

## ***“Are you ready for Christmas?”***

We so often ask our friends, our family, even strangers this question this time of year. And, I can't help but wonder if it's a trick. Can we really be prepared for Christmas? I don't see the preparation in that first Christmas. Mary wasn't planning for it. Joseph was certainly caught off guard to say the least. They forgot to make hotel reservations and so they welcomed their infant boy into a world filled with political angst many miles away from the comforts of their home.

The Christmas story is filled with elements of surprise, the unexpected, and even the unprepared. No matter how well we had prepared for the birth of baby Elliott — we couldn't anticipate all his birth meant for our family. Yet we find ourselves in this Advent season full of joy and love with his presence.

This season at Good Shepherd, we're spending some time in worship exploring the gifts of Christmas that we might share with the world. Not all the gifts of the season come with ribbons and bows. Some of the best gifts are the things God will do in our lives come Christmas morning.

Do you recall the sense of curiosity, anticipation, joy, and hope for what Santa might bring? That is what the gift of Christ is all about. It's the possibility of being surprised by love, joy, and peace in ways we can't ever fully prepare for or imagine. It's something we can't do on our own. So when someone asks, “Are you ready for Christmas?” I hope you answer, “probably not” as we wait again for Christ's birth. My advent prayer is you're surprised with a new sense of God's presence in your life and our world this Christmas.

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### **Christmas Eve Worship**

**Monday, Dec. 24  
5 PM**

Join for a candlelight service as we celebrate the birth of Christ together. All are welcome!

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You're invited to

**COGS Christmas  
Dinner**

**Saturday, Dec. 8  
6 PM**

see page 3 for more  
information

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# GIFTING CHRISTMAS

**PREPARE TO GIVE GOD'S LOVE THIS SEASON**

**9:15 AM Sunday School**

**10:30 AM Worship**

Giving worldly material gifts at Christmas time is a tradition for many, and what our world really needs, is more than just presents wrapped under a tree. As Christians, we are called to give the gifts that God brings into the world through the birth of Jesus Christ. The gifts of hope, love, excitement, joy, don't happen without preparation and anticipation. Join us this Advent season as we prepare our gifts of God's love for the world.

**December 9:** *Preparation* | Luke 1:68-79

**December 16:** *Excitement* | Luke 1:46-55

**December 23:** *Expectation* | Luke 3:8-17

**December 24:** *Joy* | Luke 2:1-20

**December 30:** *Ourselves* | Matthew 2:1-12

**Average Presence in  
Worship for November:**

54

**Total Offerings  
in November:**

\$15,850.00

**YTD Receipts vs.  
Expenses:**

\$756.73

## Upcoming Events

- 8th: **AUMM**  
9 AM  
**Christmas Dinner**  
6 PM
- 9th: **Church Council**  
11:30 AM  
**AUM Christmas Party**  
3 PM
- 11th: **UMW**  
9:30 AM  
**Trustees**  
4 PM
- 16th: **Birthday Party for Jesus**  
9:15 AM
- 23rd: **Choir Program**  
10:30 AM
- 24th: **Christmas Eve Service**  
5 PM

## Chair Yoga

Wednesdays at 10 AM

**Pastor's Bible Study**  
Wednesdays at 1 PM

## Lunch Bunch

Wednesday at 11:30 AM

- 12/5: Dixie House  
12/12: Pulido's  
12/19: Skillet 'N Grill  
12/26: JR's Grill

## COGS Christmas Dinner Saturday, December 8 6 PM

Everyone is invited to attend as we share a Christmas meal together including:

Turkey  
Cornbread Dressing  
Mashed Potatoes  
Green Beans  
Corn  
Gravy  
Rolls

Bring yourselves or a dish/dessert to share. Be sure and invite friends and family a **Santa and Mrs. Clause are coming**, too!

## 2019 Planning Meeting

If you are on ministry council, please plan to attend a meeting on **Saturday, January 12** from **9AM to 2 PM**. Please bring your dates for the 2019 calendar. We will also set our annual goals as we seek to make more disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

## Church Office Christmas Schedule

The church office will be closed the following days:



Thursday, December 20, close at noon

Monday-Friday, December 24-28

Monday, December 31, open until noon

Tuesday-Friday, January 1-4, 2019

**NOTE: There will be no pastor's Bible Study on 12-26 and 1-2-2019**

# Christmas Serving Opportunities

## Arlington Urban Ministries Client Christmas Party

Sunday, December 9  
3 PM—4:30 PM

Calling any and all help as we host the AUM party once again. Set up is at 1:15 PM and clean up takes less than one hour. Simply show up and AUM will put you to work!

## United Methodist Men Bell Ringing

Thursday, December 13  
10 AM—3 PM

Come anytime in the hours above to help ring the Salvation Army bell at Kroger (2580 E Arkansas Lane) to collect money in support of shelters, meal programs, Christmas toys, after-school programs, and emergency assistance.

## Cookies for the Troops by Sunday, December 16

Bake any nut-free cookie you like to be delivered to our service people. Place each dozen in a sealable Ziplock-style bag to the church by Sunday, December 16.

## Thornton Elementary Angel Tree

by Sunday, December 16

We have **six** angels left for our school partners. Please consider selecting an angel from the tree, recording your name on the sign up sheet, and then shop away! Bring your wrapped gifts (including your angels name on each gift) back to the church by Sunday, December 16.

## Arlington Charities Christmas Bags by Wednesday, December 12

Grab one of the bags on the bottom shelf of the Collection Center and shop for some or all of the items on the list. Some items have changed from previous year, so be sure to read the information.

Arlington Charities is also collecting new, unwrapped toys for their Christmas Toy Store.

Please bring your filled bags and toys to the church no later than Wednesday, December 12.

## Contact Us

Church of the  
Good Shepherd

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