

To our Visitors

We welcome you and hope our worship enables you to draw near to God through Christ Jesus; may you feel welcome among us. Please sign our guest book in the Narthex, and we welcome you for join us for snacks.

Pray always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

In Need of Prayer

Rosie, Linda’s daughter, deep grieving
Brenda, for health
Ed, for mobility, back pain
Nancy, health and sustaining grace
Maureen, dear friend of Lisa
Kay, continued faith, poor prognosis
Pray for caregivers of those who are ill
College students, for continuing faith
Jennet family, illness and deaths
Linda S, breathing concerns
Janet Evans, confusion (in AZ)
Marie, employment and comfort
Donna’s family, Dan, recent heart surgery.
Jen: healing of ankle, father’s chemo, friend in Israel
Family of Enrique, grief
Sue Rojek, complications after eye surg.
Jean, friend of Cheri, breast cancer.
Homeless for shelters

In Need of Prayer

Bunny Rector, recent fall with injuries, weakness
Bryan, nephew of Terras family, cancer diagnosis
Lisa, Pastor’s niece, newly discovered cancer
Glad, hospitalized after a fall
Benita, continued prayer for normal blood counts, and encouragement
Sean’s aunt & uncle, heavy caregiving
Judy V. and family in Florida
Lance, brother-in-law of Isles family
Sue, sister-in-law of Isles family
Pastor Scott McKee, serious cancer
Willy, 76, needs Jesus
Krystal’s friend, Lolita, with esophageal cancer
Our Military: Andrew, son of Craig M, deployed to Qatar.
Bev’s friend, Alice, son died by suicide.
Mary, friend of Karen, back surgery, lives alone

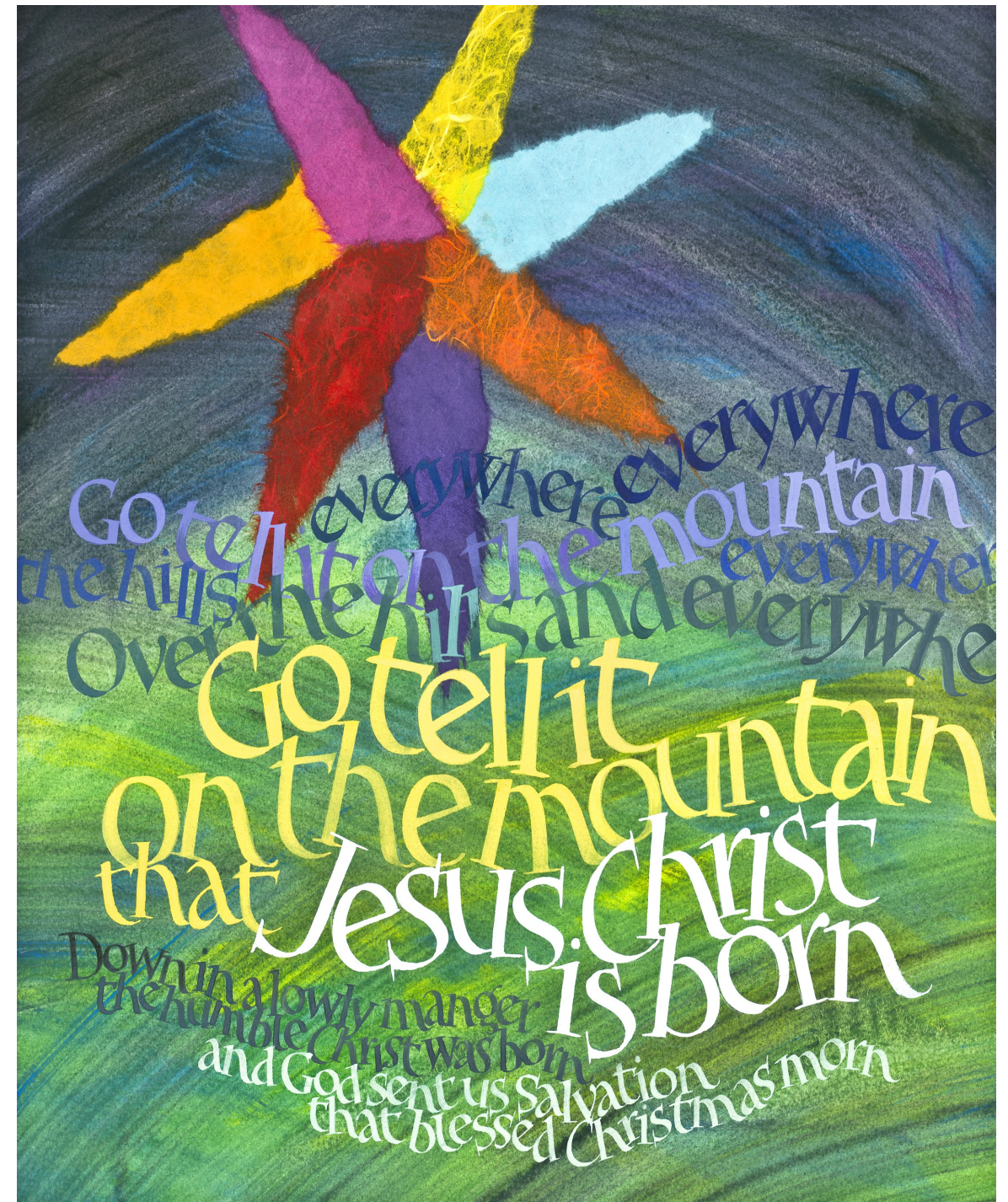
Giving for past 2 weeks: \$

Total giving to date in Dec.: \$

For tax purposes, last date today.

Please continue to pray for the ministries of Tim North and Rob and Joyce Hamd in areas being threatened by war. Pray for their safety, for ways to continue to impact the people near them with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Heidelberg Catechism Q.6 Did God create man so wicked and perverse? A. No. God created man good and in his own image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that he might know God, his creator, love him with all his heart, and live with him in eternal happiness for his praise and glory.





CHRIST
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WELCOME TO WORSHIP

DECEMBER 31, 2023

Gathering Song: *The Birthday of a King* (bulletin page 7)

† Call to Worship (Psalm 100)

Pastor: Shout for joy to the **Lord**, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

People: Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Pastor: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

Unison: For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues for all generations.

† Hymn: *As with Gladness Men of Old* (page 8)

† Invocation and the Lord's Prayer

† Standing as you are able

Poinsettias

Thank you to all who ordered flowers for the sanctuary. You may take yours to enjoy at home. (Please note that poinsettias are toxic to cats.)

Angel Tree Gifts

We rejoice that we were able to fulfill our commitment to the Angel Tree families to which we were assigned. A big thank you to everyone who contributed. Thank you to Brenda, Cheri, those who delivered the gifts, and many others who helped to bless these children of incarcerated parents.

Offering Envelopes

If you have not yet picked up your offering envelopes, you will find them on the table as you enter Fellowship Hall. They are in alphabetical order.

First Scripture Reading

Reader Today: Donna Whiting

Romans 14:1-13 Responsive

¹ Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.

² **One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.** ³ **The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.**

⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ **One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.** ⁶ **Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.**

⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ **You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.** ¹¹ **It is written:**

“As surely as I live,” says the Lord,
‘every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.’”

¹² **So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.**

¹³ **Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.**

Philippians 4:4-9 Responsive

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

⁷ **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** >>>>>

O Sing a Song of Bethlehem

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

⁹ **Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.**

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.

† **Hymn: O Sing a Song of Bethlehem** (Page 9)

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Offertory: “Another Year is Dawning” by Frances Havergal arr: Yuta Sugano

† Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Second Scripture Readings

Matthew 6:5-15 Responsive

⁵ “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

⁶ **But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**

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As with Gladness Men of Old

⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ **your kingdom come,**

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ **Give us today our daily bread.**

¹² **And forgive us our debts,**

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ **And lead us not into temptation,**

but deliver us from the evil one.’

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 Responsive

¹² Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

¹⁴ **And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.**

¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

¹⁶ **Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.**

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.

²³ **May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.**

²⁵ Brothers and sisters, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all God’s people with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

²⁸ **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**

Sermon: Becoming a Better Disciple

Dr. James N. McGuire

Pastoral Prayer

† **Hymn: Angels from the Realms of Glory** (page10)

† **Responsive Litany** (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Pastor: Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

People: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Unison: Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Benediction

Welcome, Announcements, and Prayers