

The Lantern – December 2025
First English Lutheran Church, ELCA



"Sharing the Light of Christ"



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

STAFF AND CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor: Reverend Mary E. Zupansic

pastor@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org

Parish Administrator:

parishadmin@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org

Minister of Music: Daniel Larson

Pianist: Hal Osborn

Custodians: Shawn & Jenny Blaschka

Sunday School Superintendent: VerJean Detert

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Church Council:

Officers:

President: Cindy Hermel

President-Elect: Mike Vaningan

Past President: Sherry Larson

Treasurer: Marla Zumann

Recording Secretary: Karen Czechowicz

Council Members:

Carla Baumgardt

Russ Michalski

Jenny Blaschka

Kalynn Pempek

Angela Greenfield

Dina Santangelo

Neil Juedes

Lois Stasko

Michael Klapperich

Nicholas Schumacher (Youth Rep)

Your comments, questions and concerns are important to us. Feel free to talk to any member of our staff or Church Council.

Dear Disciples at First English,



The holidays can be hectic, mixing joy with stress. Advent encourages us to pause amid the season's chaos, to reflect on the meaning of Emmanuel—God with us. The hymns that we sing in worship in the weeks before Christmas help ready our hearts for wonder at the manger. Our Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal contains many beautiful Advent hymns from around the world and across the ages. Of course we don't get a chance to sing them all, and some are more singable than others, but here are some of the texts that express the many faces of Advent...

...such as joy in preparing the home for the holidays:

People, look east-- The time is near of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table,

People, look east, and sing today – Love, the Guest is on the way. (Eleanor Farjeon)

...or hope for God's peace when our hearts are heavy:

"Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God.

Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load... (Johann G. Olearious, tr. Catherine Winkworth)

...or when we are afraid:

As the dark awaits the dawn, so we await your light.

O Star of promise, scatter night, loving bright, loving bright, till shades of fear are gone.

(Susan Palo Cherwien)

Some hymns come from the bright lands to the south, where the earth is still warm from the sun:

All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last! Furrows lie open for God's creative task:

this, the labor of people who struggle to see how God's truth and justice set everybody free.

(Alberto Taule, tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall)

And other hymns come from the far north where light is scarce and moods subdued:

Lost in the night do the people yet languish, longing for morning the darkness to vanquish, plaintively sighing with hearts full of anguish: Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?

(Old Nordic hymn, tr. Olav Lee)

Where is your heart this season? Do you have your own copy of the ELW? Give yourself an Advent gift this year and order one from Augsburg Fortress (go to www.augsburgfortress.org) and then read some Advent hymns for your devotions during the season. Read them out loud. Let them speak to your own longings or reveal to you the reality of others'. For...

We are called to ponder mystery and await the coming Christ, to embody God's compassion for each fragile human life. God is with us in our longing to bring healing to the earth, while we watch with joy and wonder for the promised Savior's birth. (Jeannette M. Lindholm)

Advent Blessings,
Pastor Mary

First English Mission Statement

***Our mission is to grow in faith,
serve our neighbors, and
support one another.***



8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

(closed for lunch: Noon – 1:00 p.m.)

Deadlines:

Bulletin: Wednesday afternoon

Next deadline for the Jan. Lantern: Dec. 17



Dec. 7: 2nd Sunday of Advent

Worship at 9:00 a.m.

Dec. 14: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Worship at 9:00 a.m.

Dec. 21: 4th Sunday of Advent

Worship at 9:00 a.m.

**Dec. 24: The Nativity of Our Lord
Christmas Eve**

Worship at 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 28: 1st Sunday after Christmas

Worship at 9:00 a.m.

Thursday Night Worship:

December 4, 11, 18
in the sanctuary – 6:00 p.m.

**Note: there will be no worship services
On Thursday, Dec. 25th.**

NEW MEMBERS GATHERING

If you have been worshipping with us at First English for a while, we invite you to become a new member / disciple! A 'New Member Gathering' is scheduled for Sunday, December 7th following the 9 a.m. worship service. Join us for a time to get to know each other, meet some of our leadership at First English, and learn about ministry opportunities. Please let Pastor Mary know that you are interested!



Membership
Gathering

PARISH RECORDS...November 2025

* **Funeral:** *"...in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to almighty God..."*

November 18: Alan Sexter

* **First Communion:**

On Sunday, November 9 and 16, we welcomed these young disciples to the Table of the Lord for the very first time. May they find joy in celebrating at the Lord's Table!

- Kaedyn Hadley
- Henry Lodahl
- Kaedence Koehler
- Anna Marquard
- Annabelle Oestreich

COMMITTEE Night



Our next committee night will be Tuesday, December 2, 6:30 p.m. We'll gather in

Fellowship Hall.

Advent/Christmas Devotion Books...

are available in the narthex and church office. These devotional books, entitled *Humble and Holy* start on the First Sunday of Advent (Nov. 30) and go through The Day of Epiphany on Jan. 6. The devotional provides blessings and prayers to enrich your preparations and celebrations during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Quantities are limited so be sure to pick up your copy.



POINSETTIAS

We will again grace the chancel and altar area with poinsettias for our Christmas services. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia(s), there are forms in the narthex and the church office. The price is \$10.00 per plant. **Orders must be in by Wednesday, December 10.**



AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE

Our annual Advent Hunger Offering will be received during the month of December. The need for such an offering remains so important.



SPECIAL
OFFERING

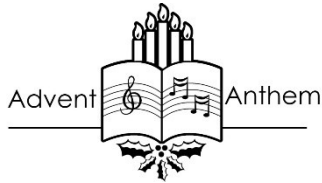
The special Hunger Appeal offering envelopes are available on the narthex tables. Let your gratitude and love flow freely during this season of giving with an extra gift to ELCA World Hunger. You may place your gifts in the offering plate on Sunday morning or Thursday evening. Thank you for caring and sharing!

CHOIR ANTHEM

for Advent 4 (Dec. 21, 9:00am service)

Dan will have an Advent anthem ready to rehearse

after Thanksgiving. All interested singers can come and practice the anthem after the worship on Sunday mornings, beginning Nov. 30 (10:00-1030) and on Tuesday nights beginning on Dec. 2, after Bell Choir practice (6:45-7:15 p.m.). Choir members will meet in the sanctuary by the piano.



THE MITTEN TREE

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our Mitten Tree this year. Your response was wonderful!! Your gifts were distributed to area schools and organizations. Food for thought: try catching some after-Christmas sales and purchase for next year's Mitten Tree!



A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

Preparing for the holidays can be so stressful. Is your "to do" list way too long? Well, we've got a sure way to give you a break from all that. You are invited to enjoy some "down time" right in our sanctuary...Sunday, Dec. 21, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Dan Larson will provide music on our baby grand piano for a time of meditation, prayer, quiet reflection and the beautiful music of the season. Come when you can – leave when you must. If you wish, you may make a freewill donation.



SNOW SHOVELERS

Look for a sign-up sheet in the narthex. We are need of snow shovelers to keep our church sidewalks and entryways clear. Thanks!

AFTER WORSHIP COFFEE HOURS

Check out the new sign-up sheet in the narthex if you would like to provide after-worship treats on Sundays.

We extend our worship experience by staying after worship to share some fellowship with each other, especially with a treat! You don't have to provide fancy treats are just fine, and there is always someone around to help with making coffee! Thanks!



HOLIDAY TREASURE SALE

Our first-ever Holiday Sale was fun and a great success! With your donations and help we made **\$2,404.01**. What an amazing total!

Thank you to all volunteers who did many tasks to help us get the sale started. Each and every thing you did was so helpful and appreciated. We came together to work as a team and we had fun!

We will be doing this sale again next. Thank you again for all your help and keep the donations coming in!

TREASURE SALE NEWS...

Items for next year's Treasure Sale are coming in nicely!

We are accepting clean clothes in good condition, housewares, collectibles, books, linens, DVDs, CDs, and more. If donating linens, please mark them with what size they are. This is very helpful.

We will accept small appliances in working condition, and furniture. Your donations can be brought downstairs in the hallway by the Sunday School rooms. There is a sign on the door.

Thank you so much for your donations!



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY of Wausau

is rushing to finish house number 77 so the family can move in before Christmas! If you are free on some weekday mornings and like to paint, consider signing up

at give.habitatwausau.org/volunteer calendar Thursday, Dec. 4, 8-12, basement drywall and start painting

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 8-10, interior painting

Thursday, Dec. 11, 8-12, interior painting

Monday, Dec. 15, 8-2, interior house cleaning

AS YOU BEGIN

your holiday decorating and find that you have Christmas lights that don't work, don't throw them out. Bring them to the narthex coatroom and place them in the container. They will be taken to Habitat for Humanity, then sent for recycling.

Since 2014 the Habitat Wausau Team has collected 46,355 pounds of holidays lights. The lights were recycled and kept out of our local landfill. The proceeds from the collection of holiday lights help Habitat Wausau purchase needed tools for the construction team.

ADDRESS / PHONE NUMBER CHANGES

Here is a request...if you have an address change or a phone number change please let Deb know in the office so she can update our records. Thank you!



ELCA WOMEN

Charity Circle...

will meet on **Tuesday, Dec. 9, 9:00 a.m.** in the Bethany Room.



Shalom Circle...

will meet on Thursday, **Dec. 18, 6:45 p.m.** in the Fireside Room.

FREE LITTLE PANTRY

The Food Pantry Transition Team is looking for a willing woodworker who would build a Free Little Pantry for First English to provide food for our neighborhood friends in need of assistance.



A materials list, diagrams, and specific directions will be provided. In addition, the FELC Council will purchase and provide the needed materials. Please contact the church office if you are able to help us make this neighborhood outreach a reality.

2025 OFFERINGS

In order to get a complete record of your financial contributions for the calendar year 2025, please have your offerings in **before Dec. 31, 2025**. The books for 2025 will close Dec. 31. Any 2025 offerings received after the 31st will be applied to your 2026 giving. Thank you!

LET US REMEMBER...

those in our congregation who are confined to their homes or are in nursing home or assisted living facilities due to illness, rehab/therapy, or are just unable to attend worship or fellowship activities. They would love and appreciate hearing from their church family with a card, visit, note or phone call.

Cady Home

1805 N. 6th Ave., Wausau WI 54401

- Michelle Detert Room 4

Crossroads Care Center

717 E. Alfred St., Weyauwega, WI 54983

- Rick Petzke

Mountain Terrace Senior Living

3402 Terrace Ct. Wausau WI 54401

- Diane Zuelke Room 133

Primrose Retirement Community
2100 Townline Rd. Wausau WI 54403
- Kathie Peterson Room 228

Rennes Health and Rehab
4810 Barbican Ave. Weston WI 54476
- Joyce Utecht Room 606-2

Rennes Health and Rehab
4602 Barbican Ave. Weston, WI 54476
- Ila Bartelt #206
- Sue McKee #235

Sylvan Crossings on Evergreen
1605 Evergreen Rd., Wausau WI 54403
- Dolores Hintz Room 13

Wood Aven Living Community
1821 N.4th Ave. Wausau 54401
- Gary Klingbeil Room 110

AT HOME...

- **Geraldine Hopperdietzel**
2505 N. 4th Ave. Wausau 54401

- **Delphine Saeger** 151700 Fern Ln.
Wausau 54401 715-298-3210

- **Eleanor Thorpe** 2901 N. 7th St. Apt. W102
Wausau 54403 715-298-1865



Worship Assistants - Ushers
Communion Set-up / Assistants
Communionware Washers / Acoyltes
Greeters / Lectors

TO THOSE WHO ASSIST IN WORSHIP

FYI...this note is just to let you know Sharon Hunter is scheduling the weekly Thursday and Sunday worship service volunteers. If you cannot

serve when you are scheduled, please find someone to take your place and let Sharon know so the correct name is reflected in the bulletin. We truly appreciate everyone who helps to make our worship service meaningful. Sharon's information is shunteratdpi@msn.com or 715 212 1672.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS:

December 7: Lynne Santangelo
December 14: Nicholas Schumacher
December 21: Connie Vaningan
December 24: Pat Seivert
December 24: Lynne Santangelo
December 28: Kalynn Pempek

January 4, 2026: Connie Vaningan
January 11: Lynne Santangelo
January 18: Pat Seivert
January 25: Kalynn Pempek

ALTAR GUILD:

December: Sue Juedes
January: Jane Schalow

ACOLYTES:

December 7: Kaedyn Hadley
December 14: Brooklynn Detert
December 21: Annabelle Oestreich
December 28: Kynslei Koehler-Dahquist

January 4, 2026: Kaedyn Hadley
January 11: Brooklynn Detert
January 18: Annabelle Oestreich
January 25: Kynslei Koehler-Dahquist

LECTORS:

Lectors:

December 7: Lynne Santangelo
December 14: Matt Schumitsch
December 21: Sheri Fochs

December 24: Connie Vaningan
December 24: Lette Becker
December 28: Pat Seivert

January 4, 2026: Lette Becker
January 11: Karen Briggs
January 18: Addie Fochs
January 25: Sheri Fochs

LECTORS: (Thursday Evening Worship)

December 4: Bobbie
December 11: Barry
December 18: Maralee
December 25: **No Christmas Day Worship**

January 1, 2026: No worship
January 8: Cheri Breneman
January 15: Barry Levine
January 22: Bobbie Levine
January 29: Maralee Moellendorf

GREETERS:

December 7: Linda Kittel / Sharon Hunter
December 14: Dilynn Koehler / Deb Kufahl
December 21: VerJean Detert
December 24: Lonnie & LeAnn Lewis
December 24: Ben & Mia Lodahl
December 28: Erin & Spencer Radke

January 4, 2026: Amy Abitz / Eli Akey /
Steve Wendorf
January 11: Linda Kittel / Deb Kufahl
January 18: Dilynn Koehler / VerJean Detert
January 25: Lois Stasko

COMMUNION SET-UP:

December 7: Dawn Kramer
December 14: Marla Zumann
December 21: VerJean Detert
December 24: Deb Kluetz

December 24: Dawn Kramer
December 28: VerJean Detert

January 4, 2026: Marla Zumann
January 11: VerJean Detert
January 18: Deb Kluetz
January 25: Dawn Kramer

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:

December 7: Scott Kufahl
December 14: Sharon Hunter
December 21: Lynn Schulz
December 24: Emma Schumitsch
December 24: Sherri Bagby
December 28: Lette Becker

January 4, 2026: Sherri Bagby
January 11: Lette Becker
January 18: Sharon Hunter
January 25: Joan Heahlke

COMMUNIONWARE WASHERS:

December 7: Neil & Sue Juedes
December 14: Lonnie & LeAnn Lewis
December 21: Deb Kluetz / Dawn Kramer
December 24: Bob & Pat Seivert
December 24: Lynne Santangelo
December 28: Lonnie & LeAnn Lewis

January 4, 2026: Neil & Sue Juedes
January 11: LeAnn & Lonnie Lewis
January 18: Deb Kluetz / Dawn Kramer
January 25: Bob & Pat Seivert

USHERS:

December 7: M & C Vaningan / Sharon Hunter
December 14: M & L Heyne / Matt Schumitsch
December 21: S & D Kufahl / Steve Wendorf
December 24: E Zabel / B Lampe / D Chapman
December 24: N & S Juedes / Jenny Blaschka
December 28: M & L Heyne / Matt Schumitsch

January 4, 2026: M & C Vaningan / Sharon Hunter
January 11: S & D Kufahl / Steve Wendorf
January 18: E Zabel / B Lampe / D Chapman
January 25: N & S Juedes / Jenny Blaschka

Subs: Shawn & Jenny Blaschka, Lowanne Brokaw, Matt & Lori Heyne, Sharon Hunter, Sue & Neil Juedes, Deb Kluetz, Deb Kufahl, Mike Vaningan, Earl Zabel

THE LANTERN

will have a new distribution schedule beginning with the November issue. The purpose of the change is to have the Lantern in your hands before the first of the month so you have the opportunity to plan with knowledge of the entire month's calendar. The schedule for the next three months follows:



The January Lantern will be mailed December 23, 2025 with a December 17, 2025 deadline for submitting information for the January issue.

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation in meeting the designated deadlines for providing information to be printed in the Lantern.

FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, OCT. 13, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

Members Present: Jenny Blaschka, Karen Czechowicz, Angela Greenfield, Cindy Hermel, Michael Klapperich, Kalynn Pempek, Dina Santangelo, Mike Vaningan, Marla Zumann, Scott Kufahl (guest)

Members Absent: Carla Baumgardt, Neil Juedes, Sherry Larson, Russ Michalski, Nicholas Schumacher, Lois Stasko, Pastor Mary Zupansic

Angela Greenfield led the opening devotions.

Reports:

September Meeting Minutes: The September Council minutes were reviewed. Kalynn Pempek moved and Jenny Blaschka seconded a motion to approve the September minutes. Motion passed.

Financial Reports: September Financial Reports were not available.

Committee Reports:

- **Pastor's Report:** Nothing to report.
- **Parish Ed** – Working on Christmas program.
- **Worship & Music** – The September 28th event by Dan Larson on understanding how the organ works at First English was attended by more than 25 people. Saint Andrews will host the Thanksgiving service with First English and Good Shepherd on Wednesday, November 26 at 6:30 p.m. People will be encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to be placed at the altar for a blessing. An anthem has been selected for a combined choir. Advent services may include a service of lessons and carols. On Christmas Eve, we typically had two services at 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. The Christmas Day service has been pretty sparsely attended and we are still considering if we should offer. The past Christmas carol history service was typically done the Sunday between Christmas and New Year's. New Year's Eve services have been discontinued. We discussed with other committees if busy bags for children were being checked and restocked. Jenny Blaschka said she would have the youth go through all of the bags to address this issue. Discussed setting guidelines and time limits for booklets, items in baskets, and boxes that are set out in the Narthex and cloakroom. Also discussed some possible guidelines for notices in bulletin.
- **Stewardship** – Nothing to report.

- **Church & Society** – Will assist Decca with the Women’s Community food drive on November 3. Plan to help the Children’s Imaginarium fund raiser in February to raise money to provide free admissions and camps.
- **Property** – The Technology Committee has asked the Property Committee to look at the three printers we currently own in the office and downstairs. Working with EO Johnson for an estimate for replacements including a colored copier. Gutters are scheduled to be cleaned at the end of month. There will be an outside yard cleanup October 25 prior to the City leaf collect. There will be a note put in the bulletin to remind people to check doors when departing the building as some doors remain ajar if not manually closed. Will be putting out a shoveling schedule. Tile replacement is still being discussed. Carpet cleaning is needed. Suggested renting machines and having a volunteer day to complete. Jenny Blaschka is in the process of getting quotes for another wider vacuum cleaner. She also suggested a container for toys used in Sunday school that can be sanitized after class. The Cedar Street doors and security system are completed and fully funded. Other project either completed or scheduled for completion are new ceiling fans, down spouts and window well covers. Mike Vaningan move and Dina Santangelo seconded a motion to close out the loan. Motion passed.
- **Youth** – Mission Sundays are scheduled as follows: November Baby’s Place, December Women’s Community, and January Salvation Army.
- **Wage & Policy** – Nothing to report.
- **Fair Stand** – Nothing to report
- **Treasure Sale** – Mini-Christmas sale will take place in November.

Old Business:

- **Thanksgiving Service** – Wednesday, November 26 at 6:30 p.m. Thanksgiving Eve worship will be held at Saint Andrews

Lutheran Church in partnership with Good Shepherd and First English Lutheran Churches. There will be a food drive to collect canned goods that will go to the Neighbors Place, as well as loose monetary donations to the Wausau Marathon County Homeless Shelter.

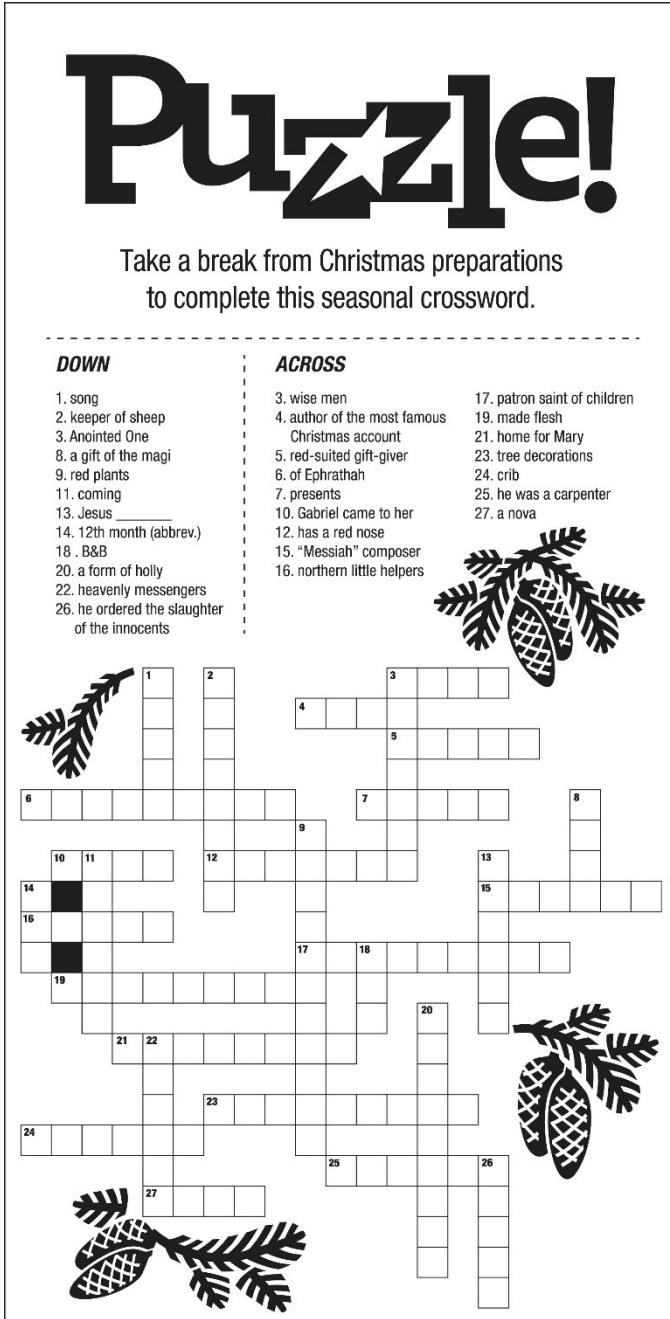
New Business:

- **Wisconsin River Valley Annual Meeting October 18, 2025 10:00 a.m.** – The meeting will be held at Saint Andrews. Each congregation can send two delegates along with a pastor.
- **Tax Exempt Status** – FELC has tax exempt status, which can be applied to the purchase of goods or services. Cindy Hermel handed out a form that can be used up front for purchases.
- **Advent Special Offering for ELCA World Hunger** – Council agreed to continue with the special offering for ELCA world hunger during the advent season. Special envelopes can be made available in the narthex.
- **Communications** – Cindy Hermel asked for suggestions for better methods of communication that are currently not in place.
- **Lantern Deadline/Distribution** – Discussed possibilities for methods of distributing the Lantern that might be more cost effective. Further considering is needed. A number of members have requested receiving the Lantern before the first of the month to better participate in events listed on the calendar. Council agreed to bump up the publication date so people receive the Lantern by the 1st of the month.
- **Mini Food Pantry** – The food pantry transition has gone well. Cindy Hermel suggested a smaller easy-to-build pantry. There were no objections to going with the small pantry.

Next Meeting Date: Monday, November 17, 2025

A motion to adjourn was made by Jenny Blaschka and seconded by Dina Santangelo. Meeting adjourned.

Closing devotions by Angela Greenfield
Karen Czechowicz, Recording Secretary



Answer: DOWN 1. carol, 2. shepherd, 3. Messiah, 8. gold, 9. poinsettias, 11. Advent, 13. Christ, 14. dec, 18. inn, 20. mistletoe, 22. angels, 26. Herod, ACROSS 3. magi, 4. Luke, 5. Santa, 6. Bethlehem, 7. gifts, 10. Mary, 12. Rudolph, 15. Handel, 16. elves, 17. Saint Nick, 19. incarnate, 21. Nazareth, 23. ornaments, 24. manger, 25. Joseph, 27. star

MARTIN LUTHER VIEWED ADVENT

as a time for God's proclamation of Christ's arrival, emphasizing both his first coming in humility and his future second coming. He saw the season not primarily as a period for human preparation, but as a focus on the grace of God coming to a world captive to sin. Luther taught that the humility of Christ, like his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, was not a sign of weakness but the very confirmation of his role as a Savior who offers forgiveness and righteousness, rather than earthly power.

Key themes in Luther's Advent message

- Proclamation over preparation: Instead of a focus on human works, Luther's Advent is a season of God's proclamation and a call to faith.
- The humble king: Luther highlighted that Christ came as a humble king, riding on a donkey, and that believers should not be offended by his unassuming appearance but should trust in the message of salvation he brings.
- Spiritual vs. earthly advent: He stressed that Christ's physical advent in the flesh was to enable a spiritual advent of faith in believers, freeing them from the bondage of sin and law.

The gift of Christ: Luther shifted the focus from saints to Christ as the ultimate giver of gifts, which influenced the tradition of the "Christkind" or Christ Child bringing gifts, according to this Reformation 500th Anniversary article.

