

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 17, 2023



Pastor's Corner for December 17-23

Here I Am

(2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:26-38)

Have you ever found yourself called by God at a crossroads in life and responded, "Here I am"? Consider two people in the Scriptures: one in the Old Testament and one in the New.

First comes King David, a king of Israel who was probably used to getting his way. Would it be any wonder if his default mode was to tell God his plans? He checks in with the prophet Nathan about a building project, a "house" he wants to build for God. David made his list of priorities. Then, he made his plans. But God had other plans for David!

Now consider Mary, the future mother of Jesus. An angel came to tell Mary she would bear a child who would be the Son of God. Such an angelic announcement changed Mary's world overnight. Mary knew the social consequences for women in her day who carried children before they were married. She and the baby could be put to death in an honor killing by the very villagers who had raised Mary as a child. What would she tell her parents? How would her betrothed (Joseph) find out? God had extraordinary plans for Mary she could never have imagined. God's plan, in a miraculous way, becomes her plan, too.

To be fair, we have neither a prophet nor an angel whispering in our ear, telling us what God's plan for us might or might not be. To discern God's purpose, we search the Scriptures. We ask others for their insights. We do a painfully honest "gut-check" to see where our own instincts are leading us. It's when the wrong instincts – our fear, our pride – or the desires of our heart get the upper hand that we need God to interrupt our plans. We'll never know with complete certainty what God's will in our lives might be, the way David did. But in David's case, God's interruption led to the revelation that DAVID would not build a house for God. God would build a house – a dynasty – for David! Life would not go according to plan for David – but there would be a future for David and his people. David was saying, "God, I'm pretty sure I have your plan figured out. Here I am." God's reply? "I don't need favors. Here is what I have in store for you. You won't build me a house... I will build a house... an everlasting dynasty... for you!"

We know how things turned out for David and for Mary. What will happen when the plans you and I have in mind seem to clash with God's purpose? Do we believe that God's plan for us is still in play? Jesus, the fulfillment of a promise God made long ago to David and the child God brought into the world through Mary, is all the proof we need that we too have the gift of a future. Even when life doesn't go according to plan.

What is the crossroads God has brought you to? Seeing God's promise unfold at Christmas again this year reminds of God's faithfulness. Together with Mary we can say, "Here I am." The love of God has found us... and holds us close. We may not know what tomorrow may hold, but we know the One who will be with us when we get there. The baby Jesus born in Bethlehem is proof that God's love is at the

bottom of life. Leaning on God's abundant grace, we put our trust in Him.

Southeastern District Deaconess Sally Hiller Retires: A Thank You Offering Invitation

Mid-Atlantic Lutherans in Mission (MALIM) is inviting anyone interested in honoring Deaconess Sally Hiller, LCMS Southeastern District Director of Operations, to contribute a thank you offering in thanksgiving to God for Sally's 30 years of service. Deaconess Hiller is retiring this year. Sally has asked that all gifts be made online at malim.org or mailed to MALIM at 2315 North Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23229. The offerings collected by MALIM will be used to fund Church Worker Wellness Grants that will help renew and strengthen church workers seeking to move God's mission forward wherever they are called to serve.

Advent peace and joy,
Pastor Jonathan

Please note, we will resume all Bible studies and Wednesday Night Workshop, including dinner, in January.

Prayers of the Church



"Restore us, O God," cries the Psalmist, in every appointed Psalm for these weeks leading up to Christmas. This year, we center our Advent worship on the theme of God's gift of restoration! We experience together God's turning our hearts back to Him, God's gift of peace and forgiveness, and God's unexpected work in life's wilderness places that can even bring dreamlike joy (Psalm 126:1). Come, Lord Jesus!

December 17 ~ 4th Sunday in Advent

Sanctuary Services - Saturday 6:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am*, 9:30 am

Praise - Sunday 11:00 am* in the Family Life Center

December 20 ~ Wednesday, 6:00 pm

Christmas Carols in the Circle Entrance

[For full listing of all the Advent services, click here.](#)

Services marked with an asterisk (*) will be live streamed online [@ResurrectionLutheranCary](#).

You can also view services afterward through the [Online Worship](#) page.

Reaching Out with the Love of Christ to all People through Advent Offerings

Each Season of Advent, RLC designates a local, regional, and international ministry to support in reaching out with Christ's love to all people. This year, the following organizations were chosen:

Lutheran Services Carolinas / Wake County Ukrainian Refugee Program, a human services organization focusing on seniors, children, families, and refugees. They help new immigrants transition to our life and culture in Wake County through their New Americans Program, with housing, jobs, and other support resources, and have a special fund for Ukrainian refugees in our county.

[Learn More](#)

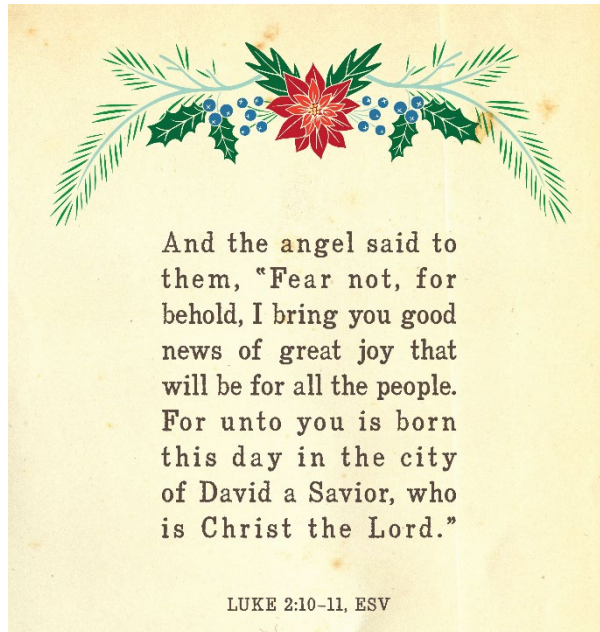
LCMS Maui Disaster Relief, providing food, housing, supplies, school placement, pastoral care, licensed therapeutic care, and other sustaining and ongoing support systems for immediate and long-term assistance since the recent fire in Maui, working through local Lutheran congregations.

[Learn More](#)

Holy Land Christian Solidarity Cooperative (via Dr. George Ghanem who visits RLC each year with his olive wood carvings fundraiser), helps Christian families survive and remain in their homeland in Bethlehem and the surrounding area, providing basic necessities for housing and everyday needs, especially now with the war in the middle east.

[Learn More](#)

Please use the Advent Offering envelopes or indicate 'Advent Offering' on memo of checks.



Christmas Worship Services

December 24 ~ Christmas Eve

(No Saturday Evening or Sunday Morning Services)

3:00 pm ~ Ideal for Families with Young Children,
Featuring Interactive Lessons and Carol Singing

4:30 pm ~ Traditional Christmas Carol Family Worship
with Special Pre-Service Musical Offerings
by Resurrection Music School Students

6:00 pm ~ Candlelight Service with Contemporary Settings
of Traditional Carols and Holy Communion
in the Family Life Center

8:00 pm ~ Candlelight Service with Traditional Christmas Carols
and Resurrection Brass Ensemble, Sanctuary Choir,
Heavenly Handbells *(*live stream)*

10:00 pm ~ Candlelight Service with Traditional Christmas Carols
and Holy Communion

December 25 ~ Christmas Day

10:00 am ~ Celebration of Holy Communion with Christmas Carols
featuring Anno Domini Quartet



Sunday Morning Adult Christian Education

The Real St. Nick: Leader, Legend, or Lie?

December 17, 9:30-10:30 am

Fellowship Hall

This study examines a man who, next to Jesus Christ, is the most visible figure during the holidays – St. Nicholas or Santa Claus – as we know him in Western culture. Dating back to the 3rd century, St. Nick is attributed with the doing of many benevolent and charitable acts of kindness and generosity.

As with most anything passed down through the centuries, however, things have a way of becoming larger than life. Is he the great despoiler of Christmas or the persecuted confessor of the Christ? Is he a defender of the faith or one who undermines it?

The **REAL**
St. Nick
Leader, Legend or Lie?
featuring the Rev. Ken Klaus



We will largely determine what role Santa plays in our homes. This study, led by Pastor Alan Shaw, looks at the traditions and tries to sort out the usable from the discardable.


Mites for Missions

We will be collecting Mites for Missions at all services this weekend, **December 16 and 17**. Please place your gifts in the large purple Mite Box in the Narthex near Sanctuary Worship.

Gifts can also be made by check, payable to RLC, and mailed directly to Donna Krupcale, % Resurrection Lutheran Church, 100 Lochmere Drive West, Cary NC 27518. The large Mite Box is always available at the Welcome Table in the Narthex for gifts anytime during the month.



Thank you for supporting the mission grants of Lutheran Women in Mission!



**Flowers on the altar
in loving memory of
our mother, Mary Greaves Linde
by Meta Linde and Gail Reilly.**

Sign up for Altar Flowers in the Sanctuary and Family Life Center.
Click [here](#) or call the church office at 919-851-7248.
Flowers are from Cary Florist and cost \$45.



Congratulations to Joshua and Emily Wheeler
upon the birth of their son,
James Arthur Wheeler!

Born on December 12, 2023
and weighing 10 lbs. 1 oz.

Proud grandparents are Randy and Janet Bowling.

*Our prayers of joy and gratitude are with them
as they celebrate this blessing!*

Weekly Bible Study Opportunities in the New Year

Sunday

Isaiah - Herald of the Messiah

Sundays, 9:30-10:30 am in the Fellowship Hall

January 7-February 11

Contacts: Bob and Barb Shimmel

This 6-week study is from the Concordia Publishing House series: God's Word for Today. Each session will combine a presentation of the scriptural focus in Isaiah, followed by opportunities to explore relevant applications for life today.

Training to Become a Stephen Minister

Sundays, 2:00-4:00 pm in Room 151, Family Life Center

January 7-May 26

Contact: Pastor Alan Shaw

Monday

Monday Night Women's Bible Study

***Measured by Grace: How God Defines Success* by Sharla Fritz**

Mondays, 7:00-8:00 pm in Room 151, Family Life Center

January 8-May 20

Contact: Jamee Thieme

In the Bible, you'll find no lack of sinfulness, shortcomings, rejections, and broken people. People like Joseph, Rahab, David, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, The Samaritan Woman, Peter, and Paul. We see them as people God transformed, turning their lack into faithfulness for His good. Study these eight biblical figures to see that God does the same for you.

Men's Weekly

A Study of Heroes of the Faith

Mondays, 7:00-8:15 pm in Room 240, Family Life Center

January 8-May 20

Contact: Tom Gebbia

We will study and discuss the Heroes of the Faith series published by Concordia Publishing House - starting with *Intrepid Heroes of the Faith*, which includes Joshua, Gideon, Sampson, and Daniel.

Tuesday

Tuesday Morning Bible Study and Fellowship

Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall

January 2-May 21

Contacts: Pastor Jonathan Blanke, Pastor Zach Sarrault

We will look at the appointed readings from each week that are used in the weekend sermons.

Mama Bear Apologetics... Also for Papa Bears

Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00 pm in Room 240, Family Life Center

January 2-February 6

Contacts: Pastor Zach Sarrault, Erika Hulse

Learn how to raise kids who think critically, love Biblically, and stand firm against the cultural tide. This book study will equip you to teach your kids how to affirm Biblical beliefs about what is true and what is false.

Wednesday

Mama Bear Apologetics... Also for Papa Bears

Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 pm in Room 240, Family Life Center

January 3-February 7

Contacts: Pastor Zach Sarrault, Erika Hulse

See listing above, identical classes.

Help Is Here: Finding Fresh Strength and Purpose in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall

January 3-February 7

Contacts: Tim Kearby, Mindy Stephani

We will use Max Lucado's five-session study to learn more about this “helper” whom we know as the Holy Spirit. *Help Is Here* reminds us that our Good Shepherd doesn't just feed us; he leads us. He does more than correct us; he directs us. God keeps us on track – he's commissioned the Holy Spirit to guide us down the winding roads of life, wherever they may lead us.

Men with Kids

Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45 pm in Room 247, Family Life Center

January 3-April 24

Contact: Tom Gebbia

Material for small group conversation will be provided.

Grace-Full Women

Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45 pm in Room 251, Family Life Center

January 3-February 7

Contact: Shane Jarvis

As we read through the in-depth Bible study of *Ruth: More Than a Love Story* by Elizabeth Ahlman, we will come to see how God watches carefully over every little detail so His grace may come to fruition and fully abound.

Any questions can be directed to the church office at office@rlcary.org or 919-851-7248.

Stephen Ministry

From Broken to Whole

The RLC Stephen Ministry group is hosting a training session for those with a servant heart. Sound like you? Or do you know someone that could benefit from having a confidential listening partner?

Your Stephen Ministry group is a great resource that helps walk alongside broken or breaking people; people experiencing difficult circumstances and need someone to talk to.

We're looking for people to join this ministry. Training is provided so you don't have to feel like you're being asked to do anything without a support system behind you.

Training Starts January 7, 2024

We only ask that you prayerfully consider this ministry. Look for anyone with a Stephen Minister badge or email Pastor Alan at alan.shaw@rlcary.org for more information. We look forward to serving you.

RLC Worship Servants

There is always a need for more volunteers to assist in all of our worship services. Please consider being a greeter or usher, a worship assistant or lay reader, a slide tech or live stream team member. Feel free to reach out directly to the following for more information:

- Saturday, 6:00 pm - Lori Jannings
- Sunday, 8:00 am - Brenda Peterson
- Sunday, 9:30 am - Dara Linn
- Sunday, 11:00 am - Suzi Heffner

You may also contact the church office (office@rlcary.org, 919-851-7248) for assistance.

Children and Family Ministry News
December 2023

Upcoming Events:

December 17 - Sunday School Children sing in beginning of Worship at 9:30 am
December 24 and 31 - No Children's Sunday School

January 3 - Kidz Live and Mama Bear Apologetics resume, 6-7 pm
January 5 - Moms Together Group, 9:30-11 am, Fellowship Hall
January 7 - Children's Sunday School resumes
January 18 - Moms Together Night Out, 5:30-9 pm, Downtown Apex

A colorful illustration of a nativity scene. It features Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus in a manger, surrounded by sheep, a cow, and a donkey. A bright star is visible in the sky above the manger.

Children's
Nativity Service

A colorful illustration of various characters from the nativity story. On the left are three animals: a cow, a donkey, and a sheep. In the center are two wise men in traditional robes. On the right are two shepherds with long staffs. Above them is a large, bright yellow star and an angel with wings and a halo.

December 24
3 pm
Everyone is welcome!

Join us for a cookie reception after the service!

Children will be able to dress up and participate.

Moms Together

Moms, you are invited to join other moms for daytime get togethers to socialize, share tips, make new friends, and work on crafts/projects.

Childcare is available for a small fee.

We also meet for evening activities occasionally.

For dates and to sign up: <https://bit.ly/3ZVhyB8>

Questions? Contact Erika Hulse, Children and Family Ministry Director
erika.hulse@rlcary.org.

Youth Ministry

Middle School and High School

Advent is in full swing and started our new church year. This really is my favorite time of year. My favorite things are definitely the Christmas lights! I love looking at Christmas lights because they truly light up the darkness. Jesus, our gift at Christmas, a savior born to be the light of the world. A Savior that lights up our hearts even in the dark.

We have just come out of a busy season of service opportunities. Our opportunity to be a light in our community and here at our church. I am so thankful for each and every youth and parent that has participated over the past 6 weeks! We now get to start to slow down and take a minute to truly appreciate the light that is Jesus and what it means.

Here's what's coming up:

- **Connection Cafe** (Sunday School for All Youth, 6th-12th Grade)
December 17, 9:30-10:30 am

- **Breakaway - High School, 9th-12th Grade**
Christmas Party on Sunday, December 17 from 6:30-8:00 pm
White Elephant Gift Exchange! Super fun tradition.
Theme is Christmas with a limit of \$15. Please wrap it, no names.



All events are located in The Warehouse (Room 253), in the Family Life Center, unless noted.

We will take a break to celebrate Christmas and the New Year and be back in 2024!
I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas!

Questions? Contact Ms. Jenny, Youth Director
jenny.piontek@rlcary.org or 919-851-7248, ext. 24

Resurrection Lutheran Preschool

Enrollment for 2024-25 at Resurrection Lutheran PRESCHOOL

+ Classes for children 2-years-old through 5-years-old +

Our program provides a balance of social and academic opportunities by means of 'learning through play' in a loving Christian atmosphere.



Class openings are currently available for the 2023-24 preschool year.

rlpcary.org | 919-851-7270 | office@rlpcary.org

Resurrection Lutheran School



rlscary.org | 919-851-7271 | contact@rlscary.org

Latest Lion's Tale

WORSHIP SERVICES

Traditional Worship
in Sanctuary

Saturday, 6:00 pm
Sunday, *8:00 & 9:30 am

Praise Worship
in Family Life Center

Sunday, *11:00 am

**Services Live Streamed to YouTube*

Online Worship Bulletins

For online services, connect through our YouTube channel at youtube.com/ResurrectionLutheranChurchCaryNC or through our website at rlcary.org/about-us/online-worship.

Visual Faith

Attendance and Giving

In-Person Worship Attendance

- Wednesday, December 6 - Holden Evening Prayer
6:00 pm - 61
- Saturday, December 9
6:00 pm - 55
- Sunday, December 10
8:00 am - 99; 9:30 am - 252; 11:00 am - 82

Total In-Person Worship: 549

Views of Online Worship at RLC's YouTube Channel

- Wednesday, December 6 - Holden Evening Prayer
6:00 pm - 42

- Sunday, December 10
9:30 am - 153; 11:00 am - 49

Total Online Views: 244 views

General Fund Giving and Spending - November 2023

	Current Month	Year to Date
General Receipts	\$ 123,763.02	\$ 540,400.52
Total Disbursements	<u>\$ 125,538.89</u>	<u>\$ 577,213.69</u>
Receipts Less Disbursements	\$ -1,775.87	\$ -36,813.17

This Week's Offerings: \$43,669.85

Average Weekly Giving for 2023/24: \$24,563.66

Average Weekly Giving Budgeted for 2023/24: \$27,761.30

We are grateful for all who are able to maintain financial contributions to our congregation! There are four ways to make your offering:

- Place in offering plate during the worship service
- Mail to Resurrection Lutheran Church, 100 Lochmere Drive West, Cary, NC 27518
- Online Giving through rlcary.org/ministries/online-giving
- Download the Vanco Mobile app, search for Resurrection Lutheran Church, transfer funds from your checking or savings account to RLC

Questions? Contact finance@rlcary.org.

Church Calendar

Resurrection Lutheran Church 100 Lochmere Drive West, Cary NC 27518
rlcary.org | 919-851-7248 | office@rlcary.org

Prayers of the Church – December 17, 2023

*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
Hebrews 4:16*

We lift the following prayer requests this week:

Ongoing Prayers

*Diane Cuper, *Eve Sommers, *Anne Altieri, *Charlotte Raines, *Eric Hammergren, *Anita Moore, *John Shaeffer, *Vern Ebert, *Aaron, Marcus, *Malcolm, *Sandy Nigg, Henry Otten, Michael Flannery, *Helen Campbell, Paul Batt, Peter and Esther Kuo, *Geoffrey Wiggins, Caitlyn, Mark Zimmerman, Justus Nicolai, Alex Fernandez, *Cheri Spitz

Ongoing Cancer Treatments

*Mike Allen, Anne Price, Angie Price, Alison Zieglmeier, Carol Diliberto, Jackie, Kathy Siemon, Scott Brinkley, *Bill Xenakis, Linda, Jimmy Ketner, Hope Mackelprang, Melissa Huntsman, Sue, Kathy, Pamm Haley, Bob, Michael Murphy, Greta Nelson, Marina de Moura Torres, Paul Wozniak, Carol Stano

For Expectant Moms

Carolyn St. Laurent, Hannah Peterson, Analissa Vasquez, Sara Phillips

Those Prayed for on December 10, 2023

Thanking God Today

- Our RLC Family
- Family Celebrations and Time Together, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Weddings, Baptisms
- Our Many Blessings
- Safe Travels
- Caring Organizations Within Our Local Communities
- Marc and Elizabeth Langefeld, Adoption of Baby Boy (and Proud Grandparents, *Annette and *Bruce Kennedy)
- RLC Generous Hearts, Donations to The Christmas Store Filled a Large Van!
- Advent Tea and All Who Attended
- Baby Joseph McKinney, 6-month Anniversary of Heart Transplant
- Darrell's Birthday
- Friends
- Employment

For Healing

- *Kim Goss
- All Those Exposed to COVID, with COVID, and Recovering from COVID

- Blind Ministry Guests - Maria Barker, Sheila McNair, Linda Jones, Desiree, James
- *Eve Sommers, Continued Recovery
- *Greta Nelson
- Paul Wozniak, Recovery at Home
- Julie Wozniak, Recovery
- *Mindy Stephani, Physical Therapy for Right Leg
- Patricia Wellington, Chemo Treatments
- Miriam Beyer, Daughter-In-Law of *Charlotte Beyer
- *Bill Xenakis, New Treatment Plan
- Jan Bloom
- Pastor William Otto, Cancer Treatment and Surgery
- Bruce, Brother of *Ralph Klevenow
- *Meredith A.
- Michael
- Don's Upcoming Surgery
- Brian, George, Charles, Karl, Linda, Tim, Justin, Red, Brian, Mark, Kevin, Keith, Carlton, Carol, Anna, Anne, Skylar, Patty, Lia, Ken, Harold, Donald, Karen, Eric, Mara, Connie, Marti, Olivia, Shannon

For Comfort

- Friends and Family of Timi Gamble, Cousin of *Donna Krupcale

For Provision, Peace, Strength, and Patient Endurance

- Persecuted Christians
- Uganda Lutheran Church
- People of Ukraine, and All Those Who Serve to Support Them
- People of Maui, Morocco, Libya, Afghanistan, and All Affected by Natural Disasters
- People of Israel and the People of Gaza, Peace in the Middle East
- All Those Supporting Family Members with Caregiving Needs
- Annie Ruth Ford, Mother of *Dennis Ford
- *Eric and *Jill Hammergren
- *Jan and Paul Wozniak
- Jan and Rich Bloom
- Stuart and Sue Sanders, and the *Boyer Family
- *Ginny and *Ed Koren
- Those Enduring Marriage Struggles and Families in Turmoil
- Those Seeking Jobs and Career Changes
- Victims, Families, and Communities Suffering with Gun Violence
- For Those Who Find the Holiday Season Difficult - Separation from Family, Loneliness, Grief
- *Mike Persson, Testing Process for New Job
- College Students Completing Classes and End of Semester Exams
- All with Substance Abuse and Their Families
- Healthy Pregnancy for Laura
- Peace on Earth

For the Lord's Wisdom, Guidance, Strength for the Health and Well-Being of the People They Serve

- Pastor Jonathan and Juli, Associate Pastor Zach and Kelsey, Assistant Pastor Alan and Faith, and Their Families
- Pastor Jon Richter, Serving St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Norlina NC
- Resurrection Lutheran Church and Schools Staff
- Area Pastors and Schools Staff
- Our Stephen Ministers

For Our Missionaries

- *Mark and *Megan Mantey, Kenya
[Click here for the Mantey's Newsletter!](#)
- JP and Aimee Cima, Cambodia
[Click here for the Cima Family Newsletter!](#)
- Shauen and Krista Trump, Kenya
[Click here for the Trump's Newsletter!](#)

*Lord Jesus, thank You for Your abiding Presence and saving grace. All is in Your Hands.
We trust You are working all things according to Your good plan and purposes,
and with that trust and confidence, we release these prayers to You. In Your Holy Name, Amen.*

***RLC Members**

Updated 12/15/23