



Observing the Season of Advent

Dear Friends,

Though the season of Advent has been observed for centuries, the majority of us today no longer really think about it. December flies by with a flurry of activities, errands, and to-do lists, and the “holiday season” oftentimes turns out to be the most stressful time of year.

Sometimes people who genuinely love Christmas ask me why we sing “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” every year, and essentially ask, “can’t we just indulge in what the marketplace has been serving up since Halloween—maybe a little more “Joy to the World?” “I know,” I say, “after all, Santa Claus *is* coming to town.”

It’s tempting to skip past the dark stable, the cold night, and the closed door of the inn. Why is it important to recall those parts of the gospel good news? Why take the time to share in the longing of the ancient prophets who awaited the Messiah with intense hope thousands of years before he was born?

I think we miss something essential in the Christmas celebration if we do not make some room for the waiting and the anticipation of the holy birth.

I realize waiting is counter-cultural. Most people will tell you it’s a waste of time. “Get going! Be doing! What are you waiting for?” I recently reread Henri Nouwen’s essay, “Waiting for God,” where he observed that waiting is hard for us because of our fears. The more afraid we are, the harder waiting becomes. That is why most people skip the waiting part of Advent and fast-forward to Christmas. In our lives instant gratification is ubiquitous. We know how to make wish-lists. We don’t know how to wait.

In our ecumenical book group we are reading an Advent book by Amy-Jill Levine called “*Light of the World*” in which she points out the significance of the Advent season beginning, in the gospel according to Luke, with the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah. They are waiting. Mary is waiting. Simeon and Anna, who were there at the temple when Jesus was brought it, are waiting. In fact, when you think about it, the whole opening scene of the gospel good news is filled with people *waiting*. And right along with each of these people are the words, in some form or another, “Do not be afraid. I have something good to tell you.”

Two things for us to ponder this Advent: First, waiting is never out of nothing. Zechariah, Mary, and Elizabeth were all living with a promise being nurtured inside them, a promise that fed them, that gave them hope, and this promise enabled them to wait. And second, waiting is not passive in scripture, it is active. The seed has been planted—something has already begun. Nouwen again: “Active waiting means to be fully present to the moment, in the conviction that *something is happening where you are*, and so you want to be present to it.”

Waiting requires patience. And waiting is open-ended. We tend to try to control our future—we want the future to go in a very specific direction—we have very specific wishes, and the direction our wish-list takes us is often driven, deep down, by our fears.

But the people in the opening scenes of the gospel good news are not waiting with a wish-list, they are waiting in hope. Waiting in hope requires us to let-go of our wish-list. Listen to Mary, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” —This kind of waiting requires a level of trust, and a radical letting-go.

Remember when Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth? Both are pregnant, and the baby leaps for joy in Elizabeth at being so near to the baby in Mary, even in the midst of waiting.

May that *leap for joy* characterize your Advent waiting this year.

Faithfully ~ Ali



December Mission of the Month—Redwood Empire Food Bank



This neighborhood food bank has been operating for two years. Located in Santa Rosa, CA, it has been operating since the Tubbs Fire in Oct. 2017 and is continuing with the Kincade Fire this Oct. They have helped 82,000 families with groceries and meals to Sonoma County residents.

This recent fire has consumed 77,000 acres, displacing 185,000 people. Eileen Horgan's brother Richard and his family have been among those evacuated twice in two years.

This community has been brought to their knees by the fires. The Redwood Empire Food Bank gives nutrition, encouragement, and hope to the people who want to rebuild their community. The families and community needs your prayers, and is grateful for any help you can provide. Please make checks payable to Caldwell and note Redwood Empire Food Bank on it. For more information, go to Sonamacofire.com.



January Mission of the Month—GLENS FALLS CODE BLUE SHELTER

AT WHAT TEMPERATURE IS YOUR THERMOSTAT SET? IMAGINE YOU HAD NO THERMOSTAT OR EVEN A ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD WHEN THE TEMPERATURE OUTSIDE WENT BELOW 20 DEGREES! IMAGINE BEING HOMELESS ON A COLD WINTER'S NIGHT! THIS IS NOT SOMETHING MOST OF US WOULD LIKE TO IMAGINE, AND YET IT IS WHAT THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS MIGHT FACE WITHOUT THE CODE BLUE SHELTER.



When we think of the homeless, we often tend to think of men with substance abuse or mental health problems. While this is true for some, others are homeless due to domestic abuse, loss of a job, large medical bills or a host of other reasons. The homeless may include men, women, teens, children, the elderly, veterans, or even people with jobs who don't make enough to pay for housing.

Our Caldwell Mission of the month for January is the Glens Falls "CODE BLUE" shelter. Glens Falls CODE BLUE provides emergency overnight shelter to homeless people in the Greater Glens Falls Area. A CODE BLUE night is called when the forecast is for a temperature of 20 degrees or lower (including wind chill) or at least 12 inches of snowfall.

Location: 226 Warren Street, Glens Falls, NY 12804. The Glens Falls Code Blue shelter had a total of 1447 bed nights over the 145 nights they were open. Bed nights represents how many times people slept there. Code Blue is now working with Washington County as well. The shelter has already opened this year with the early bitter cold. They are averaging 28 people a night. They are in the process of expanding their facilities to be able to house more people and provide more services. We will try to schedule a site visit for anyone interested in seeing the progress being made. If you'd like to donate, please make the check out to Caldwell and note "Code Blue" on it, or place your donation in a Mission Envelope found in the pew. You can also volunteer at the shelter or take warm clothing for those in need. Please pray for those who are homeless and those who serve them.

Thank you for your support!



Nativities from Across the Empire

Everyone is invited to meet Dec. 9th for lunch at the Peppermill Restaurant at 11:30. Following lunch, we will go as a group to Parks-Bently Place for a private tour of the nativities at 1:00 pm. Sign up in the coffee room.

Advent Study Opportunity

Come explore the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus on Thurs. Dec 5th from 10:30-12:00. This is a one-time event with discussion, fellowship and light refreshments. All are welcome.

Community Dinner

Please join us for dinner that is being prepared and served by our friends at Sacred Heart on Dec. 4th, 5-6 pm. Free! The next dinner is on Dec. 18th, and will be provided by the Barnsider.

December Coffee Hour Hosts



- 1 - Earl family
- 8 - Fuller family
- 13 - Carol Bayle & Berne Kouba
- 22 - KC Glenn family
- 29 - Jo Anne Pedersen & Ed Kopf



January

- 5 - David Madden
- 12 - Jessica King & Emma Boucher
- 19 - Sarah & David King
- 26 - Corriveau Family



February

- 2 - Denise & David Paddock
- 9 - Jenne Family
- 16 - Patti & Jeffrey Brozyna
- 23 - Mannix Family





Love Feast and Advent Wreath Making Activity

Again this year, we will hold our Love Feast and Wreath Activity on the first Sunday of Advent, December 1st at 5:00 pm in the Middle Room.

Those attending should bring enough sandwiches, whole pieces of fruit and baked goods for their family. The idea is to make the sandwiches special, as if for a friend because all of the food is pooled and shared. (You may not necessarily eat what you bring but if you have a picky eater who only eats what you make, it isn't a deal breaker- come anyway.)

After the feast, we will distribute Styrofoam rings, fresh greens, and candles...all the materials needed to make a beautiful Advent Wreath. If you have pruning shears, bring those along. If you have your ring from last year, bring that as well.

The two hour evening will conclude with a brief Advent reading, songs and the lighting of the first Advent candle.

Come join our Caldwell Family in this meaningful Christmas tradition. Watch for the sign-up sheet or contact Sarah King at (518)798-0615 or scubakings@roadrunner.com if you would like to attend.



Church Wide Cookie Exchange

A church wide Cookie Exchange will take place on the same evening as the Love Feast.

You may do one or both activities. If you plan to do just the cookie exchange, please bring your cookies no later than 7 PM. The exchange takes a very short time in the Coffee Room following the wreath making event. Don't be late!



Rules for Exchange:

Bring 6 dozen of the SAME kind of cookie. They may be on a tray, cookie sheet or box cover whatever is easiest for you to transport.

Also bring a Tupper ware container to collect your cookies in. (You bring six doz. and take home 6 doz. of a mixed variety).



Time to order Poinsettias to help decorate the sanctuary. You may take them home with you following the Christmas Eve Service. You can choose white, pink, variegated, or red plants. You also choose the foil color of red, green, gold or silver. Please place order in the offering plate by 12/8. Make checks out to: Caldwell Presbyterian Church.

	Plant color/ foil color/ how many
6 " Pot—1 plant	\$7.00 _____ / _____ / _____
7.5" Pot—2 plants	\$14.00 _____ / _____ / _____
8.5" Pot—3 plants	\$20.00 _____ / _____ / _____
10" Pot w/greens & twigs	\$40.00 _____ / _____ / _____
12" Pot—4-5 plants	\$45.00 _____ / _____ / _____

Winter Rose Poinsettias with curly bracts

6" Pot—1 plant	\$7.00 _____ / _____ / _____
7.5" Pot—3 plants	\$20.00 _____ / _____ / _____

Christmas Day Community Dinner, Dec. 25 at 4:00
at the Courtyard Marriott

If you or your family would like to join others on Christmas Day for dinner, please call the church office at #518-668-2613 to make reservations.

The dinner is hosted by our church and the Inn at Erlowest.

It will be served at the Courtyard Marriott in Lake George, and you are asked to arrive at 3:30.



DEACON'S CORNER

Thank you to everyone who contributed food and helped to make the Thanksgiving Food Baskets. The Deacon's assembled and served 50 baskets this year! Sacred Heart Church served 50+ baskets.

The Deacons have soup and freezer meals that we provide to folks who are home from the hospital or in need of some comfort food. If anyone makes soup or a larger batch of food that you would like to share and place in the kitchen freezer, please label the container with date and the kind of food that is inside.

Merry Christmas everyone!

Margy Mannix and the Deacon's



Adopt a Family

If you would like to participate, please take a mitten in the coffee room. Buy the gift and place it in an unwrapped box or bag along with the mitten

Please bring it to the church by Dec. 15th. Thank you!

December 2019



ADVENT SCHEDULE

Dec 1 - Advent 1~ Worship with Communion 10 a.m.
 5 p.m. Love Feast, Advent Wreath,
 7 p.m. Cookie Exchange

Dec. 4 - Community Dinner 5 pm

Dec. 5 - Study on the life of Mary 10:30 am

Dec. 8 - Advent 2 ~ Worship 10 a.m.

Dec. 9 - Lunch & Tour of the Nativities 11:30

Dec. 15 - Advent 3 ~ Children's Pageant
 Worship at 10 a.m.

Dec. 18 - Community dinner 5 pm

Dec 22 - Advent 4 ~ Worship 10 am

Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Family Candlelight
 Service of Lessons, Carols

Happy Birthday

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Sara Bunalski | 17 Marybeth Tenne |
| 4 Jessica King | 20 Karen Azer |
| 10 Kim Cornelius | 22 Maggie Earl |
| 10 Sean Mannix | 22 Todd Earl |
| 12 Tom Jenne | 25 Jesus Christ |
| 17 Kathy Duell | |



PRAYER CONCERNS

Karen Azer, Justin, Chelsea & Alex Blanco, Pam Parrott, Gus Hoffman, Bud Steiner, Bill O'Reilly, Len Bunalski, Dee Spencer, Sharon Koshak, Eileen's mother Shirley, Elaine Berninger, Buell Brayton, Patricia Dever, Linda Moxham, Nancy Hollenbeck and Marie, Julianna Potts, Kay Kupa, Bill Tinsen, Marianne McCarthy, Donnie Smith, Ann, Nell & George Brendel, Peg & Les Edwards, John Kohland, Irving Rosado, Dee Spencer, Ephraim Suarez, Pastor Shawn, Marcy, people in Syria, people in Haiti, people in the Bahamas, Dottie Kopf, Kari Haskell, Mary Morrano, Nell Brendel, Chris & Lesley Able, Gretchen, Albert Amrock, Hunsicker family, Marge's coworkers Laurie & John, McCann family, Aunt Natalie, Margaret Sandora's family, Pat's brother Dean, Pat Cornelius, Vulner family, Joey's family.



Pastor Appreciation Thank you Note

Dear Caldwell Family,

Once again your annual ritual of "pastor appreciation month" has blown me away. As we begin our 6th year together in ministry, I can think of no more fitting marker than the beautiful handmade stole you commissioned, with the artistic renderings of a scene of a lake with a fishing boat and net. I shall wear this stole with profound gratitude always for you and for God who has brought us together.

I am extremely excited to use the cross country skis that you provided a gift card for. Jeb and I can't wait to adventure outdoors together.

Thank you also for the soft, warm sweater and knitted hat which is especially cozy on those raw chilly days. Thank you for the movie cards, the wind chime, the ornament, and the candy. Thank you for your notes and expressions of appreciation and kindness, and for your gift cards which are so incredibly generous and which will continue to treat us extravagantly well into 2020.

Jeb, the girls, and I are grateful beyond words to be a part of this family of faith, and we look forward with joy and anticipation to all that lies ahead.

Gratefully,

Ali



DECEMBER NEWS FROM THE HAITI MISSION SCHOOL

STALEMATE IN HAITI

The protests in Haiti continue. The two sides seem locked into an ever-growing struggle with neither side willing to give ground. President Moïse (see picture) says that he is in discussions behind closed doors, but the leaders of the resistance say that they have not been invited to participate. At this point, it seems only the willpower of the two sides or an intervention by an outside force (God???) will begin to help resolve the problem. (A good article on understanding the situation is found in the "*Jurist*". <https://www.jurist.org/news/2019/11/understanding-the-turmoil-in-haiti/>)



Meanwhile shortages of food, gas, electrical power and other necessities continue to worsen. Schools remain closed in cities and towns throughout the country. A friend of ours in Jèrèmie who runs a school was managing to continue by having them walk to school in their street clothes instead of uniforms. However, the resistance eventually figured that out, and she was warned that there would be problems for her if she continued. So she closed the school. The good news for Labastille students is that in the countryside, so far, schools are open much of the time.



Our planned trip to Haiti in December continues to be on hold until things settle down in Haiti. This means that we are dependent on communications with Haiti, most of which hinge on Junior Eustache, who is our contact point in Haiti at this time. So far, Junior has been able to secure food to bring to the school for the meals program.

With the cost of food, the families of our students have been struggling. The U.S. Board has considered this and would like to assist these families with a gift of food for the holidays. Many of you have likely heard of the school backpack program where needy children receive backpacks with food and snacks on weekends and holidays. If we are able to work out the logistics of purchasing and distribution, we plan to do a similar thing for our student families. The difficulty will be trying to figure out the means to actually accomplish this. These things are difficult when you have to work from a distance. We plan to discuss the issue with Junior and ask him to talk it over with the Committee.

MISSION OF THE MONTH

The church which JoEllen and I attend, Caldwell Presbyterian in Lake George, NY, has a "Mission of the Month" program in support of various mission projects. Each month, the mission committee screens and selects a project and provides information to the congregation about it. We try to include local, national and international projects. Recent examples, besides the Haiti Mission School (*our November Mission of the Month*) included emergency funds to the Bahamas, a Presbyterian goat program in Africa, the local Code Blue winter shelter for homeless people, the California fire emergencies and scholarships for our own Caldwell Nursery School. The "Mission of the Month" is a program which our congregation seems to appreciate. It helps to educate them about a variety of needs at home and around the world, and also allows individuals and families to choose the missions they wish to pray for and support. We thank one and all for their continuing support and prayers.

Restavèk: A Definition

Restavèk is a Haitian Creole term for a child from a poor family who is handed over to another family to provide "domestic help," in exchange for a better future. The vast majority of these children are blatantly denied their rights to education, adequate nutrition, rest and recreation.

The word "restavèk" comes from the French "rester avec" meaning to stay with. In Creole, there is no difference between a restavèk who is treated well and one who is treated badly by the family. A restavèk should never be confused with a child in foster care. (Definiton from the Coalition for Haitian Rights)

The Haiti Mission School has a number of restaveks attending due to the fact that we charge no tuition.

Thank you for keeping Haiti, Sabrina and Haiti's other Restavek children in your prayers and thank you for continuing to pray for and support the school.



We wish you a very Merry Christmas!

Christian Ed. Corner

Merry Christmas! We are so thankful for all of the folks who help out with the youth. We have listed some important dates to put on your calendar:

Dec. 1 - Advent Wreath Making/Love Feast and Cookie Exchange

Dec. 15 - Christmas Pageant. Youth please arrive at 9am to rehearse and prepare

Dec. 18 - Community Dinner. Youth volunteers needed to help with setting, serving and clean up. Starting at 4 pm finishing up by 6:30 pm. Come to help at any point during that time. Please sign up if you can bring a dessert.

Dec. 29th & Jan. 5th - No Sunday School Classes

January 12th-****NEW MONTHLY EVENT**** 2nd Sundays Youth Group Meeting with Pastor Ali: Beginning in 2020 we will have monthly Youth Group meetings for kids of any grade who would like an opportunity to discuss bible themes for daily life application. Meeting topics will vary but the format will consist of group discussion, occasional games, prayer, and fellowship.



January 22nd - Community Dinner. Youth volunteers needed to help with setting, serving and clean up. Starting at 4 pm finishing up by 6:30 pm. Come to help at any point during that time. Please sign up if you can bring a dessert.

January 26th - Family Bowling Event. Watch for details in the bulletin.

Please take time to fill out a Stewardship Card

and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the office. You will find one available in the pews. This will help us to plan our budget for 2020. Thank you.

PRESCHOOL NEWS:

It's the Most Wonderful time of the year! We look forward to celebrating Jesus' Birthday! What peace, hope and joy He has brought to this world and we are working to share this with our student's and their families. The Savior of the World is with us, and we are eager to share how each little one can trust Him as their personal Savior.



We look forward to celebrating all month but on December 16th at 10:30 we invite our families and anyone in our church family to come and celebrate Jesus. Thank you for your support and love for the preschool. It is a joy to serve our community.

Merry Christmas! ~Christine Sallstrom

The Seeker

Caldwell Presbyterian Church

71 Montcalm St.

Lake George, NY 12845

All are welcomed into The Caldwell Church Family.

We would love to see you in church on

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10AM!

Contact Information:

Office Number—(518) 668-2613

Secretary Email—secretary@caldwellpres.org

Pastor's Email—pastor@caldwellpres.org

Website— www.caldwellpres.org