

Call Committee Report

The call process for NALC churches is a way of discerning God's will for the ministry of ordained pastors and congregations. This process involves prayer, Bible study, communication and cooperation with all members of the congregation. The congregation elected Julie Copenhaver, Dianne Hermanson, Shawn Keller, Conrad Raymond, Lloyd Wallace and Beverly Watts to serve on this committee. They have met twice to get organized and review the Call Process Manual and will be meeting via Zoom with Pastor Schultz, NALC Call Process Coordinator, for orientation and support.

A few things of which you should be aware:

1. Confidentiality is extremely important in this process. The Committee will not be sharing names of potential pastors as some may be serving other congregations and do not want to share their availability to receive a call.
2. The call process is a spiritual one of discernment, led by the Holy Spirit. It is God's process, not ours. We will spend time in Bible study, discussion and review of the PCAT and Fresh Eyes Mission Summit information. Our goal is to allow God's will to clarify for the call committee, the council and the congregation who He is calling to be our Pastor. It is about revealing God's will, not completing the process as quickly as possible.
3. Calling a pastor is not like "hiring an employee." It is more like a marriage, the process similar to finding a mate for life. Going slowly and intentionally, seeking God's will and developing a relationship are key and more important than matching a pastor's skills to the needs of the congregation. God does not necessarily call the equipped. He always equips those he calls.
4. **The Call Committee needs your help!** Please pray for us as a committee, as individuals and for the process. Pray that God will be working in the heart and life of the pastor he has selected as our next pastor and that all of us will be open to the working of the Holy Spirit through this process.

Remember—the call process is a spiritual walk, waiting for the Holy Spirit to move and to work. We cannot hurry it. Scripture is full of the problems that arise when we human beings want to “help God” or “hurry God along.” This will require patience and wisdom on the part of our council, the call committee and the congregation. This process is about “waiting for the Lord.”

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! (from Psalm 27)

...but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with sings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (from Isaiah 40)

Submitted by Dianne Hermanson, Call Committee Chair



New Covenant News

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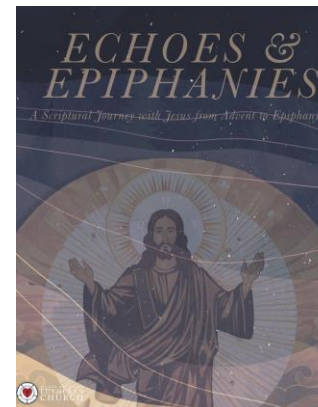
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New Covenant Lutheran Church in Morganton, NC



MISSION STATEMENT: New Covenant Welcomes God's People
Founded in Faith, United by Love, and Gifted to Serve

From the NALC – Advent Devotional: Echoes & Epiphanies



Foreword | *Echoes & Epiphanies: A Scriptural Pilgrimage*

In the sacred tapestry of the Christian liturgical calendar, this year marks a significant expansion in our journey of faith as we extend our devotional reflections to encompass not only the season of Advent but also the joyous celebration of Christmas as well as the illuminating days of Epiphany and the Baptism of Our Lord. This extended pilgrimage, from the anticipatory silence of Advent to the resounding clarity of Epiphany, invites us into a deeper exploration of the scriptural narrative that echoes the omnipresence of Jesus Christ and culminates in the epiphanies of His divine revelation. Advent, traditionally observed in the

Western Church as the commencement of the liturgical year, is a period rich in anticipation and longing. It is a time when we immerse ourselves in the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament, which foreshadow the coming of the Messiah. These ancient texts, brimming with expectation, sketch the contours of the Savior's purpose, characteristics, and the hallowed site of His birth, long before His incarnation. This season of Advent, therefore, is not merely a prelude but a profound engagement with the promise of redemption that resonates through time. As we transition into the Christmas season, our focus shifts from the anticipation of Advent to the manifestation of these prophecies in the person of Jesus Christ. The New Testament, with its vivid narratives and teachings, illuminates the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. The miracles, teachings, and the salvific work of Jesus stand as a testament to the prophetic Word-made-flesh. This period is a celebration of the tangible presence of God in human history, a divine intervention that alters the course of humanity. The journey then leads us to the day of Epiphany and the Baptism of Jesus, a time of revelation and luminous clarity. Here, each echo of Christ in the Scriptures

transforms into a moment of epiphany—a profound realization and understanding of His presence and redemptive mission. This isn't merely an auditory journey but a spiritual unveiling, where the divine narrative is deeply understood and internalized. At the heart of this pilgrimage is the story of redemption. From the Fall in Genesis, which anticipates a Savior, through the shadowy figures of the Old Testament that hint at His coming, to the Gospels that narrate His life and sacrifice, and the rest of the New Testament that explores the profound implications of this sacrifice for humanity, the narrative of redemption unfolds. This journey through the Scriptures is not just a historical or theological exploration but a personal encounter with the living Christ. As we move beyond the echoes of Advent and Christmas and reach the season of Epiphany—a time of steadfast faith and hope—the scriptures call us to embrace the eternal presence of Christ, to resonate with the clear, shining truth of His word, and to find solace in God's protective love as we await His return. "Echoes and Epiphanies" is an invitation to embark on a scriptural pilgrimage, to discover the nuanced resonances and radiant epiphanies of Jesus Christ. It is an opportunity to appreciate the intricacy of God's redemptive story and to inspire a life attuned not just to Christ's gentle reverberations but to His moments of illuminating truth. May this devotional guide you in your reflections and deepen your faith during this extended season of grace and revelation.

The Rev. Dcn. Andrew S. Ames Fuller, Editor

Director of Communications North American Lutheran Church

The NALC Advent Devotional

This year's devotional extends beyond Christmas, covering the 12 Days of Christmas to the Day of Epiphany and the Baptism of Jesus. The NALC Bishop, Dan Selbo, encourages everyone to download the devotional from the NALC website and to engage with the devotional videos as well. They pray they bless you this Advent and Christmas season. The website address is: <https://thenalc.org/advent-christmas-devotional-2023/>

Advent and Christmas Events

Advent starts Sunday, December 3rd. It is the start of the new church year and is a time of great joy!

- ❖ The Hanging of the Greens will be held on Saturday, December 16 at 10 AM. Come join in the fellowship as we decorate the church for Christmas.
- ❖ Christmas Eve lands on the last Sunday in Advent this year. We will have only the morning service on December 24th. It will be a regular service but will end in singing Silent Night by candlelight. There will be a Christmas Eve Snacks and Cider Fellowship after the service. Please bring a finger snack to share. Beverages will be supplied.

- ❖ If you would like to purchase a poinsettia for Christmas to decorate the church, please let Beverly Watts or Mary Dawn Stuenkel know. We have reserved 12 plants and they are \$9 each. You can purchase them in honor or memory of someone.

Members in Need of Prayer

Rose Marie and Joe Starr, Sr. and Joe Starr, Jr., Donna Short, Beth Walborn, John Parker, Mary Dawn Stuenkel

Prayer Concerns: If you have an urgent prayer concern, please contact Kamara Reade at 828-430-0760 or kay.29@netzero.net. She will send it out to New Covenant members.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 17th during the Sunday school hour (starting at 9 AM). The 2024 budget and annual report will be presented. The 2024 budget will be voted upon and two council members will be elected. Please make plans today to be in attendance at this important meeting.

New Covenant Women's Luncheon

The New Covenant Women's group will not have a regular meeting in December but will venture off to have a nice luncheon at the Greene Street Grill on Sunday, December 3 at 11:30 AM. All women are welcome! We hope that you can attend.

Pastor Marty Ramey's 25th Ordination Anniversary Service

Pastor Marty will be honored on December 17th at 2 PM at Miller's Lutheran Church in Hickory. All are invited to attend this special service and celebration.

Honoring Our Veterans- November 12



On Sunday, November 12, New Covenant honored its veterans. They were recognized during the service and a love offering was collected for the Wounded Warriors Project. \$685 was collected and sent to Wounded Warriors. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Sharing the Warmth

Thank you to everyone who donated warm clothing and blankets for the Share the Warmth drive at New Covenant. We were able to donate four large trash bags full of scarves, gloves, hats, coats, and blankets to Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM).

Sharing Shepherds

New Covenant adopted eight children from West Virginia and bought clothing, toys, and other items that will bring the joy of Christmas to them. These items will be delivered on December 9th with a few of our members traveling to deliver them personally. Thank you to everyone who helped to spread the love of Jesus this season!