

Amaz^{ing}!News

DECEMBER // 2020



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM ZOAR LUTHERAN CHURCH | WWW.ZOARLUTHERAN.COM

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⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in

the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

— **Luke 2:8-20**





from
Pastor Tim

Senior Pastor

pastortim@zoarlutheran.com

WRAPPED IN FLESH

I love Christmas – the whole shebang. The songs, decorations, hymns, foods, gatherings, worship services, candles, family. But I also deeply love Advent. These four weeks before Christmas help us get prepared. I need to get my “house” ready for the return of Jesus and the end of death and brokenness and grief. I need to get my “house” ready for the awesomeness of the birth of Jesus.

So, I really don’t like celebrating Christmas until after Advent is over. After all, the “12 Days of Christmas” don’t begin until December 25, and conclude on January 5, the night before The Epiphany. I’m not even in favor of Christmas items in stores before Thanksgiving! You can imagine the conversations in connections with those who want to go right to Joy to the World, when it’s not even Christmas, just Advent.

Then Covid-19 struck. The isolation; the fear; the progression of the disease; the sickness of friends and members; the unknown tomorrow; the changes in worship style and placement; the weight of depression around the world; the inability to truly enjoy the theater or a restaurant or a big event; the masks, necessary but...; the way these days keep us separated as well as opening our eyes (again) to the brokenness and injustice between races. “How Long, O Lord, How Long?”

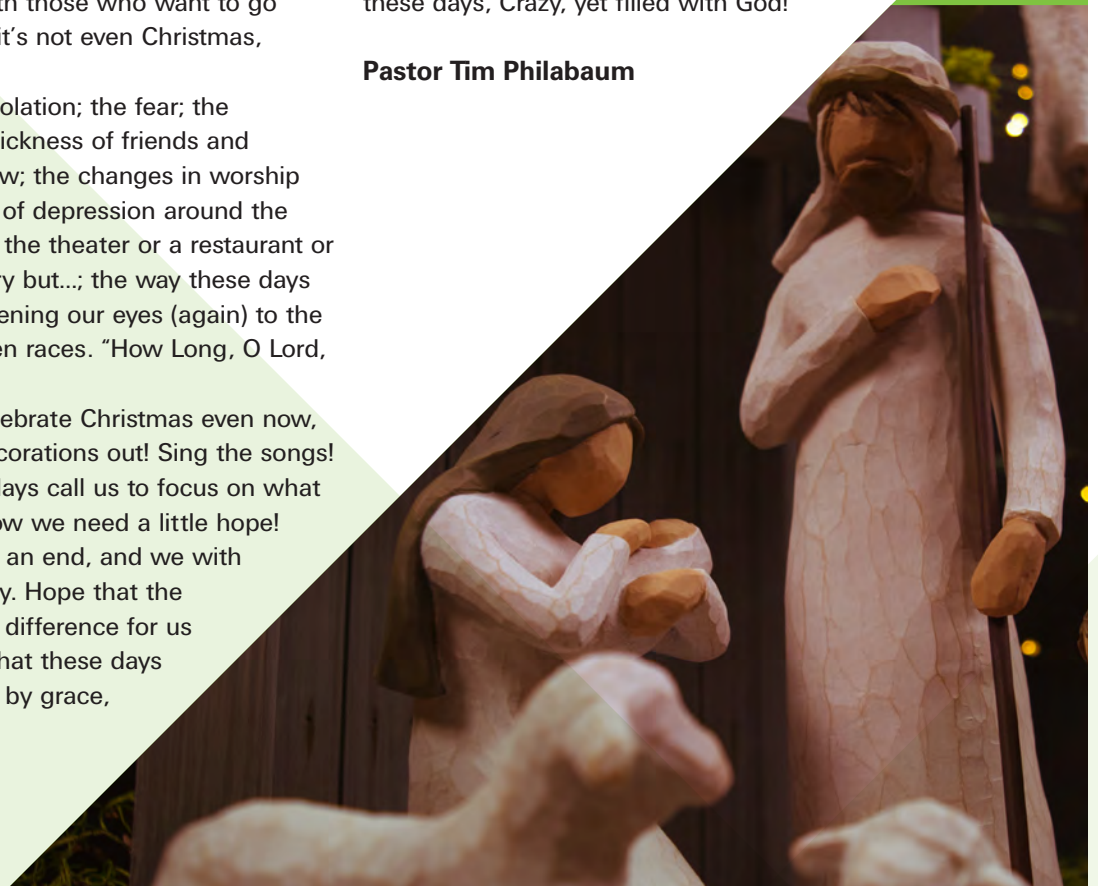
This year, I am thrilled to celebrate Christmas even now, before Thanksgiving! Get the decorations out! Sing the songs! Light the candles. These Covid-days call us to focus on what is really important – and right now we need a little hope! Hope that this time will come to an end, and we with gather together (differently) in joy. Hope that the precautions we take will make a difference for us and for those around us. Hope that these days are not defined by a disease but by grace,

forgiveness, family, joy. Because when God wrapped God’s self in flesh, and then 30 some years later God’s dead flesh rose from the grave God promised God’s presence here and now and reminds us that all things are in God’s hands of grace. As Paul wrote in Romans, “All things work together for good.”

Yep- bring on the tinsel! Put up the trees. Jesus is here, right in our midst. God’s love is so much stronger than Covid, God’s family through Zoar is so much better connected than Covid, and God’s hands hold all of God’s people in joy.

Blessings to you, sisters and brothers in these days, Crazy, yet filled with God!

Pastor Tim Philabaum



A SEASON OF WAITING



from
Pastor Cindy
Interim Associate Pastor
pastorcindy@zoarlutheran.com

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way.
(Matthew 1:18)

Do not be afraid; for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.
(Luke 2:10-11)

Tis the season to focus on the reason for the season... the coming of the Lord...JESUS, our Messiah. He has been promised to us, for us and is with us already. Praise God! Both the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke bring us this good news that we celebrate each and every Christmas Day. My grandkids tell me each year Christmas is the day we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Yes, I tell them and what a celebration it is! Happy Birthday Jesus!

So here we are in the beginning of December in the "Season of Advent," waiting for Jesus' birthday. Often churches focus on hope, peace, joy, and love on the four Sundays before Christmas. Special candles are lit, and special hymns are sung as we await the coming of the Christ Child in the manger. And of course, we are also waiting for the second coming of the Lord. Our scripture readings from the Holy Bible will guide us as we wait.

A season of waiting...anticipation...and expectation. And this year is most important to hold onto hope, peace, joy, and love as we experience a different kind of Advent Season. This year has been like no other that I or any of us have ever experienced. Unfortunately, we have endured 9 long months of the Coronavirus pandemic. I am saddened by this. I am weary of this. I miss seeing beloved family members. I miss our family gatherings. I mourn over the great heartbreak and losses many folks have had to endure. Everyone in the whole wide world that God created has been deeply affected.

Yet, as believers in Jesus Christ our beautiful Lord and Savior...may we all focus in the coming days on the hope, peace, joy, and love our Amazing God gives us. Each of us can personally choose to be the light of Christ for others in our families and communities. More than ever before people need God's hope, peace, joy, and love to be part of their lives.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, may we trust the many promises of the Lord God and be ready to share the good news of great joy: Emmanuel is born. God is with us. We are never alone. And again and again on Christmas Day and every day after, God blesses us with hope, peace, joy, and everlasting love with the best gift ever: Jesus our Lord, Savior, and Messiah.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!
In Christ, Pr. Cindy



GATHER/GROW/GIVE

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Even in pre-Covid days the Christmas season has been a difficult one for many of us. Memories of beautiful Christmas long ago never to return, or memories of painful Christmas that still haunt us each year, or the empty awareness that there are those who cannot celebrate with us this year because they are in God's hands. And in these days, with Christmas music and decorations everywhere, we may think that we should be "happy," when we really aren't.

This year, on Sunday, December 13, at 1pm we will offer a time a prayer and remembrance at our "Blue Christmas." Candles will be lit, the gospel will be heard, loved ones will be remembered, and we will hear again how God is with us always.

So come, bring your burdens to the gift of the Christ Child, whose loving arms are open to us, and to all!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Zoar is calling our members together for a Congregational meeting on Sunday, December 20, at 12PM. The purpose of this meeting is to vote on financing certain HVAC changes.

The plan is to have this open meeting for those who are able and wish to attend in person, but we will also open a Zoom link so that many others may join us online. More information, as well as the Zoom link, will be shared in the Z-Blast and Worship Bulletins.

DECEMBER ADVENT SCHEDULE

Advent II

Saturday, December 5, at 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 6, at 8:30, 9:45 and 11:00 a.m.

Nativity Walk-Thru

Sunday, December 6, at 6:00 p.m.

Advent III

Saturday, December 12, at 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 13, at 8:30, 9:45 and 11:00 a.m.

Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 13, at 1:00 p.m.

Nativity Walk-Thru

Sunday, December 13, at 6:00 p.m.

Advent IV

Saturday, December 19, at 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 20, at 8:30, 9:45 and 11:00 a.m.

Virtual Advent Service led by our Youth and Families on YouTube

Sunday, December 20, at 8:00 a.m.

Nativity Walk-Thru

Sunday, December 20, at 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Eve

Wednesday, December 23, at 6:00, and 8:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24, at 2:00, 4:00, 8:30, and 11:00 p.m.

All four services complete with carols, candles, and Communion

First Sunday of Christmas

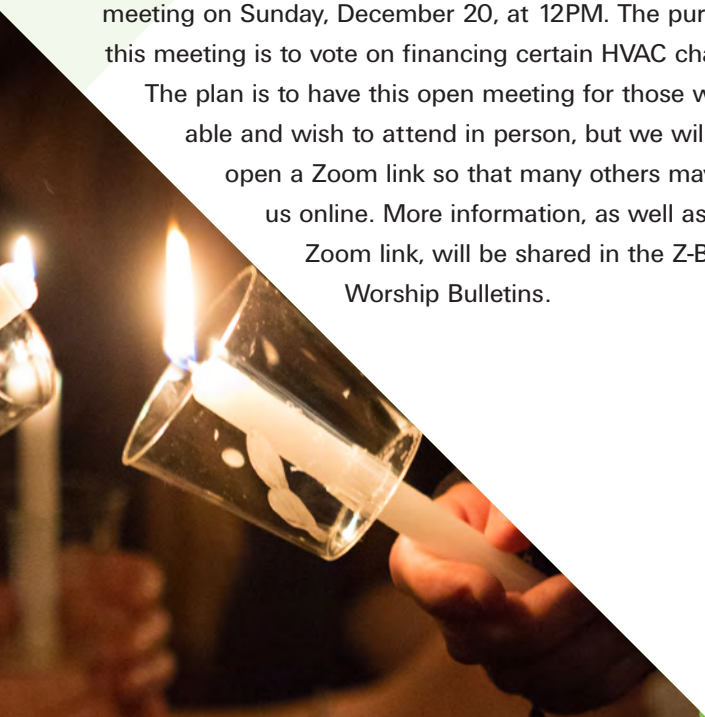
Saturday, December 26, at 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 27, at 8:30, 9:45 and 11:00 a.m.

Second Sunday of Christmas

Saturday, January 2, at 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 3, at 8:30, 9:45 and 11:00 a.m.





NATIVITY WALKTHROUGH

Zoar Lutheran Church will offer a Christmas Candlelight Walk through its decorated worship spaces every Sunday from 6-7pm, beginning Nov. 29 until Dec 20. The walk will provide an opportunity for families to experience the Christmas story together, where all the senses can absorb feelings of peace, calm and generosity.

Guests will meet in the decorated Family Life Center, receive a candle, and hear a short message about Christmas from Pastor Tim Philabaum. Timed for social distancing, families will then be dismissed to follow the Christmas Walk where Fontanini Nativity figures and accessories illustrate the events leading to the birth of Christ. The 12" figures were donated by the estate of Art and Norma White. Buildings for the set were built by Susan Hughes with other elements created by the Zoar Arts Committee. Favorite carols of the season will be provided by Omaldo Perez in the sanctuary. A small treat waits for children at the end of the walk which exits onto Sandusky Street. On some Sundays, horse and carriage rides around the block will be available.

The Sunday evening Christmas Candlelight Walk is free and open to the public. Zoar members may also enjoy the walk after church services; however, the full experience is better in the evening when candlelight is more effective. Masks are required in the building and social distancing will be observed. For more information, contact the church office at 419-874-4346 or email pastortim@zoarlutheran.com.

\$300 DEDUCTION AVAILABLE

You may not know that there is a special tax advantage this year to encourage giving of at least \$300 to charity. The CARES Act passed by Congress last March will allow those who do not itemize on their taxes to deduct up to \$300 on next year's taxes for gifts made to charitable organizations like Zoar Lutheran Church. The deduction is only for gifts of cash made in calendar year 2020.

Many of you have already given more than \$300 and for that we are grateful. The pandemic has taught us that there is tremendous need right now—in our congregation, in the community, and around the world. Every gift and every giver strengthens our shared ministries to nurture faith, care for our community, and share God's Good News throughout the world. Thank you for giving.

To qualify for the CARES Act deduction and to allocate funds as designated above, gifts should be received at the church by December 31, 2020. Send check to 314 E. Indiana or give online at www.zoarlutheran.com.

Retirement Card Shower

In honor of Dale Nordahl's retirement this month, we would like to "shower" Dale with congratulations, blessings, and well wishes through the mail, since we are not able to celebrate with an open house. In these last weeks of December, we would love to fill her mailbox with cards, notes, or other gestures to express how much we appreciate her faithful service to Zoar members and families. Dale has served the Zoar office for 15 years. We are so grateful for the impact she has had here at Zoar. She will be missed!

You can send cards to Dale Nordahl at the following address:

10402 Avenue RD
Perrysburg, OH 43551



from
Omaldo
Cantor

operez@zoarlutheran.com

For centuries Advent has been understood as a time of preparation and discovery. As we get ready for Christmas, we ready our homes, and more importantly, our hearts to welcome Jesus anew. During this year's preparations, we will do well to remember that Mary and Joseph were also readying themselves to travel in the weeks before Jesus' birth. The great Roman census was about to take place, and it was to include everyone in the Empire.

Regarding this context, theologian Thomas G. Long once wrote, "The writer of Luke is careful to remind us that the day of Jesus' birth was not a holy day, but a working day. Jesus was born not during a worship service but a tax census. The day when Jesus was born was a time, so to speak, of the ringing of cash registers, people standing in long lines to beat the deadline, snarled traffic, and crowds so thick that there was not a hotel room to be found."

Friends, as we go about our business and continue to live in uncertain times, perhaps preoccupied with what the future may hold, I pray that we may see this God who comes to us in the middle of the commotion and ordinariness of daily life. And let us be ready! Like Joseph and Mary, we too are bravely engaged in the most significant census of our lives: "We isolate ourselves so that when we can get back together, no one is missing."

Peace,
Omaldo



DECEMBER YOUTH EVENTS

December 6

Gingerbread House and Ornament Making 4-5PM (Supplies will be provided via drive by pick up! Sign up required!)

December 13

Service Sunday! 4-5PM Leading Families Home Shopping Project (Details TBA)

December 20

Virtual Youth and Children's Worship Service Airs at 8AM via YouTube
Community CHRISTMAS LIGHT SCAVENGER HUNT! DETAILS TBA
(Open to all Youth, Children and Families)

December 27

Merry Christmas! No Youth Group!

Current Sunday School Operations

After reviewing the recent Sunday School Parent Survey and assessing the situation in our community, Life Long Learning and Youth and Young Adult Committees have decided to continue operations remotely through the month of January. Sunday School for PK-4th Grade students will continue at 10AM via Zoom and 5th-12th grade Sunday School will take place in conjunction with youth group via Zoom at 4PM.

Winter Youth Group Events

All December and January Youth Group events will be held remotely, but that can't stop us from growing in our faith while having fun together! These events are open to all 5th-12th Grade Youth and will be held via Zoom at 4PM on Sundays! Several hands-on activities have been planned! Registration is required. You can learn more in your Weekly Update emails from Amanda! Wish to be added to this list? Please email Amanda at arich@zoarlutheran.com.

Advent-in-a-Box

Children's ministry families (PK-4th grade) should expect a special delivery to kick off the advent season during the week of November 29th-December 5th. An advent-in-a-box kit will be delivered to you to observe the season in devotion, crafts and fun together at home as a family.



Advent Workshop 2020/Reverse Advent Calendar

This year we workshop in service! Families are encouraged to create a Reverse Advent Calendar. What does this mean? Families will decorate a box for the holidays, then each day, during the month of December, they will add a non-perishable item to the box. During the week of December 28th families are asked to return their decorated box and collection of items to Zoar where they will then be delivered to Perrysburg Christians United for food distribution. A list of suggestions will be included in the Z-Blast! All are welcome to participate in this advent food drive!

Youth and Children's Virtual Worship

We may not be able to have a Christmas Pageant this year for our children's ministry, but that can't stop us from having a children and youth-led worship! To make this happen we need YOUR help! Families are asked to volunteer to read the Christmas story, scripture readings and pray via video for a special youth and children's led virtual worship during the season of Advent. If you would like to help, please let Amanda know ASAP. This worship service will air on Advent 4, December 20th, 2020.

Zoar Community Christmas Light Scavenger Hunt

During the week of December 20th, families are encouraged to partake in the Zoar Community Christmas Light Scavenger Hunt. Take a "sleigh ride" through Perrysburg to debunk the clues leading you to some of THE BEST lights in our community! Stay tuned for more! Families with awesome Christmas Lights are encouraged to let Amanda know to be included in the hunt!

Leading Families Home Gift Giving 2020

Each year, Zoar Youth and our congregation adopt several families to provide Christmas gifts for from the Beach House Shelter in Toledo. The Beach House is a shelter that is administered by Leading Families Home (formerly known as FOCUS). Leading Families Home in conjunction with the Beech House, provides shelter for homeless women and their children. In addition to a temporary home, Leading Families Home helps in finding those they serve their own permanent home. Like past years we will again be adopting families to donate gifts too. These requests will come in the week following Thanksgiving and should be returned during the first two weeks of December. In addition, to Christmas gifts the shelter has requested gift of socks, sweatpants and tops of various sizes. Please stay tuned for how you can help as donations requests come in! Please contact Amanda at arich@zoarlutheran.com with any questions.

from
Amanda
Director of Youth Ministries
arich@zoarlutheran.com

Dear Friends,

Happy Advent! During this season of preparation and waiting, we at Zoar have found ways to provide fun and remote ways to share in fellowship and service. While the season looks different this year, I look forward to spreading joy with our youth in making Christmas goodies and in present-hunting for our friends at Leading Families Home. The world we currently live in can often times seem dark and distant; however, I encourage you to find joy in your blessings. Perhaps this means joining us for one or more of the events mentioned here! Remember that you are LOVED more than you could ever imagine! Get out there and PREPARE for JOY!

Peace,
Amanda Rich

Z O A R C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S H I G H L I G H T S

DECEMBER // 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 3:14PM Prayer with Staff 7PM LLL	2 11AM Staff 6PM Confirmation	3	4 1PM Book Club	5 6PM Worship
6 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship 6PM Nativity	7 6:30PM Comm 6:30PM Property 7PM Social Min.	8 3:14PM Prayer with Staff 7PM Stewardship	9 11AM Staff 6PM Confirmation Class	10	11 1PM Solo Again	12 9AM Feed Our Families 6PM Worship
13 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship 1PM Blue Xmas 6PM Nativity	14	15 3:14PM Prayer with Staff	16 11AM Staff 6PM Confirmation	17	18	19 6PM Worship
20 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship 12PM Cong. Mtg 6PM Nativity	21	22 3:14PM Prayer with Staff	23 6:00, 8:30PM Worship	24 2:00, 4:00, 8:30, 11PM Worship	25	26 6PM Worship
27 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship	28	29 3:14PM Prayer with Staff	30 11AM Staff 6PM Confirmation	31	OUR 85+ MEMBER OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS: December 3 Liz Kaczar December 5 Arlene Knapp December 18 Ester Speck December 24 Betty Creps December 28 Ann Lieder December 29 Jane St. John	

for a complete list of events, please check
the Z-Blast for weekly announcements

ZOAR STAFF

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum
Interim Associate Pastor: Rev. Cindy Ritter

Cantor: Omaldo Perez
Director of Youth Ministry: Amanda Rich

Administrative Manager: Dale Nordahl
Secretary: Suzanne DeLaney
Custodian: Paul Cannon
Communications Assistant: Sonia Krolak

WE WISH TO THANK OUR SPONSORS

Would you like to place a birthday announcement or congratulatory message in the Zoar monthly newsletter? Send an email to communications@zoarlutheran.com for pricing and availability.

Deadline is the 5th of the preceding month!

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Business Card Size

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THIS SPACE AVAILABLE



**"Comfort, comfort my
people, says your God."**
– Isaiah 49:1

**314 East Indiana Avenue
Perrysburg, Ohio 43551
419.874.4346
www.zoarlutheran.com**

**Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum
Senior Pastor

Rev. Cindy Ritter
Interim Associate Pastor**

Worship times:
Saturday: 6 PM
Sunday: 8 AM Virtual Worship,
8:30, 9:45 & 11 AM
Youth Sunday School at 9:45 AM

Be
AmaZed!

www.zoarlutheran.com

