

Shepherd of the Mountains

Lutheran Church (LC-MS)

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Ministers: Each and Every Member

Pastor: R. Wayne Morton

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

January 14, 2018

Welcome

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

The Distribution of the Lord's Supper

Following Holy Scripture, which speaks of the blessing of forgiveness (and therefore life and salvation) for those who discern the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the Supper (Mt. 26:28, e.g.), but warns of harm and judgment for those who don't (1 Cor. 11:27-30, e.g.), we urge all those baptized and catechized individuals (youth and adults) who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you:

repent of your sin;

believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;

affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in/with/under the bread & wine;

and desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.

If you have not previously communed here at Shepherd of the Mountains, please first introduce yourself to our Pastor, in order that all those who will commune together today - who will share the one bread and the one cup - may be assured that we share as well the same confession and understanding.

(Young) children who are not yet capable of such self-examination are nevertheless invited to come forward - not to receive the body and blood of our Savior, but rather, the blessing of our gracious God.

As We Gather

“Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.”

With this invitation, the prophet Samuel opens himself to receive God's Word for His people. In the Epistle, Paul reminds us that we are not our own. Rather, we belong to the Lord because we have been bought with the price of Jesus' precious body and blood given and shed for the forgiveness of sins.

This Jesus is God's first and final Word to all humanity—the Logos incarnate. Born in Bethlehem and heading for Golgotha, Jesus invites people to follow Him. From one disciple to another, the invitation is to come and see the One whom Moses and the prophets foretold—Israel's Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and our God.

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

(10:25 a.m.) Make a Joyful Noise: #397 “As with Gladness Men of Old”

(vs. 1-5)

Welcome

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

“The Lord be with you.” “And also with you.”)

* (stand) The Invocation

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

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Confession and Absolution of Our Sin

Pastor: Beloved in the Lord. Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, imploring him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

People: Who made heaven and earth.

Pastor: I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

People: And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Pastor: O almighty God, merciful Father,

People: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess to you all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended you and justly deserved your punishment now and forever. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely

repent of them, and I pray you of your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being.

Pastor: Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I 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: #807 "When Morning Gilds the Skies" (vs. 1-5)

* (stand) The Prayer of the Day

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

The Old Testament Lesson: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)

(The Lord summons and speaks to Samuel about Eli.)

1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

4 Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" 5 and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

(Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.)

12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

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

* (stand) The Holy Gospel: John 1:43-51
(Jesus calls Philip, who calls his brother Nathanael.)

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”

48 Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?”

Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

49 Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

50 Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

The Hymn of the Day: #682
“God of the Prophets, Bless the Prophet’s Sons” (vs. 1-5)

The Sermon

* (stand) We Believe, Teach and Confess: The Nicene Creed
(from the inside back cover of *Lutheran Service Book*.)

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.)

* (stand) The Offertory Song:

#781 “We Give Thee But Thine Own” (vs. 1, 3)

**We give Thee but Thine own, Whate’er the gift may be;
All that we have is thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.**

**May we Thy bounties thus As stewards true receive
And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our firstfruits give!**

* (stand) The Responsive Prayer

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole Church of Christ Jesus and for a darkened world in need of the Light of the world.

For the outreach efforts of Shepherd of the Mountains congregation, that we would tell the Good News about Jesus without fear of persecution, and that we would be made bold to witness to all that Jesus did and taught, so that, by means of Baptism and life-long instruction in the Word, the Spirit would make disciples of all nations here and around the world, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the Holy Ministry, that God, whose infinite power alone does great wonders, would send down on His ministers and the congregations committed to their care the healthful spirit of His grace and the dew of His continual blessing, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the educational outreach of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, including our seminaries, universities and colleges, high schools, Christian day schools, preschools, daycares, and Sunday Schools, that all the baptized people of God would grow in faith and knowledge, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For all who rejoice, that the Church may thank our good and gracious God for His abundant gifts, asking the Lord of the Church to help us receive all blessings from Him with thanksgiving, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For purity of body, mind, and heart, that the baptized people of God would lead sexually pure and decent lives in what they say and do, reserving intimacy for the spouse alone, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the lonely, depressed and mentally ill, that God, the Lord of life and the Source of the peace that surpasses all understanding may grant peace in Christ Jesus that the world cannot give, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

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

People: Amen.

* (stand) **The Service of the Sacrament** (from *LSB*, p. 160)

The Preface (*LSB*, p. 160)

The Proper Preface (*LSB*, p. 161)

The Sanctus (*LSB*, p. 161)

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (*LSB*, p. 161)

The Words of Our Lord (*LSB*, p. 162)

The Proclamation of Christ (*LSB*, p. 162)

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.

The Pax Domini (*LSB*, p. 163)

The Agnus Dei (*LSB*, p. 163)

A Prayer before Communion

Dear Savior, upon Thy gracious invitation, I come to Your table to eat and drink Your holy body and blood. Let me find favor in Your eyes to receive this holy Sacrament in faith for the salvation of my soul and to the glory of Your holy name; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Distribution

(The white wine in each tray is “non-alcoholic” wine.)

(Children coming forward for a blessing are asked to keep their hands below the communion rail in order to eliminate any confusion for those who are distributing.)

(We encourage all those communicants who intend to come to the Sacrament today to prepare for receiving the Lord's gracious gifts with the Christian Questions found on page 329 of our worship and hymn book, *Lutheran Service Book*.)

(Following Holy Scripture, we urge all those communicants who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you:

repent of your sins;
believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in/with/under the bread and wine;
and, desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.)

A Prayer after Communion

Almighty and everlasting God, I thank and praise You for feeding me the life-giving body and blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send Your Holy Spirit that, having with my mouth received the holy Sacrament, I may with my heart obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

* (stand) The Common Dismissal

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in (+) peace.

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Post-Communion Prayer

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, heavenly Father and King eternal, for You have once again fed and nourished us at Your Table through the body and blood of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Strengthen us through this gracious Meal that we may live without fear and confidently show forth Your love through acts of mercy. Support us in this life and bring us at last to the unending feast in Your eternal kingdom, where You live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Blessing of Our God

*Pastor: 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 (Numbers 6:24).*

People: Amen.

The Closing Hymn: #827 “Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling”

Parish Announcements
A Time of Greeting and Fellowship
Organ Postludes

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MISSION MINUTE: *"Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding." His, not yours.* Don't let an incomplete understanding hold back *your* witness. You know all you need to know . . . to be able to share. "Christ the Savior is born!" Let His Holy Spirit take it from there."

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.

Marty & Debbie Minninger

Marianne Klisares

Brenda Stickler - Concho AZ

Donna Stewart - Show Low, AZ

Bruce & Beth Lynn - Lakeside, AZ

Bill and Sandra Marshall - Rogers City, MI

Western Altaha - Whiteriver, AZ. Open Bible Lutheran Church

Marcus Henry - Whiteriver, AZ. Open Bible Lutheran Church

Dave & Gwyn Goodet

LIFE QUOTE OF THE DAY (from Lutherans For Life) "Life issues didn't arise overnight. Their frequent connection to medical technology can make them seem like recent developments—and advances in understanding physiology and pharmaceuticals have made abortion and euthanasia more efficient and available of late. But these circumstances have been causing society's difficulties—and

providing opportunities to proclaim the Gospel—since ancient times.” (Rev. Michael W. Salemink, executive director of Lutherans For Life).

WHERE ARE OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERINGS OFF TO THIS MONTH? We voted in our Sunday School and Bible Class opening 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	1/14	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service - Holy Communion (2 nd Sunday) 11:55 a.m. - Dorcas Society “Mites for Missions” Coffee Fellowship
Tues	1/16	5:00 p.m. - Confirmation Class
Wed	1/17	9:30 a.m. - Ladies’ Bible Study 6:00 p.m. - <i>LifeLight</i> Bible Study
Sun	1/21	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. - LWML “Mites for Missions” Coffee Fellowship

THE CRECHE IS GONE; IT’S BEEN REPLACED BY A HOUSE. For Christmas is over and the Epiphany season has begun, and the Scriptures tell us that the Magi (Wise Men) visited Mary and Joseph in their house in Bethlehem rather than in the stable out back the No-Room-In-The Inn. (No wonder, it took them quite a while; they came quite a way from the east.) And the gifts of those Magi are laid out there for you too, in that oversized treasure chest: gold (okay, *that* one’s not real), frankincense (you can smell it) and myrrh. See for yourselves, after worship.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK: 1/15 - Warren S, 1/16 - Betty W, 1/17 - Dave D, Waylene G.

WHAT’S GOING ON IN BIBLE CLASS THESE DAYS? What a good question! And what a fine time to ask, for you know that was one of your New Year’s resolutions. It doesn’t get any easier than Bible Class. No special trip; you were coming to church anyway. So what are we studying? We’re working our way through the book of Luke. When we’re done, well, see, that’s the thing; then, we’ll decide what we want to do next. Come, be a part of the decision. Come, be a part of the study.

LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR (from Lutherans for Life) “Can anything good come (John 1:46) from surprise pregnancy? How about from defending embryos? From chronic suffering? From incapacitated or unresponsive persons? Truly, truly! Jesus has bought these bodies and lives for God with His own blood (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). He has forever foreseen their purpose even despite our failures and pains.” (Prayer: Lamb of God, let us come and see Your grace that we may go and show it. Amen.)

WHAT WAS THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY? Christian Ed. - 14; Worship - 42 (Members 32, Friends 5, Visitors 5) How many were here because you invited them, will return because you welcomed them?

OH, THE PRICE WE PAY! Did you hear Louis Farrakhan “repent”? One point eight million Facebook viewers did! And why *not*, when the word was the eighty-four-old Nation of Islam leader was turning from Islam and had discovered the truth of Christianity? And why *not* - at least on the *surface* - when the high-profile Muslim leader now-famously said in his video, “I know - I’m not guessing - that my Jesus is alive. . . . So I say to the devil I know I gotta pay a price for what I’ve been teaching all these years.” Does it *sound* Christian? *My* Jesus? I gotta pay a price for my *false* teaching all these years - all that “white people - and their religion - are created and inspired by Satan just to deceive blacks into accepting subjugation and slavery” stuff? Why *not*? Because of what “Minister” Farrakhan has said since, combined with what he has said before. Because, say most religious

AND JUST IN CASE YOU HADN'T HEARD:

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.

"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.

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.

“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.

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.)

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.

LOOKING FOR WORTHY RESOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR? HOW ABOUT THIS ONE: TO SUPPORT THE CONFIRMANDS IN THEIR INSTRUCTION BY MAKING THEM DINNER On the wall above the ETS heater in the fellowship hall, there’s a new blank sign-up sheet. You can have your pick of all but two of the slots! On the outside chance you haven’t heard, here’s the story: The confirmation class looks forward to having families of the congregation join us for dinner - or invite *us* to join *them* - each week we have class. Our parents and pastor all take turns, but we especially enjoy being able to eat with you, for it give us both a chance to get to know each other better. We do pizza - \$10 for two Hot-n-Ready’s @ Little Caesar’s - and we do standard dinners, too. The added joy for us, knowing how we all love to be in class with Pastor, is that when you bring dinner in, we don’t lose a single minute of class time.

THERE ARE NO (!) MORE SHOPPING DAYS LEFT UNTIL CHRISTMAS - LAST CHRISTMAS, ANYWAY - BUT ALL THE STORES ARE STILL OPEN IN THE ARIZONA TUITION TAX CREDIT! For the new year, that is.

This is the first week for you to take advantage of this gift-giving tax credit (not mere deduction!) for this new tax year (2018)! And think how much more these fine schools could do with a gift that comes this early in the year rather than later. But in the case of *private* - read "parochial," read "Lutheran" - schools - and always check with your tax preparer, of course - the law in AZ now says you have until April 15th - or the day you file your AZ return, whichever comes first - to claim the credit for the *previous* (2017) tax year, if you so desire.

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.