

Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church

(Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod)

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Pastor: R. Wayne Morton Ministers: Each and Every Member

The First Sunday after the Epiphany - The Baptism of Jesus January 7, 2018

Welcome

In the name of Jesus Christ, we warmly welcome you to God's house this morning. Especially if you are visiting, we pray that you will feel at home with us and discover the blessing of God's grace in this service.

As We Gather

Jesus began His work for our salvation when He became man at Christmas. He began His active work shedding the first drops of redeeming blood at His circumcision. Now He takes His place alongside all mankind as He stands in the Jordan River. At His Baptism, He receives the Holy Spirit, and a voice from heaven declares, "*You are My beloved Son.*" Beginning now, our Lord lives for us sinless under the Law of God as He does all the way to His ultimate work of deliverance, shedding His blood on the cross. We take comfort that our Savior is with us, right alongside, with His Word and Spirit to enable us to live holy lives by faith and with the boldness of the cross, following Him. Our Baptism is for us the beginning of the new, eternal life that unites us with God both now and forever.

(10:25 a.m.) The Ringing of the Bell

(10:25 a.m.) The Welcome

(The Pastor may invite the people to God's house with the following greeting:

"The Lord be with you." **"And also with you."**)

(10:25 a.m.) Make a Joyful Noise:

#877 "God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven"

(* In honor of our Triune God, we stand to sing the final verse and remain standing for the Invocation.)

* (stand) The Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

(Mt. 28:19)

* (stand) The Confession and Absolution of our Sin

Pastor: When God spoke creation into existence, He saw that it was very good. But humanity, from Adam and Eve to every successive generation, has rebelled against God. When our Lord was baptized, the Father was well-pleased with Him. In our Baptism we were joined to His death and resurrection. As baptized children we are new creations! Let us therefore confess our own sinful rebellion and call on our gracious heavenly Father for pardon and peace.

Pastor: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

People: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore now publicly forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen

The Entrance Hymn: #578 "Thy Strong Word" (vs. 1-6)

* (stand) The Greeting and Prayer of the Day

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

The Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 1:1-5

(God calls a good creation into being.)

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle Lesson: Romans 6:1-11

(Christ's baptism gives us new life.)

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a resurrection like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

* (stand) The Gospel Acclamation ("Alleluia, ..." LSB #173)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

* (stand) The Holy Gospel: Mark 1:4-11

(Jesus is baptized.)

4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore

a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon Hymn: #405 "To Jordan's River Came Our Lord" (vs. 1-6)

The Sermon

We Believe, Teach and Confess: The Apostles' Creed

Pastor: The God who works in the First Article (Creation) is the God who works in the Third Article (Sanctification). In other words, the God who creates is the God who re-creates, who creates faith in us once-created-good, but now fallen sinners. Since God always creates out of nothing (Latin: ex nihilo), we always remember that just as our world is not our work but His creation, so, too, is our faith:

What is the First Article of the Apostles' Creed?

People: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

Pastor: What does this mean?

People: I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

Pastor: What is the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed?

People: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Pastor: What does this mean?

People: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

The Offering

(If you have not already done so, please register your attendance with the Friendship Form at this time and pass it down and back your pew, taking note of the names of those sitting with you and rejoicing in their presence here today.)

* (stand) The Offertory: #806 “Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart”

* (stand) The Responsive Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we praise You for Your whole creation, for the beauty of the earth and for the orderly passage of days. As sin has brought only chaos and disorder to the lives of all, You therefore sent Your Son who, by Your Word and Spirit, has restored Your world

through His cross and resurrection. Bring that same restoration to the lives of all those baptized into Christ that we may live our days in peace and joy. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Guard and bless those You continually send in Your name to proclaim the restoration of life through Your Word and Sacraments. Send Your Holy Spirit upon them as they preach Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, to the world. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Send Your light and truth to guide all in the authority of government that darkness and injustice not prevail but rather justice and peace through the faithful use of the law. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Give courage and comfort to all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or trials. Set them free in the forgiveness of their sins to faithfully look to You, the God of peace, healing, and life. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

(Here special intercessions may be made.
Each petition concludes: *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*)

Pastor: We give You thanks for all those baptized into Christ who have gone before us and are now set free from sin in the presence of Your mercy. In fellowship with all Your saints, bring us to the joys of Your heavenly kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Now hear us as we pray the way our Lord first taught us to pray:

People:

(The Lord's Prayer)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

* (stand) **The Blessing of Our God**

Pastor: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and (+) give you peace (Num. 6:24).

People: Amen.

Closing Hymn: #600 "Mark How the Lamb of God's Self-Offering"

(Tune: ICH STERBE TAGLICH, *LSB* #618 "I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table")

(Lyrics: Carl P. Daw, Jr., b. 1944, Ralph W. Morton, b. 1953)

**Mark how the Lamb of God's self-of-f'ring Our human sinfulness takes on
In the birth-waters of the Jordan As Jesus is baptized by John**

(Refrain)

Lord, may Thy washing in the flood Be for my soul the highest good!

Hear how the voice from heaven thunders, "Lo, this is My beloved Son."

See how in dove-like form the Spirit Descends on God's Anointed Son.

(Refrain)

**From this assurance of God's favor Jesus goes to the wilderness,
There to endure a time of testing That readies Him to teach and bless.
(Refrain)**

**So we, by water and the Spirit Baptized into Christ's ministry,
Are often led to paths of service Through mazes of adversity.
(Refrain)**

**Grant us, O God, the strength and courage To live the faith our lips declare;
Bless us in our baptismal calling; Christ's royal priesthood help us share.
(Refrain)**

**Turn us from ev'ry false allegiance, That we may trust in Christ alone;
Raise up in us a chosen people Transformed by love to be Your own.
(Refrain)**

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Parish Announcements
Organ Postludes

WE INCLUDE IN OUR PRAYERS TODAY:

All those who are sick
All those who continue to receive treatments
All those who have suffered due to wind and rain, fire and flood, ice and snow.
All those who travel
All those who serve
Bob D - as he awaits his transplant surgery
Inter-Mountain Lutheran Church - Pine Valley, CA. Deacon Robert Kulowitch
Living Water Lutheran Church - San Diego, CA. Pastor Steve Duescher
New Hope Christian Fellowship - Show Low, AZ. Pastor Tom Brown
January SS/BC Mission Project - Bread of Life Mission, Holbrook, AZ

MISSION MINUTE "The door is wide open to you, wide open to your witness. "All who have been baptized into Christ Jesus" are dead to all that "old" - dead and buried. We've been raised from the dead! Goodbye, old self; hello, new! And they can be too!

AND SPEAKING OF MISSION, please take a few minutes to welcome those **VISITING WITH US AT SHEPHERD THE LAST FEW WEEKS** If you know them, be sure to let them know how glad you were to see them at worship. And if you don't, make it a point to meet them, to invite them to worship again or to Sunday Bible Class or Ladies' Bible Study or *LifeLight* Bible Study.

Allison, Ben, Jackson and Ellie Richter - Morton, IL. Bethel Lutheran
Amy, Ben, Shaun Cooper - Saginaw, MI. Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Kay Trusheim - Phoenix, AZ. Christ Church - Lutheran
Joe & Linda Richter - Phoenix, AZ. Christ Church - Lutheran
Paul & Carol Trusheim - Fort Worth, TX
Sharon Harvey - Whiteriver Assembly of God
Dana, Randy, Taylor and Ryan Oxley - Cedar Rapids, IA, et al
Lesta Cromwell and Si'Layna Bradley - Pinetop, AZ
Kasey Wade - Phoenix, AZ
Dollie Ringelberg - Fountain Hills, AZ
Jo, Greg, Ian and Ryan Schalow - Show Low, AZ
Abby (nee Walker) & Gary Schultz and the girls
Randy & Erin Deines - Lakeside, AZ

WHERE ARE OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERINGS OFF TO THIS MONTH? We voted in our Sunday School and Bible Class opening last Sunday to support the work of Bread of Life Mission in Holbrook. Bread of Life is far more than just a food pantry or a homeless shelter. Their work is changing lives. Their mission is "to provide spiritual guidance and physical assistance including shelter, food and vocational training to people in need, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to help them recognize and deal with their problems in a life changing" way.

"This is the week that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!"

Sun	1/07	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service 11:45 a.m. - "First Sunday of the Month" Potluck Luncheon
Tues	1/09	5:00 p.m. - NO Confirmation Class (BRUSD break)
Wed	1/10	9:30 a.m. - Ladies' Bible Study 6:00 p.m. - NO <i>LifeLight</i> Bible Study
Sun	1/14	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service 11:55 a.m. - Dorcas Society "Mites for Missions" Coffee Fellowship

LIFE QUOTE OF THE DAY (from Lutherans For Life) "Our happiness, therefore, does not depend on a new year or a changed situation, but upon the Lord and our changed relationship, our deepened growth, in Him and in terms of His will for us ... 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matthew 6:33 KJV)" ®. J. Rushdoony, philosopher, historian, and theologian).

WHAT WAS THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY? Christian Ed. - 16;
Worship - 44 (Members 31, Friends 5, Visitors 8) How many were here because you invited them, will return because you welcomed them?

THIS SUNDAY IS POTLUCK SUNDAY-- POTLUCK "SQUARED," YOU MIGHT SAY, for it's not just the first Sunday of the month, it's the first Sunday of the year! It's a joy to be able to break bread together with those with whom we are one in Him Who is the very "*Bread of Life*." We do it just the way they did in the Early Church; you bring one of your family's favorites, we bring one of ours, and we all share everything together. It happens right after worship, right after fellowship, right here in the fellowship hall. This new kitchen of ours not only has twice the space of the old one, but a double oven, three crock pots, two microwaves, two

refrigerators, a freezer, an island, and counter space all around. You know you resolved to be more active in Church this year. Well, here's your first opportunity! See you there! Better yet, we'll save a place for you.

P. S. And if you happen to be visiting with us this morning, we'll save a place for *you, too!* Please do come join us. It will be our pleasure. We made extra, just hoping you would come.

ATTENTION ALL VOTERS! As you heard last week, this Sunday is our quarterly Voters' Assembly meeting. This is our opportunity to establish our Ministry Plan - to approve our budget - for the upcoming year (2018). There have been a few changes - we've now got this beautiful new addition to heat, and cool, and clean, and maintain, and complete! There *will be* a few changes - we'll have some one-time expenses associated with a change in pastors. Bob the Bean Counter - a.k.a. Bob the [Bean] Roaster - has worked hard with the Elders and President and the Budget Committee (Pastor, Elder, Trustee) to provide the Voters with the best estimate of what the upcoming year of God's grace will look like for us here financially. But you Voters - all your communicant members 18 years or older - will be the ones who will make the actual commitment. So please make it a point to be with us - Sunday, January 8, 2018, right after coffee.

P.S. We can't send our Call paperwork into the Seminary until we've approved this budget; it's got numbers that our new candidate/pastor will see in his Call Documents and Diploma of Vocation. And the deadline is 1 Feb.

LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR (from Lutherans for Life) "John's Baptism convicted every human being - "*all the country of Judea*" (Mark 1:5). No physical incapacities excused anyone. Jesus' Baptism consecrates every human being. God, in giving His Son, identifies with us at our weakest and embraces us at our worst. Even when we don't resemble anything our Maker intended, He doesn't call us "unwanted" or "better off dead." Instead He declares, "*You are my beloved [child]; with you I am well pleased*" (Mark 1:11). In this newness of life (Romans 6:4), Christians can also welcome the least among us." (Prayer: Lord, construct Your kingdom of little ones like us. Amen.)

TO CREATE OR NOT TO CREATE. THAT IS THE QUESTION. That is the question the Supreme Court is being asked to answer. 2012. Charlie and David wanted to be married. Colorado wouldn't have any of it at the time, so they made plans to travel to Massachusetts to get it done. However, they wanted to celebrate back home. So they went shopping for a wedding cake. Now where cakes are concerned, Lakewood's Jack Phillips [Masterpiece Cakeshop] makes masterpieces. But not just for anybody. He's always believed he had the right to turn away individuals or groups - or couples - that in good conscience he couldn't celebrate with. Charlie and David complained. To the Colorado Civil Rights Division. Charlie's mom did, too. To the ACLU. The CCRD found Jack guilty of discrimination under a Colorado law that denies businesses the right to refuse service to any individual or group - or couple - based on sexual orientation. And it decided to sue Jack. After Judge Robert of the Colorado Office of Administrative Courts affirmed the CCRD's finding, the case was appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court. Jack's not denying that Charlie and David have rights. He's asserting that he has rights, too - and big ones, in fact, like under the First Amendment. He's asking the high court to balance the religious rights of him as a commercial baker and artist against the couple's right to equal treatment under the law. Hanging in that "balance" are similar situations with bakers and florists and photographers and event planners and many other Main Street businesses all across the U.S. And all across the U.S., folks are chiming in. Charlie's mom has posted her feelings on the ACLU site. The Alliance Defending Freedom has issued a statement from its senior counsel Jeremy Tedesco: "We are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to ensure that government understands that its duty is to protect the people's freedom to follow their beliefs personally and profession-ally, not force them to violate those beliefs as the price of earning a living." And just last fall, the Justice Department weighed in, arguing in an amicus brief that governments "may not . . . truncate the First Amendment by compelling a person to create a piece of artwork - particularly one that violates the artist's conscience." To create, or not to create. To be *forced* to create, or *not* to be forced to create. That seems to be the question. Pray for the Supreme Court, which has to provide the answer.

"FREEDOM OF CHOICE" IN RELIGION IS A "DIVINE GIFT," THE COUNTRY JUST DECLARED. "Every individual has the freedom to practice their religion." Which country? Switzerland? Canada? The U.S.? How about Bahrain, Saudi Arabia's Muslim neighbor! The declaration - signed by its head of state, and which also condemns preaching hatred, suicide bombing, sexual slavery, and the abuse of both women and children, was to be drafted into law last month.

AND JUST IN CASE YOU HADN'T HEARD:

"THANK YOU FOR REMEMBERING US AT CHRISTMAS!" - Pastor and Beth want you to know how thankful we are for your gifts. Some we read (cards), some we ate (bread and candy), some we decorated (tree), and at least one - the one that came from all of you - we promise we'll find a very good use for. So whether you snuck something under our tree on your own, or joined with everyone else in what amounted to a very generous love gift that you gave us, please know how much we thank you. Christmas is a busy time at our house because of everything at church. But everything you did there - from bulletins, to decorating, to cleaning, to making ready for worship - gave us more time as a family. And more than that, every time you showed up to worship or study or fellowship you affirmed the work we do serving you. We receive all your gifts as Christmas gifts because we know that they are all given in the name of the Christmas Child. Our thank you - and our gift - to you is our prayer that in this new year of God's grace, He will bless you all with the new life His newborn Son came to bring. . . to you, and (through you) to all the world.

"OH, CHRISTMAS TREE! OH, CHRISTMAS TREE!" Our thanks to Wayne Goklish for supplying our fresh Christmas tree this year. It's a beauty! And thanks, to all who stayed late a couple of weeks ago in order to string it with white lights and decorate it with our beautiful Chrismons (CHRISt MONographS).

COPIES OF THE MORTON CHRISTMAS LETTER ARE STILL AVAILABLE - (in green) on the counter just inside the sanctuary door. If there aren't, ask, and we can get you one in short order. *You* may be up to date on the Year of the Mortons 2017, but maybe somebody you know would be interested, so feel free to have/share a copy. And best wishes under God to all of you in 2018.

YOUR DAILY DEVOTIONAL HAS ARRIVED! First-quarter 2018 issues of *Portals of Prayer* are in the tract rack in the narthex. Be sure to pick yours up so you won't miss a single day of daily devotions. And when you do, pick up a copy for someone you know who could use a closer walk with God in this new year of our Lord. (As a silent invitation, our service times are conveniently listed right on the back of each booklet.)

MAY I HAVE THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE?" Yes, you may! You don't even have to be an official member! If we know your name, we'd be happy to keep track of your regular gifts to the Lord here. If you had an envelope last year - a numbered offering envelope - we've set out a box out for you just inside the sanctuary door for the new year. If you don't see your name there, check with Financial Secretary Janie Ringelberg. (If you don't see Jane, see Pastor; he's here most Sundays.) And if your godly resolve this new year is to serve God better with your financial stewardship, then as you pick up your gift envelopes, offer a little prayer asking your gracious God, who gave you His all in Bethlehem's manger, to bless each weekly gift you seal inside those envelopes as your personal thanksgiving and offering to Him, and to His people, and, ultimately, to His world.

KEEP-IN-TOUCH folks & seasonal worshipers and friends of the congregation, we have envelope boxes available for you too - just for the asking. Who to ask? Janie is a good start. Pastor, too. Or an Elder or Council member.

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY. Christmas Eve Sunday morning we were blessed as this congregation of God's worshiping people to be able to welcome Ellie Marie Richter into His family by water and the word. Ellie's grandparents Joe and Linda R. were honored to be able to stand in for her baptismal sponsors, Uncle Matt and Aunt Christalyn Richter. As we have now welcomed this newest member of his kingdom, please continue to remember her in your prayers that our God and Father, who granted her new birth in Holy Baptism and made her a member of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and an heir of His heavenly kingdom, would keep her in her baptismal grace, that according to His good pleasure she may faithfully grow to lead a godly life to the praise and honor of His holy name and finally, with all His saints, obtain the promised inheritance in heaven.

DO WE HAVE YOUR IMPORTANT DATES - birthdays and anniversaries? We do if you've completed a SOTMLC member biographical form. We may well not if you haven't. Wonder why we missed praying for you on your birthday? That could well be the reason. If you'd like us to be able to celebrate with you, please see Pastor or one of the Elders for a form today.

DID YOU HAVE TO BE AWAY FOR CHRISTMAS? DID YOU THINK YOU MISSED SHARING CHRISTMAS WITH US? Well, you *didn't* - at least not *entirely!* Worship bulletins and sermons from both our Christmas services are still available. You can use them to recapture some of the spirit of our Christmas celebration. On the eve of the birth of our Savior, we sang and spoke our way through our traditional Candlelight and Carols service (with the pillar nativity "Unto us is born" cover). In the "I'm Just Sayin' . . . Nothing Less Than God Would Do," sermon, Pastor laid out for us why it had to be Immanuel - "God with us" that God gave us at Christmas. No mere idea, or concept, or notion, not even a word, not even a whole book of words, could answer all the big questions we bring to church on Christmas Eve. And then on Christmas Day (with the manger cover), we celebrated the Light of the world coming into the world. In "We Have Seen the Light," we looked back to answer more big questions: "How many bulbs would it take to light up the outer court of the Temple, . . . a city, . . . the whole world?" Members and visitors, feel free to pick up your copies on the ledge just inside the sanctuary doors or the rack in the narthex. "Keep-in-Touch" family members, "Ask and you shall receive"; tell us what you'd like, and we'll be sure to mail it right out to you. Internet users, we've got copies posted on our website: www.shepherdofthemountains.com. To all of you, may God bless your Christmas worship with the family of which He has made you a part here at Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church in Pinetop.

WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THOSE CHRISTMAS CARDS YOU GOT? How about this idea: Put them all in a pile like a deck of cards and take the top one each night - or put them in a cloth bag and pull one out each night - and include that individual, couple, or family in your daily prayers.