



ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
**DECEMBER NEWSLETTER**  
DECEMBER 2023

In a season filled with holiday shopping, events, and gatherings, Advent asks us to do the opposite: to slow down and contemplate the arrival of God Incarnate into the world.

Throughout the four weeks of Advent you'll hear us move through three major themes:

- Jesus' future return to set the world right,
- The ministry of John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way for Jesus,
- And, of course, the story of a young pregnant woman named Mary.

I invite you to join Christians across space and time to spend this season anticipating the birth of our Savior in a

**UPCOMING EVENTS**



**3**

Worship Service  
10:00 am

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Caring for Friends  
Snack Bag Assembly  
11am

**10**

Worship Service  
10:00 am

\*

Christmas Caroling  
Meet at Ascension  
1pm

**17**

Worship Service  
Hanging of the Greens  
10:00 am

\*

Luminary Preparation  
11am

renewed devotion to prayer, scripture, and charity to the world. This waiting that we do together is active, and not necessarily in wrapping the gifts and preparing for Christmas dinner. No, this active waiting is about sinking down in the promises we receive from God. It is about hearing again, as if for the first time, that *God broke into our time through the birth of Jesus to give us hope for today and tomorrow.*

In our worship, you'll notice how we mark this liturgical season in several ways. My preaching will focus on the concept of time in a series called, "Out of Time." In this series, we will do as Advent has asked us to do: sit in the tension of what it means to feel the finitude of time as children to a God who is outside of time entirely. Our paraments will turn to blue, we will light the Advent Wreath together, our musical selections will tune into the melodies and lyrics of anticipation, and after worship, there will be several opportunities to serve our neighbors together through the assembly of snack bags, luminary preparations, and caroling.

Lastly, this is also a stretch of time where we feel the loss of our loved ones so palpably. We will continue our tradition of providing a special service that

**18**

ALC Family Night  
5:45-7:30pm

**20**

Blue Christmas Service  
7:00pm

**24**

Setting out the Luminaries  
8:00am

\*

Worship Service  
Intergenerational Pop-up

Pageant  
10:00 am

\*

Christmas Eve Service  
7pm

**31**

Worship Service  
10:00 am

holds the hope of Christmas amid our sorrow. In partnership with God's Love Lutheran Church, we will offer a contemplative and healing service called, Blue Christmas on Wednesday, December 20th at 7PM right here at Ascension.

As Anita Weems says in her poem, "In Search of our Kneeling Places," *In the excitement and confusion, the merry chaos, / let's listen for the brush of angels' wings. / This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem / and find our kneeling places.*

On the journey with you,  
Pastor Kayla

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### **Advent Devotionals**

*On the table in the narthex, you'll notice several of Pastor Kayla's books out for you to look over and ponder during this Advent season. We also commend you to the following devotionals:*

- Liberty Lutheran's Daily Advent Devotional Booklet, which can be viewed online by [clicking here](#).
- December calendar, family oriented created by Presbyterian pastor, Rev. Traci Smith. Copies are available on the table in the Narthex.
- Lastly, throughout the weeks of Advent, we will give you a weekly devotional in your bulletin that focuses on our theme of "Out of Time."

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## GIVING TREE

It is our tradition at Advent to have a Giving Tree in our Narthex. It has gift boxes below giving you an opportunity to support our Caring for Friends, the Delaware Valley Food Pantry, Lutheran Disaster Response ([elca.org/ldr](http://elca.org/ldr)) and ELCA World Hunger (Good Gifts Catalog) through your gifts. You are welcome to put donations in the boxes, offering plate, donate through online giving or give directly. Now through December 31, all gifts to ELCA World Hunger ([elca.org/hunger](http://elca.org/hunger)) will be matched up to \$165,000. Thank you for your generous support of our neighbors.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35.



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## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We are now taking orders for poinsettias for Christmas. Please fill out the form below.

### CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER

You may mail your check or put it in the offering plate on Sunday. Checks should be made payable to: Ascension Lutheran Church / "Christmas Flowers" on the memo line. Poinsettias are \$22 each.



## Make Your Voice Heard Via the Synodical Mission Profile Survey

Dear Beloved Church,

In May of 2024, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be electing a new bishop. Bishop Davenport is concluding her six-year term and has informed the Synod Council that she will not stand for a second term.

As a part of the process of preparing for this election, a Transition Team was formed to develop a Synodical Mission Profile. This document will assess the vitality of and hoped-for missional direction of the synod. This resource will be the basis of discussions led by a Discernment Team and will help to inform persons who may have the gifts to serve as bishop.

A brief survey has been developed by the Transition Team and is now available via Google Forms. We hope that you and members of your congregation will take the time to complete this survey. To ensure that responses are included in the Profile, **surveys must be completed by Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**. We realize that this is a quick turnaround, however the timeline is dictated by the Synod Constitution.

**To access the survey, [follow this link](#).** Results will be posted by the end of the year on the synod's website.

Thank you for your participation.  
Patricia Moore & Pastor Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath  
Transition Team Co-Chairs

## Ascension Family Fun Night

Join us for Family Fun Night! We share in some food and a fun, creative, and interactive lesson with Pastor Kayla as well as a service project. Come join us for our next gathering on Monday, December 18th beginning at 5:45pm.



### Snack Bags Assembly

Caring for Friends provides food and friendship to homebound seniors, veterans, homeless persons and families with children in need. They provide ready-to-heat meals, caring visits and cards, and fresh/pantry staple food items that support hunger relief in the five counties of Greater Philadelphia. They need about 4,000 snack bags a day to serve hungry children and adults in between meals and for breakfast. So far this year, we have filled 2280 Snack bags thanks to your generosity and a Thrivent Action Team grant.

## **We will be assembling Snack bags again on December 3.**

A Thrivent Action team grant has been received. Your help is greatly appreciated! Caring for Friends is no longer requesting oatmeal, instant coffee/tea/hot chocolate packs as they are transitioning to Snack Bags only.

### **Items needed:**

- 1 gallon plastic storage bags (zip loc)
- 6.75 oz 100% juice boxes (especially needed)
- Cereal/granola/protein bars (Snack bags)
- 6 packs of peanut butter or cheese crackers
- 1 oz boxes of raisins or other dried fruit, or fruit/vegetable squeeze pouches (such as Motts or GoGoSqueeze)-Already have purchased so do not need
- Or cash donations are also welcome.

Our goal is 750 or more snack bags prepared.

As the holidays approach, please take soup containers and/or meal trays (meat, starch, and vegetable) to fill at home with leftovers. Bring to Ascension's Caring for Friends freezer marking labels with our freezer number 287. We will also take frozen turkeys or hams. Thank you!

### **Delaware Valley Food Pantry**

To our generous community, please help us fill our shelves this week with the following items:

Diapers (size 3 & up), Toddler Pull-Ups (size 2T & up), Baby formula, Baby Wipes, Toothpaste, Tooth brushes (adult and child), Shampoo/conditioner, Laundry detergent, Dish soap, Female hygiene products (pads & tampons), Disposable razors (men & women) and any other non-perishable food items (especially bags of dried black beans and bags of rice) are welcome as well.

You can bring donations to Ascension and leave in the



baskets in the Narthex and they will be delivered to the Food Pantry.

Thank you for your constant kindness and support!

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### WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL ZOOM

Are you interested in enriching both your spiritual life and your array of female friendships?

Please join us Saturday mornings at 9:30 for our Women's Devotional Zoom where we will be continuing with our focus on Gather Magazine issue July/August 2023 with Bible Study on Salvation now.

Our material will be drawn from Gather Magazine, a publication which reflects many voices on a variety of topics in step with the Lutheran calendar. <https://www.gathermagazine.org/getgather/>

There's a new subscriber's introductory rate of \$9.95 per person, which includes both hard copy and online access. During registration, please choose Ascension Lutheran of Newtown for the purposes of this magazine subscription.

If you need any assistance with the subscription, please contact Anne Chmielewski at [d.r.ski@att.net](mailto:d.r.ski@att.net).

As always, one need not feel obligated to buy the book or magazine. Join us! We will let you know the day's topic & scripture focus ahead of time by email. Your unique perspective is always most welcome & encouraged!

Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84850522590pwd=aFRnMEdx3ZzUFNwdnZlRnFVdIJjQT09>

Meeting ID: 848 5052 2590

Passcode: 659592

Wishing You a Very Merry Christmas Season!





