



DECEMBER 2023

TIDINGS

The Church of the Good Shepherd
Cashiers, North Carolina

COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS^[1]

Nearly 2000 years of waiting, yet the air is still fully expectant with the contemplation of the coming of Christ. The Presence of God is waiting, waiting to be reborn in us.

If God is ever ready, why might we be hesitating. Advent is the time to reflect on and to prepare for the coming of Christ. Advent is the season we ask to receive what God gives each of us -- the expectant hope of new birth, reconciliation, and the healing that the Presence of God brings. So we can with open arms and open hearts sing, "Yea, Lord we greet thee born this happy morning".^[2]

Advent is also the occasion to consent to Jesus dwelling and increasing in our hearts.

We all experience Advent as a time of preparation – I pray that it is not just the outward visible preparation we all associate with the holidays. I pray for the interior preparation of our hearts to receive Christ. Doing something quiet encourages interior preparation. A moment or moments set apart for silent prayer or a quiet walk will help prepare the way for something new to be born in you.

Additionally, one of the ways we prepare for the coming of Christ is through prayer and attention to our spiritual practice. To that end devotional materials for all ages are available in the back of the church and in Hines Hall or on our website. Pick up a copy and consider starting a new practice or renewing an old one —it's a new year after all!



COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;

from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;

dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,

now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;

by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.



[1] Hymnal 1982 #66 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

[2] Ibid #83 O, Come All Ye Faithful



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 JOHN CANNON
- 2 ROBERT FORTSON
- 3 LAURA BLACK
- 5 LIZ MCCLURE
- 5 WINTON NOAH
- 5 SUZANNE TURNBULL
- 8 JENNIFER RUSSELL
- 9 SANDRA WALTZEK
- 10 CATHY FOSTER
- 11 MARY CONOVER
- 12 BARON HOLMES
- 14 LAUREN TURNER
- 15 GWIN ROBBINS
- 16 CARL BLOM
- 17 MAURICE SPONCLER
- 17 CLARE CRAWFORD
- 18 JERRY HAYES
- 20 GORDON GRAY
- 21 ELEANOR WELLING
- 21 WYLIE HOFFMAN
- 22 GAIL KECK
- 22 M.J. SOLDO
- 23 CARROLL RIVERS
- 26 RAY MAGARO
- 26 DEBBIE JONES
- 26 GUY PETERSON
- 27 JIM SCANLON
- 28 BEN JOHNSON
- 29 SHELIA CRAWFORD
- 29 KAY MAYBANK
- 29 BRIGGS PUSCH
- 31 MARY LOFTIN

TRANSITIONS

New to Good Shepherd

Tom & Martha Davis
Howard & Sara Gaines

Bill Schroder
Emilie Shaw

WCU VOCAL SHOWCASE

November 17, 2023

Vocalists: Darius McLeod, Alex Manley, Valeria Raymond, Dylan Longworth, Kennedy Cox



2023 Kirkin O' The Tartans



- 7 MAURICE & BETTY SPONCLER
- 18 MARTIN & CORABEL SHOFNER
- 19 JOSEPH & KATE GHOLSTON
- 20 RAY & PATTY MAGARO
- 21 DICK & LYNN MEYERS

- 22 BRAD & SHARON VANVICK
- 23 COLLINS & BETTY VALLEE
- 24 TOM & KAREN SNYDER
- 27 CLAY & DEBBIE JONES
- 28 MICHAEL & DONNA BORN
- 31 TODD BROADBRIDGE & ALISON SCHULTZ

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

IF YOUR BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY IS MISSING PLEASE CONTACT ELLEN AT 828-743-2359 OR GOODSHEPADMIN@FRONTIER.COM



THE GIFT OF INCARNATION

How did St. Paul and St. Mark miss it? St. Luke got it. So did St. Matthew and St. John, who gave us some of the best words to understand the divine mystery of what we call the *Incarnation*.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

These words of *Incarnation* from John we read every Christmas Day. (Yes, I know as you read this we are still in Advent, so maybe read this again on December 25!) By the way, December 25 as Jesus' birthday was assigned by tradition, not scripture, as is the word Christmas.

We also call Christmas *The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and we read the *Nativity* story on Christmas Eve. It's what Christmas pageants are made of, the words from Matthew and Luke about angels, shepherds, Mary, Joseph, the babe in the manger. It's all very cozy, cute, tender, and joyful, as most births are.

Even so, the word *nativity* seems too small when held beside the word *Incarnation*. God taking on human flesh, or as we say in the Creed: "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God....For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man."

I grew up at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Athens, Georgia, and since Emmanuel means 'God with us,' this deep truth of Incarnation, God with us, the word becoming flesh became part of me early on. Later on in seminary, the intellectual caught up with what my soul had known. I guess that's how a lot of faith works: *faith seeking understanding*, as the saying goes.

At other times in the church year, and in most of Paul's theology, Crucifixion and Resurrection take center stage. In addition, Paul does not speak of nativity—of baby Jesus—neither does St. Mark. That fact acknowledged, we would have never gotten to Crucifixion and Resurrection and new life if we had not had this first life: the word becoming flesh.

Jesus was not chosen or tapped after his birth, not even at his birth. God's plan for our salvation even predated conception. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1ff). Emmanuel, God with us in ways the word *Incarnation* attempts to hold.

Thus, Incarnation is as equally important as Crucifixion and Resurrection. All three are redemption, grace and gift. Our celebrations this and every December 25 are more about life than they are about nativity and birth itself. A life shared. A life sacrificed. A life redeemed. God dwelling among us, God with us, so that we can be with God, now and forever. Amen.

Rob +

The Reverend Robert B. Wood, Rector
rwood.gs@gmail.com
The Reverend Alison Schultz, Assistant Rector
The Reverend Toby Summerour, Adjunct Priest
The Reverend Steve Hines, Adjunct Priest

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Vestry Officers:

Laura Lankford, Senior Warden Peter Keck, Junior Warden
Irv Welling, Treasurer Ellen Albright, Clerk

Vestry:

Doreen Hastings Sharon Stricker Fred Halback
Mark Quick Vic Brandt
Ruth Russ Kate Gholston
Kevin Rowland Rose Mary Achey

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Staff:

Ellen Albright, Parish Administrator
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Michael Yannette, Director of Music
Donna Patton, Nursery & Office Assistant
Skip Ryan, Bazaar Barn Manager
Cari Sanders, Communications Director

Church Phone: (828)743-2359

Website: www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE



HOLIDAY EVENTS

December 3 | 10am & 12pm
Advent Wreath Making in Hines Hall

December 17 | 10am & 12pm
Tree Trimming in Hines Hall

December 21 | 12pm
Blue Christmas Service

December 23 | 5:30 pm
Christmas Caroling

December 24 | 9am
Advent 4 Service (NO 11am service)

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

December 24 | 3:30 pm
Christmas Pageant

December 24 | 5:30 pm
Lessons & Carols Service
with Holy Communion

December 24 | 10:30 pm
Holy Eucharist, Rite II

December 25 | 12 pm
Christmas Day Holy Eucharist