

Members in Need of Prayer

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

Church Council Meeting

New Covenant's Church Council meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6 PM. All are welcome to attend. The next meeting is December 14. If you have an item that you want the Church Council to discuss or consider, please contact Eric Stuenkel at westuenkel@bellsouth.net or Angela Williams at 3521awilliams@charter.net

Recruiting New Church Council Members

If you are interested in serving on the NCLC Church Council, please see Eric Stuenkel or Angela Williams. It is a three year term. Nominations will close on December 4 with the election on December 11.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting will be held December 11 at 9 AM in place of Sunday school. We will review the budget and elect Church Council members.

NALC Advent Devotional

Advent begins November 27. The NALC 2022 Advent Devotional is now available online. You can find it by using this link: <https://thenalc.org/advent-devotional-2022/>

Advent Sunday School Lessons

Pastor Marty will lead Sunday school for all ages during the Advent season November 27 – December 18. The lessons will focus on the Advent season and will remind us of how to prepare for Christ's second coming.

Hanging Of The Greens

The Hanging of the Greens will be held on December 17 at 10 AM. Come help to decorate the church for Christmas!

Christmas Eve Service

New Covenant will have its Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 5 PM on December 24. We hope that you can come. Invite your family and friends!

Christmas Sunday Services

Christmas is on a Sunday this year! Come join us to celebrate Christ's birth during worship service on December 25 at 9:45 AM. There will be no Sunday school that morning.

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone who filled shoeboxes and/or gave money for the shipping for Operation Christmas Child. New Covenant donated 40 boxes and Trinity Lutheran in East Flat Rock donated 10 boxes. Angela Williams delivered the 50 boxes, along with the shipping money, to Samaritan's Purse in Boone. The staff and Angela prayed over the boxes upon arrival at Samaritan's Purse.



New Covenant News

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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 Pastor:

"...the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments."
Psalm 103:17-18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We began the season of Advent on November 27th. Advent is one of the two penitential seasons of the year, a time when we reflect on our need for God and devote our energy to strengthening our relationship with him. Many will already be living in Christmas—it's hard to avoid when the stores put out Christmas paraphernalia, most of it secular, before Halloween is even over! But it is important for us to use this season of Advent to prepare, not just for the celebration of the birth of Christ but for his coming again. That means reflecting on who we are as God's people, people of his covenant.

In Psalm 103, we are reminded of God's love that is for all eternity, expressed in his covenant with us. God's covenant is one of relationship with his people, and our part of the covenant is to obey him and follow his commandments. But we know that we cannot do it alone. We depend on the Holy Spirit who comes to us in our baptism to help us hold fast to what God would have us do.

As we enter the season of Advent this month, we remember that God loved us enough to send his son to die for us. God did this not because of anything we had done to deserve it, but because his love for us is so great that he wanted to provide for our forgiveness and eternal salvation. We love him because he first loved us. Out of that love, hopefully we grow in obedience to his commandments. The prophet Jeremiah proclaims the word from



God, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God." (Jeremiah 7:23) In that proclamation, God is reaffirming that he is in relationship with us, not that our obedience earns that relationship but that it confirms it from our side. We strive to obey because we know that relationship transforms us and gives us life.

The season of Advent is a season of waiting, of anticipation of the celebration of the birth of Christ. It is also the season that reminds us we have something even more significant to anticipate – the coming again of Christ to bring to fullness the kingdom of God. That is why being in relationship with God is central to our faith as Christians. What more powerful manifestation of relationship could we have than for God to come to us in human flesh, to live among us, to experience our joys and sorrows at ground level? The promise that he will return reminds us that our relationship with him cannot be severed by earthly means.

We anticipate the coming of Jesus in our celebration of Christmas; and we anticipate his return, knowing that he is God in flesh, and there is no shadow of turning in him. The Psalmist says, "He is from everlasting to everlasting." And as the writer of Hebrews tells us, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) He is our hope and our salvation. In Christ, our relationship with God is established forever, and we await his return with great joy.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Marty

The Advent Wreath

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)



The season of Advent is the beginning of the church year, a penitential season in which we anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas, but even more we look forward to Christ's coming again in glory at the end of time, as he promised. The liturgical color of Advent is blue or violet, the color of royalty.

There are four Sundays in Advent, the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. Many churches mark the season with the lighting of candles on an Advent wreath or candelabra, one for each of the four Sundays. The candles are blue or violet, but often the third candle is rose or pink. The third Sunday in Advent is celebrated as Gaudete Sunday, a break from the penitential nature of the season about halfway through. There is also often a larger white candle in the center of the Advent wreath, which is lit on

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as a celebration of the light that has come into the world in the Christ child.

The use of an Advent Wreath and candles as part of worship is a relatively recent custom in the church, probably no more than about 300 years old. Originating among Lutherans in northern Europe from earlier cultural traditions, it has been adopted by many Christian denominations over the last few centuries.

Designating the names for the various candles is a very recent phenomena (probably mid-20th century), and multiple traditions have developed. These often vary by denomination, region, religious publisher, and even in the literature of various candle supply companies! Some of these names were related to old lectionary texts that are no longer in use. An even more recent tradition among various churches is to name the candles by Advent "theme" words, the most common four being Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. The scriptural designations are rooted in biblical tradition:

The Prophecy Candle: Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...

The Bethlehem Candle: Matthew 2:6

And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,

are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

The Shepherds Candle: Luke 2:8

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field,

keeping watch over their flock by night.

The Angels Candle: Luke 2:9-14

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 among those with whom he is pleased!"

Remember that the use of candles in Advent is a human tradition, neither mandated nor prohibited in Scripture. *"And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike."* (Augsburg Confession 7)

Adapted from <http://www.solapublishing.com/seasonal-page/advent>

During this season of Advent, may we be reminded of the gift that comes to us from God as we anticipate the celebration of the birth of Christ and look ahead to his coming again.