



## +Christian Symbol+

### NOAH'S ARK

The image of an ark, or boat — often shown with pairs of animals — recalls the story of Noah and the “Great Flood” in Genesis. The floodwaters represent God’s judgment on sin, while the ark reminds us of his gracious power to save and redeem. In this account, Christians see a foreshadowing of our baptism into Christ: “And baptism, which [God’s rescue of Noah and his family] prefigured, now saves you ...” (1 Peter 3:21, NRSV).

# CHAPEL NEWS

Return Service Requested

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
337 Farview Avenue  
Paramus, New Jersey 07652

JANUARY 2025

# CHAPEL NEWS

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

WE MUST BE  
WILLING TO LET GO  
OF THE LIFE WE  
HAVE PLANNED,  
SO AS TO HAVE  
THE LIFE THAT IS  
WAITING FOR US.

— JOSEPH CAMPBELL



## 3,120 MINUTES WITH CHRIST

The years seem to be slipping away...I think everyone can agree to that. We only have a certain number of minutes in each year. Come spend around 60 each Sunday with us. Church is still open between Christmas and Easter!



## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

We'll be holding our annual meeting on Sunday, January 26th at 11:15am, following a shortened 10:00am Worship.

All confirmed members are encouraged to attend. Your vote counts! Hope to see you there!



**CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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# SERMON NOTES FROM PASTOR JONATHAN



*Luke 2:41-52*

**W**e often spend the season of Christmas, and especially the Sunday after Christmas, looking at the very few passages of scripture we have about Jesus' childhood and life before his Earthly ministry seemed to "officially" begin.

And this particular reading assigned for the 1st Sunday after Christmas this year, the story of the boy, Jesus staying behind at the temple and worrying his Earthly parents, fits into the idea of Christmas so well – that Jesus came to us as a human. God chose to live among us as a human, and today's Gospel reading contains a very human story that we can relate to.

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus traveled to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old to attend the festival of Passover – a central religious holiday for the Jewish people. I know personally that I traveled a lot this past week, so I can definitely relate to this part of the story.

But they traveled to Jerusalem, attended the festival, and then on the way back home, they hit traffic and plane delays. No, but as they were walking home, Mary and Joseph realize that Jesus is not with them, they start to worry, and turn around to find him. I can think of many similar stories to this in my life where a child is missing and then is found.

Jesus' situation was similar, but also uniquely different. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were traveling with a caravan of people heading back and forth to Jerusalem for the festival. It was likely that many of the children were gathered together playing with one another so that it would have been easy to not immediately notice that Jesus wasn't there.

It is almost certain that this was also a dangerous journey. The likely route they would have taken was through the Wadi

Kelt – a ravine hundreds of feet deep (not as big as the Grand Canyon) that for generations would have been the traveling path towards Jerusalem. People would walk along the bottom of this ravine, or canyon, or valley – whatever you want to call it – to be protected from the hot sun as they traveled.

However, there also were little caves and crevasses throughout this ravine where bandits or thieves would lay in wait for those traveling alone. This particular path is one that scholars say Jesus would have referred to in his parable of the Good Samaritan (maybe because of this instance and his parents concern), and also could be the place imagined in the 23rd psalm – the darkest valley or the valley of the shadow of death.

So, we can see that it would have been easy for Jesus' earthly parents to be worried and concerned and to rush back to Jerusalem. After searching everywhere, they find Jesus at the temple, and I imagine it went something like this.

Mary and Joseph said to Jesus: "You had us so worried. Jesus Christ, where were you?!? No really, Jesus, Christ, where were you!" Jesus replied: "No worries, I was just spending the weekend at Dad's place." Thankful that Jesus was safe but maybe also rolling their eyes, Mary and Joseph hug Jesus, give thanks for his safety, and head on their way back home with the next caravan.

I think this story is perfect for the Christmas season because it relates to such a central theme of Christmas: Emmanuel, God with Us.

We can see God's presence with worried parents when they need comfort, with community that seeks to help when a child is missing, and in thanksgiving when a child is found. But also, with Jesus, literally God-with-us, we trust that God knows the walk of the human life firsthand and can relate to us where we are.

In this simple story of Jesus as a lost child, we can trust in this truth that God knows the walk of life. God even knows what it's like to be scolded by parents for being lost. God can relate to us in these everyday human experiences and desires to be alongside us in all of them.

God is with us in our worries and concerns as well as our thanksgivings. God is with us when there is danger and when there is safety. God is with us in the miracles and in the everyday. That is the miracle of Christmas, that God is with us, alongside us, and understands us in everything we do and are – comforting us, guiding us and loving us.

So, we continue to celebrate Emmanuel, God-with-us in this season of Christmas and far beyond. Trust that God is truly with you especially in your most deeply human moments and simple shared experiences. God is with you. Emmanuel.



# CHRISTMAS AT CHRIST



Patrick, Noyes "Bart" Bartholomew, Dolores Brickman, Charlie Brown, Tony Calise, Karin Carlough, Mike Chapman, John Claesens, John Cutler, Carol Daley, Carol Doyle, Krista Fuchs, Mary Carolyn Harrison, Fred Hesse, Pat Kelly, Dennis & Jennifer Kruk, Walter Kruk, Kaitlyn Kruk, Hugh Lally, Dolores & Jack Lowack, Marie Lupinski, Linda McFate, Doris Robinson, Danny Rojas, Cathy & Roger Schramm, Michelle Seals, Tina Smith & Family, Dave Splieth, Marge Tomaselli, Lenny van Dam, the Vega Family, Janice & Dave Wedderman and Peter Zingaro



## **Those serving in the military...**

Bryant Rodriguez Cyriax, Devin Vega and Rachel Zarnke

## **Those who can't be with us...**

Carol DeMott, Al & Barbara Frielink and Irma Weishaupt



We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family of Anna Kruk, who passed away on December 26, 2024.

Wishing her husband, Walter and their family strength and comfort in the months ahead.



## MLK ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS

Exactly two months before his assassination, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. On February 4, 1968, the civil-rights icon spoke about how he wanted to be remembered at his funeral. He preferred that people recall not his education or achievements but that he “tried to give his life serving others” and “tried to love somebody.”

Adapting a 1952 homily by J. Wallace Hamilton, King decried the “drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade.” Humans often want to be great and first, as evidenced by the disciples James and John requesting prime seats in paradise. But King urged listeners to focus on the “reordered priorities” of Jesus, who wants us to “be first in love.”

As Jesus showed, “everybody can serve,” King said. Your background or status doesn’t matter, as long as you have “a heart full of grace” and “a soul generated by love.”

## A PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

When my spiritual vision is foggy, help me to find my way.  
 When my understanding is incomplete, open my mind and increase my patience.  
 When my indifference blocks my senses, touch my heart.  
 When worry or fear raise their voices, speak to my faith.  
 Let your Spirit permeate my longings as well as my living and my loving. Amen.

## BIBLE QUIZ

When 12-year-old Jesus stayed at the Jerusalem temple as Joseph and Mary started traveling home, after how many days did his parents find him?

- A. 1 day
- B. 2 days
- C. 3 days
- D. 7 days



Answer: C (See Luke 2:46.)

## JAN

**Lay Assistant | Usher  
Altar Guild | Counter  
Schedule**

<b>JAN 5</b>	10:00am
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Pam Sakala
<b>Usher</b>	Anne Carman
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Lore Braun
<b>JAN 12</b>	10:00am
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Pat Berinato
<b>Usher</b>	Linda Comery
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Marge Tomaselli
<b>JAN 19</b>	10:00am
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Bob Denicola
<b>Usher</b>	Margarete Denicola
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Linda Polise
<b>JAN 26</b>	10:00am
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Bill Jaichner
<b>Usher</b>	Linda Polise
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Gina Lally
<b>Counter</b>	Pam Sakala

## BIRTHDAYS

<b>Chuck Young</b>	1/1
<b>Claire Cyriax</b>	1/4
<b>Dolores Brickman</b>	1/5
<b>Herb Carlough</b>	1/6
<b>Chris Nilsen</b>	1/13
<b>Alyssa Young</b>	1/19
<b>Paul Witte</b>	1/24

# JANUARY 2025

Church (CH)  
Fellowship Hall (FH)  
Family Room (FR)  
Office Building (OB)

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

			<b>1</b> New Year's Day <i>Church office closed</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Crafty Ladies (OB) 10:00am
<b>5</b> Worship Service (CH) 10:00am	<b>6</b> Epiphany	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Baptism of Our Lord Worship Service (CH) 10:00am Council Meeting (OB) 11:15am	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Crafty Ladies (OB) 10:00am
<b>19</b> Worship Service (CH) 10:00am	<b>20</b> Martin Luther King Jr. Day	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Worship Service (CH) 10:00am Annual Congregational Meeting <i>following a</i> <i>shortened church service</i> 11:15am	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

## CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH STAFF AND COUNCIL

**Pastor**  
**Office Administrator**  
**Sexton**

**Director of Music Ministries**  
**President**

**Vice President**

**Council Secretary**

**Treasurer**

**Recording Financial Secretary**

**Financial Secretary**

Rev. Jonathan Westerlund

Debbie Geerlof

Bob Sakala

Michael Wittenburg

Chris Nilsen

Bill Jaichner

Pam Sakala

Chuck Young

Pat Berinato

Marge Tomaselli

### Inward Ministry Team

**Christian Education**  
**Shepherd**

**Worship**

Pam Sakala

Carrie Ralston

Marge Tomaselli

### Administrative Team

**Financial**

**Property**

Chuck Young

Bill Jaichner

Chris Nilsen

### Outward Ministry Team

**Servant**

Anne Carman

Rosemary Chandra

Jan Behnke