

Free!

# Merry Christmas!



From everyone at WNPC and the *West Notting News*



Teach me about:

## Advent



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## Who Stole My Christmas?

By Pastor Chris Scott, WNPC

Do you remember the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas"? That song was composed to celebrate the Christmas season with twelve days of gift-giving *after* Christmas day, not before. That's right! In Christian theology, the Christmas season begins on Christmas day, December 25th, and continues through January 5th. And get this, there just happens to be twelve days between Christmas day and January 5th. The next day, January 6th, is known as Epiphany (Teach me about: Epiphany, Jan. '24 issue).

Well how about that! The 25th of December is just the beginning of Christmas season! So let's keep celebrating! *cont.*

## A Word, Please



*Merry Christmas!*

Hi! My name is Cindi Lamb Wiley and I am the copy editor of the *West Notting News*. I have been helping to write, format and prepare this publication for almost a year. This newsletter is published mostly for people who do not go to our church, or any church.

My religion knowledge is quite limited. I discovered last week that although I have heard of Advent, I never knew what it was. So I asked my Pastor, and he told me. Then I asked him to prepare a short article about Advent and he did. It was short for a while, but with a little extra research, the "short article" grew.

Then it hit me: I'll bet there's a lot of folks that don't know about Advent, or Epiphany, or the Day of Pentecost, or... lots of other churchy words and events.

So this new feature is for you (and for me): *cont. on pg. 4*

## Who Stole My Christmas?

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But today's version of the Christmas season is interpreted as the four weeks between Thanksgiving day and Christmas day. In the Christian church, this four-week period is called "Advent" or the season of Advent.

**"So what's the purpose of Advent?"** you ask.

I'm glad you did!

The word "advent" means coming or arriving, and for Christians, the Advent season prepares our hearts and minds for the arrival of Jesus Christ, the Christian reason for the Christmas season. It is a period of preparation for the



*The flames of the Advent candles represent the light of Christ's birth, a light that illuminates the hope for a world filled with joy, peace, and love.*



Christmas feast held to celebrate Jesus Christ's nativity (nativity means "birth") on December 25th. Advent also reminds us to reflect and prepare for the second coming of Christ, as promised.

Advent season begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas day, so the first Sunday of advent is usually the first Sunday after Thanksgiving day, or, the Sunday closest to November 30th. Each of those four Sundays focus on a theme related to the birth of Christ: hope, peace, joy and love.

**"What's the deal with the candles?"** I'll tell you!

But first: it's important to know that people all over the world, Christian or not, celebrate the customs of Advent by lighting candles. And they don't have to be special "Advent candles"; they can be any candle, lit by whomever, whenever, wherever! The bottom line: God's design for us all is to thrive in hope, peace, joy and love. God begins to fulfill this promise through the birth of His son, Jesus. Praying and meditating on those four themes of Advent does a body (and heart) good, no matter who you are!

In most Christian churches however, one candle is lit each Sunday during Advent and each candle commemorates its own special significance, as you can see on the front page.

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*We welcome your comments and ideas!*

The flames of the candles represent the light of Christ’s birth, a light that illuminates the hope for a world filled with joy, peace, and love. Often, the candles are placed in a symbolic wreath.

**“Why is the joy candle pink?”** Bring on those questions!

Traditionally, no colors were assigned to Advent candles. In fact, different churches use all blue candles, all white candles, or all purple candles. Also, different churches light the candles in different orders, so there’s no cut-and-dry rules. Here is a theme summary of each Advent candle:

### The Hope Candle

The first candle, which is the color purple, symbolizes hope. It is sometimes called the “Prophecy Candle” in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah. For many Christians, the hope of the second coming of Christ is alive and well!

### The Faith Candle

The second candle, also purple, represents faith. It is called the “Bethlehem Candle” as a reminder of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. Just think of the faith that Joseph had in Mary!

### The Joy Candle

The third candle is pink and symbolizes joy. It is called the “Shepherd’s Candle,” and is pink because it signifies a sense of joy and anticipation as the birth of Christ approaches.

Shepherd One: “Guess who’s coming to town?”

Shepherd Two: “Santa!”

Shepherd One, “NOPE! It’s BETTER than Santa; it’s JESUS!”

Wow. Now that’s what I call: **JOYOUS!**

### The Love Candle

On the fourth week of Advent, we light the final purple candle, sometimes called the “Angel’s Candle,” because it was the angels that proclaimed: **“Do not be afraid, for I bring you Good News of great joy!”** The angels announced peace and love! And love encompasses Jesus’ entire purpose for being on earth: Love God, and love your neighbor. How’s that working out for you?

### The Fifth Candle: Jesus!

Sometimes a fifth candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to represent the birth of Jesus. HALLELUJAH!! This candle is typically white and larger than the other candles and is placed in the center of the Advent wreath. Once again, the tradition of the Christ candle is observed preferentially.

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## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 4:00 PM

No morning service  
on Dec. 24th or 25th

## FREE LUNCH Tuesday

January 9th  
11:30-12:30

ALSO January 12th:  
11:30-1:30



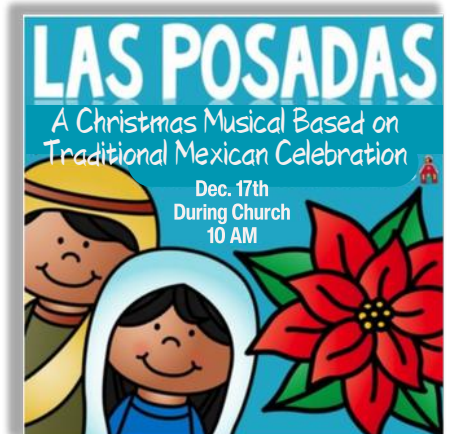
## Maryland Mobile Food Market

- Boxed And Canned Goods
- Pick Your Own Produce

# The Solid Rock Players

### Presents:

A way to teach children and adults about Christmas traditions in another culture.



## Sunday

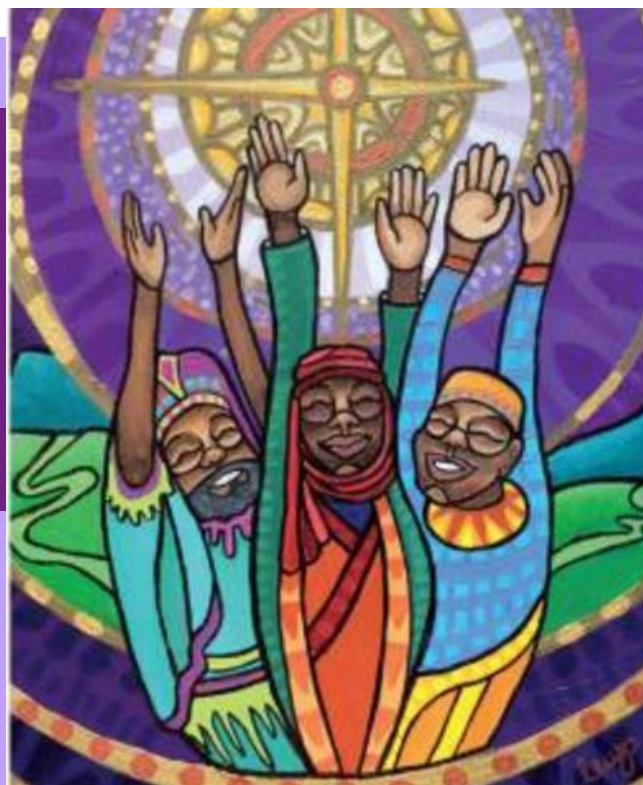
## Dec. 17th • 10 AM

## SPECIAL OFFERINGS

December 3 - December 24, 2023

### Christmas Joy

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.



### A Word, Please

Cont. from pg. 1

“Teach me about...” It can be confusing to go to church if you don’t understand the lingo. Even if you don’t want to do church, this stuff is pretty interesting, I think.

Our second new feature, “A Word, Please”, is a free-for-all column to say what needs to be said. Good news, ticked off, uplifting thoughts and prayers, questions, disagreements, just say it! It’s for EVERYBODY!

And if nobody has anything to say, I do. I’ll write it. I always have something to say, just ask anyone at West Nottingham Presbyterian Church, my church. They are pretty open-minded and I’m grateful for that!

Thanks so much for reading and yes, I said **Merry Christmas!**

Cindi

### Who Stole My Christmas?

*continued from page one*

Whenever and however you choose to celebrate the Christmas season, try to ponder and pray on the Advent themes. As you hear all that holiday music transmitting through the air this month, listen for those four themes of Advent: hope, peace, joy, and love. There’s a good chance they are missing.

And if you have a real “hum-bugger” in your midst, hand them a copy of this month’s *West Notting News*. It’s worth a shot, and maybe all that hum-bugger really needs is a little Advent spirit nudge.

In Good Faith and Love,  
Pastor Chris Scott

### WAYS TO GIVE



Through your congregation



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