex, and in the undercroft . Your contributions are needed by Friday, December 9. If you would like to help distribute the items, contact Youth Director Stacy Blake at Lutheranchick@aol.com.

Thank you for your support.



St. Paul's Women's Ministry Sponsoring Two Christmas Families

The Women's Ministry of St. Paul's will sponsor two families this Christmas. To give these families a joyous Christmas, we need your help. Fill one of the blue envelopes located in the pews with cash or a check made out to St. Paul's and indicate that your donation is for the Christmas families. Place it in the collection plate by December 11. Gifts will be purchased and wrapped by the Women's Ministry of St. Paul's.



REMEMBER
TO PRAY FOR...

Trudy Booth

Donna Ainsfield

Carolyn Cowherd

Maureen Forcier

Gladys Hane

Marta Muller

Jim Hickey

Paul Noring

Peter Frenze

Hal Skean

Jack Hartman

Dave & Millie Sullivan



Caroling & Party

Sunday, December 18

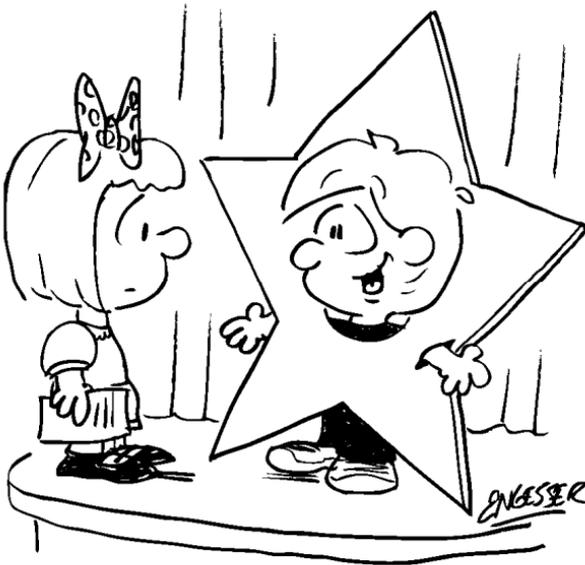
5:00 p.m.—Caroling

6:30 p.m.—Party

Join us for the annual Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 18. We will meet in Room 9 of the Education Building and begin with caroling to residents in the area.

We will end our evening at the home of Ed and Gladys Hane for refreshments and fellowship. If you would like to join us for the festivities only, you are welcome to come to the Hane home between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. Their address is 1708 Hicks Drive in Vienna.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



"I knew someday I'd be a star!"

HAVE YOU
TALKED
TO GOD
TODAY?



December

- 2 Kerrie Shrewsbury
- 3 Peter Frenze
Nicolai Taranov
- 5 Andrew Lorenz
- 7 Brenden Harrell
- 9 Christopher Huling
- 11 David Hann
- 17 Timofey Taranov
- 18 Dale Amdahl
David Yashar
- 19 Tim Hecht
- 24 Alane O'Neill
- 25 Rachael Seidenschnur
- 26 Maureen Forcier
- 29 Brit Schwoebel
- 30 Robert Juenger
Shaw-hwa Yang
- 31 Brian Fick
Ed Hane

January

- 7 Melissa Hecht
Carol Juenger
- 8 Tor Eide

- 12 Geraine Armstrong
Juliane Buuck
- 13 Paula Kelso
Barb Perlowski
- 14 Cayla Freedlander
- 16 Paul Du
Gladys Hane
- 19 Viviane Thompson
- 21 Al Kroening
- 24 Betty Hickey
- 25 Jerrold Goldblatt
Kathleen Wang
- 26 Dan Casto
Maj-Britt Frenze
Susan Hecht
Katrina Kelso
- 28 Paige Huling
Hannah Mahach
Kathryn Mahach
Ryan Mahach
- 29 Aldo Becci
Teresa Springer
- 31 Russell McCants
Norm Williams

A Note From the Editors

The *Epistle* editors are pleased to welcome
Kim Williams (kimberwilliams@aim.com)
to the newsletter.

Please include Kim on
all future newsletter-related e-mail.
Thank you!

February–March Newsletter Deadline: January 20

Send submissions to
m.baumgartner@cox.net,
stringer.orvedahl@verizon.net
and
kimberwilliams@aim.com

PRESCHOOL NEWS

December/January

I don't know about you, but I have had a very difficult time this year with the retailers pushing Christmas so early. Maybe it's been this way for a couple of years and I just haven't noticed, but it seems to me that on November 1 (or maybe earlier) Christmas decorations were being sold in local stores and the malls were decked out. As a Christian, I always struggle with this. I want the Christmas season to begin the day after Thanksgiving *and no sooner*. I hope that some of you will agree with me. This brings me to my next point ...

What do we need to do to honor God on Christmas Day as well as during the season? Why do we, still to this day, need this child to be born? Why is it so important for God's Word to become flesh? The answers to these questions are woven through the Old Testament in God's promises, prophecies, and miracles. Focusing on these questions and working on a better understanding of the answers will greatly enhance your Christmas season. Each year I look for ways to help my friends and family understand the *real* reason for Christmas. This year in my home we are using the Jesse Tree during Advent.

Jesse was the father of King David. The idea of the Jesse Tree comes from Isaiah 11:1–9, where God promises a discouraged nation that the glory they remember from David's time will come again. They will have another king from Jesse's family, in whose reign the whole earth will know God. As Christians, we see that promise fulfilled in Jesus, and so we decorate a Jesse Tree with reminders of how God prepared the world for that kingdom.

So what is a Jesse Tree? Start on December 1 with an empty tree branch or a small artificial tree and hang a reminder ornament each day until Christmas Day. Read a Bible verse and review the story. This allows you and your family to share and meditate on God's Word. If you are not familiar with the Jesse Tree or want more information, there are many sites on the Worldwide Web that will help you make your own Jesse Tree. Following are two that I recommend: <http://www.shalfleet.net/advent> (download the daily symbols for the tree) and <http://www.jesse-trees.com> (for daily devotional ideas). I've also

recently purchased the book *Celebrating Advent Family Devotions and Activities for the Christmas Season*, written by Ann Hibbard.

In the Preschool it is busy and active! We will spend the month of December preparing for the birth of baby Jesus. The children are learning about the Christmas story not only in their classrooms, but also through their weekly music time as they prepare for our annual Christmas program. Be sure to mark your calendar now and plan to attend, Friday, December 16, at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. In January, the children will explore themes associated with winter, and we do hope for some snow!

In this season of giving, the Preschool will again support the Falls Church–McLean Children's Center. Over 75 percent of the children who attend the center receive some type of assistance through the city or county.

Feel free to stop by and see our beautifully decorated tree in the Preschool hallway, and if you would like to participate, your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

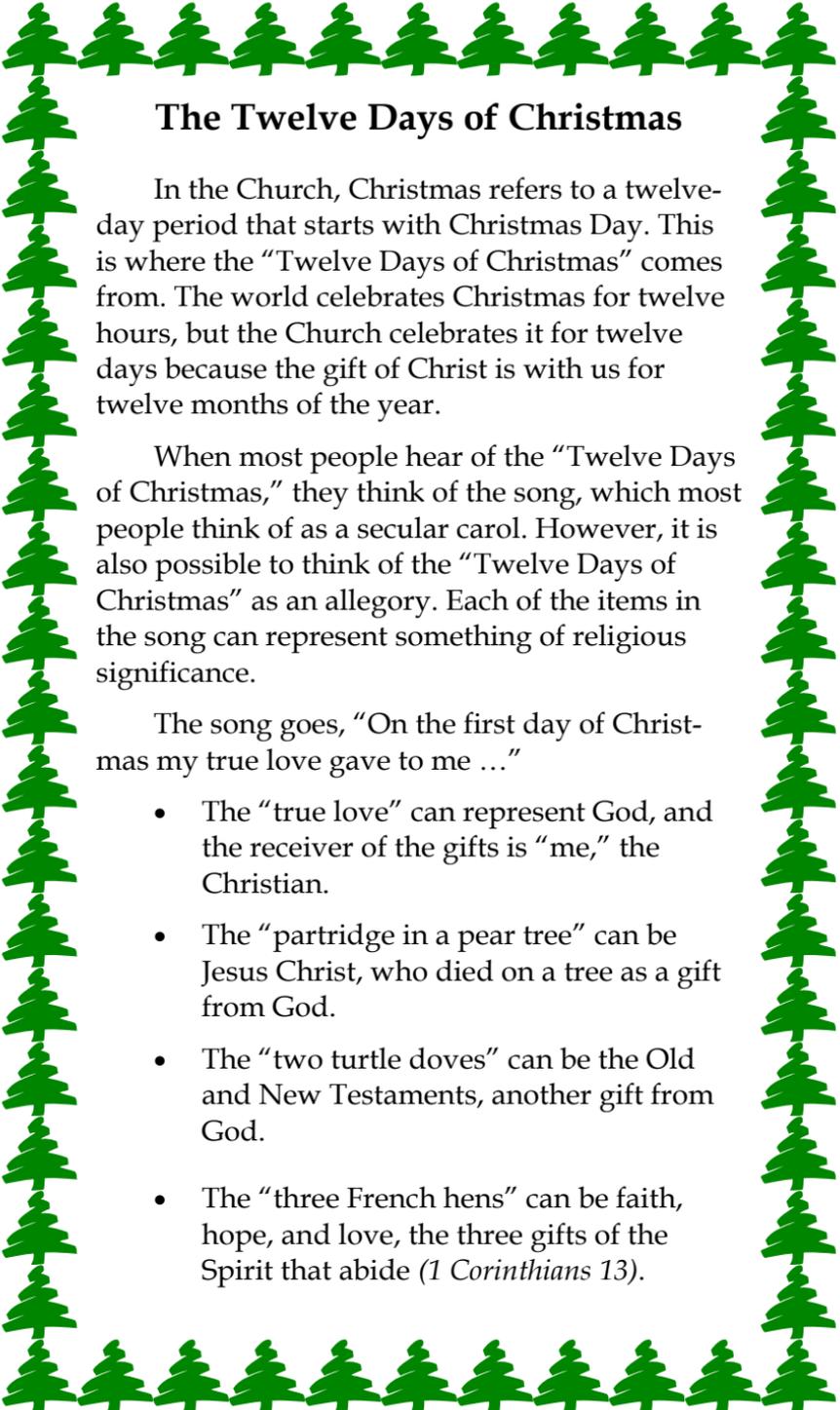
In closing, as you and your family celebrate the season of Advent, make a commitment to live some of the time quietly and reflectively. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Instead of watching TV, put together a puzzle and talk about the Christmas story.
- As you and your family consider what gifts you will give this Christmas, talk about what a gift really is.
- Commit to a weekly quiet time for prayer. Don't forget to have your children lead in prayer.

The staff and I wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

God's Instrument,
LuAnn





The Twelve Days of Christmas

In the Church, Christmas refers to a twelve-day period that starts with Christmas Day. This is where the “Twelve Days of Christmas” comes from. The world celebrates Christmas for twelve hours, but the Church celebrates it for twelve days because the gift of Christ is with us for twelve months of the year.

When most people hear of the “Twelve Days of Christmas,” they think of the song, which most people think of as a secular carol. However, it is also possible to think of the “Twelve Days of Christmas” as an allegory. Each of the items in the song can represent something of religious significance.

The song goes, “On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...”

- The “true love” can represent God, and the receiver of the gifts is “me,” the Christian.
- The “partridge in a pear tree” can be Jesus Christ, who died on a tree as a gift from God.
- The “two turtle doves” can be the Old and New Testaments, another gift from God.
- The “three French hens” can be faith, hope, and love, the three gifts of the Spirit that abide (*1 Corinthians 13*).

- The “five golden rings” can be the first books of the Bible, also called the books of Moses.
- The “six geese a laying” can be the six days of creation.
- The “seven swans a swimming” can be the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 12:8-14, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4:10-11*).
- The “eight maids a milking” can be the eight beatitudes (*Matthew 5:8-12*).
- The “nine ladies dancing” can be the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*).
- The “ten lords a leaping” can be the Ten Commandments.
- The “eleven pipers piping” can be the eleven faithful disciples.
- The “twelve drummers drumming” can be the twelve points of the Apostles’ Creed.

So the next time you hear the “Twelve Days of Christmas,” think of what this apparently nonreligious song can teach us about our faith.



"Peace on Earth" Ornament



Make this Earth ornament as a reminder to pray for the peace Jesus will bring when he returns.

What you will need:

1. Clear glass ornament
2. Blue and green acrylic craft paint
3. Sponge
4. Scissors
5. Black permanent marker (Sharpie) or black puffy craft paint
6. Paper plate
7. Glitter (optional)



What you need to do:

1. Cut the sponge into 2 rectangles, about the size of your tallest finger.
2. Pour a little paint onto a plate. (Add glitter if you want your ornament to sparkle.)
3. Use one sponge for blue and one for green.
4. Dab the paint onto your glass ornament one color at a time. Use green for land and blue for ocean to make the ornament look like our planet Earth.
5. When the paint is dry, use the marker or puffy paint to write PEACE on the ornament.
6. Use your ornament as a Christmas decoration or give it as a present.



Celebrate "A New Year and A New You!"

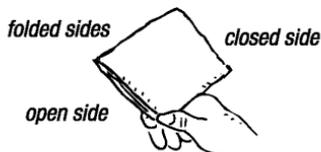
Make a paper noisemaker to celebrate with.

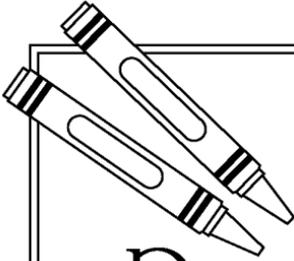
You will need:

- * a piece of notebook or copier paper
- * crayons or markers
- * ruler
- * scissors

How to:

1. Cut a piece of paper 7" or 8" square.
2. Color it or write "Happy New Year & Happy New You" on it.
3. Fold paper almost in half. The bottom edge should be $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top. Crease the fold well.
 
4. Fold in half side-to-side with the shorter flap inside. Crease well.
 
5. Hold the paper tightly between thumb and index finger at open corner where there are only 2 thicknesses.
6. Quickly flick your arm and wrist downward. The inside paper will pop out and make a loud snap.





Just for KIDS

Peace on Earth

Do you remember what King Herod did when he heard about the birth of Jesus? He was so troubled that he issued a decree ordering the death of all male children younger than 2 years old. Jesus was not born in a time of peace, but we can look forward to His return and believe what the heavenly host proclaimed.

Follow the maze through the verse.



START

	And	suddenly	
			there
	was with the angel		
	a multitude	of the	
heavenly host	praising	God,	
	and saying,	"Glory to God	
in the highest,	and on earth		
	peace,	good will	
toward men."	Luke 2:13-14, KJV	FINISH	