

# The Gloria Dei-ly News

December 2020

1333 Beltline Road, Garland, Texas 75040

(972) 530-8555

Pastor Tom Schwolert

**A Word from our Minister:**

**AN ADVENT LIKE NO OTHER**

We certainly can say that 2020 has been a year like no other. It feels like we are constantly adapting and sometimes making it up as we go. Now the church year begins with Advent. How about we make this Advent like no other? What I mean is, what if we seize the opportunity to make this Advent a time when we all come together to lean into the wonder of the journey of Mary & Joseph as they make their way to the manger? Might we discover this sacred story anew?

The story of Advent is about the arrival of something new. It is about hope. It is about you and me following Mary and Joseph through the joys and challenges of their journey to Bethlehem. Yes, we hear the same story every year, but each year we are given the opportunity to discover something new that is meant to renew our faith.

I see it as similar to hearing a new version of a Christmas song from an artist I've not heard sing it before. "Away in a Manger" is one of those songs that never gets old to me. Each year I like to hear a new version that gives me the opportunity to hear something new. I think my favorite line in the song is:

Be near me, Lord Jesus  
I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever  
And love me, I pray

To me, it is a prayer that I know that my Lord is close to me every day. No matter what I'm confronted with, Jesus is near and I am not alone. May you know that Jesus is near to you this Advent season. Take some time to read or listen to the story again and see what God might reveal to you anew.

May we know that because of Christ Jesus, we are always being made new. May we experience an Advent like no other. Advent blessings to you.

Grace and Peace to You! —Pastor Tom

**JOIN THE VIA ADVENT JOURNEY**

Join Pastor Tom and others Wednesdays during Advent at 7 pm on Zoom for some fellowship and devotional. We will be reading a book called *Via Advent* by Shawn Small that follows the journey of Mary to the manger and the birth of Jesus. It is filled with scripture, art and short essays.



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**December 2020**

The Gloria Dei-ly News is a monthly newsletter distributed to members and friends of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 1333 Beltline Road, Garland, Texas 75040 (972) 530-8555. Worship begins at 10:15 a.m. The staff currently consists of Karen Johnson, Editor and Mr. Steve Maziarz, Acting President of the Congregation. Articles may be submitted to the next month's edition of the newsletter by the third Sunday of the month and may be e-mailed to [newsletter@gloriadeigarland.org](mailto:newsletter@gloriadeigarland.org).

[www.gloriadeigarland.org](http://www.gloriadeigarland.org)

**Glory to God**

**Birthdays to Celebrate in December**

Karen Johnson	12/6
Randy Reininger	12/11
Caitlin Hastings	12/21

Please let Karen Johnson know if your birthday is missing from the list or incorrect so that the church records can be updated.

How can we turn down free books? Pastor Tom had breakfast with his good friend Shawn Small about a month ago. Shawn told him that God was nudging him to do something for his pastor friends. Shawn has a non-profit called Wonder Voyage ([wondervoyage.com](http://wondervoyage.com)) that leads church groups all over the world on what he calls pilgrimages. These trips are a mix of mission work, learning about cultures and spiritual renewal. Out of gratitude for all the pastors who have brought groups on these trips he decided to give his books away. *Via Advent* is daily readings, scripture and prayer for the Advent journey. Pastor Tom hopes you will take advantage of this free resource.

If you'd still like to get one let Pastor Tom know and he can meet you at church. If you want to stay home, Karen Johnson has volunteered to deliver them to you. Please email her at [lionkj02@gmail.com](mailto:lionkj02@gmail.com). Who knows? Maybe one day we can take a group on one of Shawn's adventures. Join the *Via Advent Journey*.



**SPECIAL DATES IN DECEMBER!**

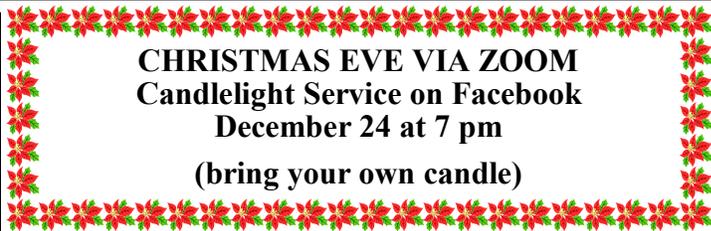
- ◆ Second Sunday of Advent, *December 6, 2020*
- ◆ Saint Nicholas Day, *December 6, 2020*
- ◆ Chanukah Begins, *December 10, 2020*
- ◆ Third Sunday of Advent, *December 13, 2020*
- ◆ Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 20, 2020*
- ◆ Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting, *December 20, 2020*
- ◆ First day of winter, *December 21, 2020*
- ◆ Christmas Eve, *December 24, 2020*
- ◆ Christmas Day, *December 25, 2020*
- ◆ New Year's Eve/Watch Night, *December 31, 2020*

**A Word from the Council:**

On behalf of the Church Council I would like to wish you a blessed Advent and Christmas! This year has brought it's share of challenges for all of us. It also brought us a blessing of a new pastor! It's truly been a year unlike any other. We'll be having our Semi-Annual Congregational meeting on December 20th. We need to fill two spots on the Council. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Pastor Tom.

On a personal note, as I conclude my leadership role on the Council, I wanted to express my thanks to my fellow Council Members and members of the Future Directions Committee for their service to Gloria Dei as we searched for a new pastor. It's been an honor to serve as your President and Vice-President. I'm proud of how we've adapted to our new "normal." I pray that 2021 brings an early chance for us to return to in-person worship. Merry Christmas! You are always in my prayers.

—Steve Maziarz, Acting Council President



**CHRISTMAS EVE VIA ZOOM  
Candlelight Service on Facebook  
December 24 at 7 pm**

**(bring your own candle)**

**TAKING FAITH HOME**

I'd like to introduce you to a new resource to help you and your family grow in your faith at home. It's called "Taking Faith Home." Certainly, we are spending more time at home than we ever have during this pandemic. This is the perfect time to explore new ways to grow in faith. Each week, along with the lessons and announcements, you will also receive Taking Faith Home in your inbox.

TFH consists of daily Bible readings, prayers, conversation starters, devotions, acts of service and rituals and traditions. Research shows that when we practice these things in our home it can have a profound impact on our faith. You can pick and choose what you want to do or do all of it. There is plenty to choose from. Advent is a good time to start some new rituals. I hope you will take advantage of this great resource. Enjoy!

—Pastor Tom

**A LITTLE MORE LUTHERAN FROM  
WWW.OLDLUTHERAN.COM**

[Editor's Note: I came across the following while shopping on the Old Lutheran website and requested permission to print it here. I am not endorsing shopping from the website, just the sentiment expressed by the design. kj]

"We would love to see a world where everyone is just a little more Lutheran. While we realize that none of these behaviors are specifically Lutheran it occurs to us that just as Grace is fundamental to our understanding of how God comes to us, Grace can also be a guiding principle to how we live out our lives as Lutherans.

Imagine what this world could be like if on any given day each of us lived out our life with a little more grace, and hope and peace and love and joy and rest and welcome and forgiveness and music and worship and study and proclaiming and supporting and encouraging and calling and listening and sharing and giving and praying and preaching and learning and empowering and caring.

Maybe tomorrow is a little more encouraging and next week is listening. Just a little more. If we all were just a little more, we could change the world." —www.oldlutheran.com



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS  
SEMIANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
SUNDAY DECEMBER 20, 2020  
VIA ZOOM 11:00 AM**

**GOOD SAMARITAN DONATIONS**

According to Stacy Hanson, our Council Chair of the Social Ministry Committee, due to the pandemic Good Samaritans of Garland will not be collecting the fixings for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners as they have in the past. Instead they are asking for \$25 gift cards from local grocery chains and cards or letters of encouragement to go out to the families in need.

If you want to help, you can make a \$25 donation to Gloria Dei via tithe.ly from our Facebook page or website (<https://gloriadeigarland.org/good-samaritan-donations/> or <https://www.facebook.com/gloriadeigarland/>)

OR send a check to the church and we will buy the cards from Aldi, Winco, Albertsons, Tom Thumb or Walmart and get them to Good Sams. Please designate the donation or check for Good Sams.

Also send cards with words of encouragement to the church and we'll pass those along to Good Sams for them to distribute with the gift cards. Sign them with your name and church, or just the church name if you don't feel comfortable including your own. We will be collecting money and cards through mid-December. If you have questions, contact Stacy Hanson or Karen Johnson.

DECEMBER BIBLE READINGS				
Dec	First Lesson	Psalm	Second Lesson	Gospel
6	Isaiah 40:1-11	85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
13	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	126	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
20	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	89:1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
24	Isaiah 9:2-7	96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]
27	Isaiah 61:10--62:3	148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

### ST. NICHOLAS—THE GIVER

Many Christian families struggle with what role — if any — Santa Claus should play in their Christmas celebrations. No matter what you decide, it’s fascinating to know the history of the real-life St. Nicholas.

Born about 270 A.D., Nicholas was a bishop in Myra, or modern-day Turkey. In the year 325, he was part of the Council of Nicaea, which produced the Nicene Creed.

Nicholas, known for his generosity, often gave away his money anonymously. According to tradition, he secretly provided dowries for the three daughters of a bankrupt merchant. Nicholas threw two bags of gold through open windows and placed the third in a stocking hanging by the fireplace to dry. Thus began the Christmas tradition of placing gifts in stockings.



St. Nicholas is quoted as saying, “The giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to mimic God’s giving, by grace, through faith, and this is not of ourselves.” —*The Newsletter Newsletter*

### FINISHING STRONG

There’s a saying in sports, “finish strong.” I know when I play golf, it sure feels a lot better when I birdie the last hole instead of getting a double bogey. Either way, “finishing strong” is a good attitude to have.

A few weeks ago, I sent a letter to the congregation about stewardship. I mentioned that our income was behind our expenses a bit. Several of you responded by giving a gift to Gloria Dei or increasing your giving. Thank you for your faithfulness! Now I invite you to help Gloria Dei “finish strong” as we enter into the final month of 2020. If you are able, please consider a special end of the year financial gift. If you are struggling financially, simply do what you can. May you see Christ in the generosity of this season. Thank you for your commitment to God’s ministry through Gloria Dei.

—*Pastor Tom*



DECEMBER FINANCIAL FOCUS*	
Month Income (October)	\$13,732
Month Expenditures (October)	\$12,494
Monthly Net	\$1,288
Year-to-date Income through October 2020	\$90,092
Year-to-date Expenditures through October 2020	\$103,547
Net Year-to-date Income (Loss)	(\$13,405)
Mortgage Balance as of 8/7/2020	\$118,093.08
*Presented at the November Council meeting.	

### December anniversary celebrations

Bob and Kathy Helms	12/5
Steve and Chris Kanouse	12/21
Randy and Terry Reininger	12/23

Please let Karen Johnson know if your anniversary is missing from the list so that the church records can be updated.—*Karen Johnson*

### PRAYER REQUESTS

Pastor Tom is making a change on how we communicate the prayers of the church. It seems that many prayer requests come up later in the week so he will now be sending out the prayer list on Mondays so that we have the week to pray and also gather other prayers that you have. He can then send prayers that he has collected to those putting together the worship service to list during the service. We will still continue to use the prayer form. Use this link to send your prayer request: <https://gdlc.churchtrac.com/card/4> —*Pastor Tom*

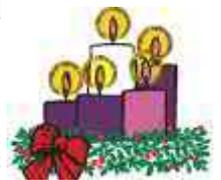
*Prayer is not about changing God, but being willing to let God change us. ~ Richard Rohr*

[Christmas Day] O dear Christ-Child, help me set aside thoughts about Christmas dinner, company and presents. Help me treasure you, just as Mary did.

### ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus’ birth. The wreath’s circular shape symbolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World — he brought light and life to a dark world (see John 1:4-5). On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so do our hope and joy.

—*The Newsletter Newsletter*



### WOMEN’S DINNER CANCELLED IN DECEMBER



The Women of Gloria Dei **WILL NOT MEET** for dinner the fourth Thursday of December.

### FIRST MONDAY BREAKFAST CANCELLED IN DECEMBER



The Men of Gloria Dei **WILL NOT MEET** for breakfast the first Monday of December.

## ALL ARE WELCOME AT GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH!

As Lutherans, we believe that God's grace is given to all, regardless of color, age, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, mental or physical health status, culture, or faith tradition. We strive to live up to the example of unconditional love and acceptance that Jesus has taught, and welcome all to join us.

We are a congregation that is active in care of God's creation, taking part in various ministries, including serving the differently abled, pet therapy providers, animal rescue, social justice, and music.

In the Book of Romans, Paul writes that we "are one body," and that "we all have gifts that differ, according to the grace given to us." We invite ALL to share with us the gifts and grace that we are given, as we are:



“Called and sent to share Christ 's love.”

## WORDS TO PONDER

“Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.”

—Calvin Coolidge

\* \* \*

““Youth is when you’re allowed to stay up late on New Year’s Eve. Middle age is when you’re forced to.”

—Bill Vaughan

\* \* \*

“One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas Day. Don’t clean it up too quickly.”

—Andy Rooney

\* \* \*

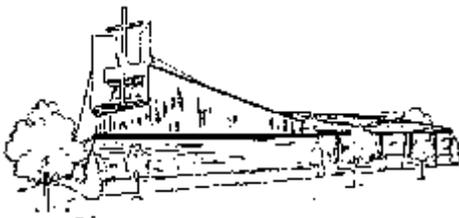
““Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus.”

—Neal A. Maxwell

\* \* \*

—*The Newsletter Newsletter*

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church**  
1333 Beltline Road  
Garland, Texas 75040-3267



**Return Service Requested**

# Christmas at Coventry

## Five Different Shopping Opportunities



**1**

Friday, November 27th  
4am-midnight

**Online Christmas Ornament Sale**  
20 Hours, 20% Off (Something Good in 2020!)

**2**

Thursday and Friday,  
December 3rd & 4th 5pm-9pm

**Reserve Your 1 hour Shopping Time**  
\$25 ticket fee applied to purchase

**3**

Thursday, December 3rd 7pm  
**Facebook Live Online Sale**  
featuring new items

**4**

Saturday, December 5th 9am-2pm  
**Traditional Christmas Open House**  
no reservation needed, limited capacity

**5**

Saturday, December 5th 9am-4pm  
**Wylie Arts Festival**  
great selections at our outdoor booth



Questions?  
Our website has  
all the details!

[www.CoventryReserve.org](http://www.CoventryReserve.org)

2004 Parker Rd.

972-636-8498

Supporting adults with special needs through creative  
therapeutic programs in a Christ-centered environment.

“Give a gift with a story behind it”