# *Christ Lutheran Church*

***Germantown, Maryland***

## *Epistle To the Saints*

# *December 2026*

**Sunday School at 9:30 AM &**
**Service at 10:30 AM each Sunday**

Thursday, December 24th-Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion 7PM

Friday, December 25th-Christmas Day/The Nativity of our Lord

Thursday, December 31st-New Year's Eve



Welcome!

To view the livestream of our services, go to the church Facebook page (Christ Lutheran Church AALC) or go to our website (clcmd.org) and click the link at the bottom of the first page. Once on the FB page click the "videos" tab. Bulletins for our services are on the website.

## *PRAYER AND PRAISE*

**Chinese Cross Baptist Church:** *Thank you, Lord, for your blessings to us in our support of Pastor Paul Zhou and his congregation. As they continue their ministry from a new location, please bless them richly with your gracious love.*

**REVEREND DR. CARY LARSON:** *Heavenly Father, we thank you for Reverend Larson. We pray that you keep him in your care and bless his work in Your name.*

**PASTOR SCOTT YOUNT:** *Lord, we ask that you bless Pastor Yount and his wife, Lena, as they faithfully serve You and spread the word of the Lord.*

**FOR OUR CONGREGATION:** *Father, we ask for your merciful goodness in providing us with the wisdom, discernment and courage to do your will. We thank you for providing each of our members, visitors, friends, and family. Each and every one is a true blessing.*

**FOR OUR CHILDREN:** *Lord, keep each of them strong in you each day. Protect them and guide them in the plan that you have for each of them.*

**FOR OUR PASTORS:** *By the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, please uphold and help them stand firm in the truth of Your gracious word.*

**FOR OUR SEMINARY STUDENTS:** *Father we ask that you be with Chris Clarke as he prepares to join the ministry.*

**FOR THOSE SERVING AWAY FROM HOME:** *Father, please guide them in Your mercy and bless them with the fullness of Your love.*



## Christ Lutheran Church AALC

Our Facebook page is looking great! Lots of wonderful information about our church, congregation, and news. Every week the service's video is posted. AWESOME!

**Like us on Facebook!**

In December, we are collecting peanut butter and jelly for Damascus Help!






## christlutheranofgermantown.org

**We encourage you to provide Jeane with your comments and things that you think would add additional value to the site.**



*--Pastor Irvin Stapf*

## An Observation – God the Father and God The Son

I have written before about the incorrect distinction between the Old and New Testament's, a God of wrath in the Old and a God of love in the New.

I was a poor student despite my parents encouragement. I can remember one time my father happened to be sick and in bed. I came home with a very poor result on a school paper. Mom showed it to Dad, and she told me that he wept. He wanted so much for me and I was neglecting it. That is a father's heart. Can God, the Father, be less? No, so very false distinction. Especially when Jesus said to Philip in John 14:9, "he who has seen Me has seen the Father." The nature of love, gentleness, and mercy are both in the Father and in the Son.

I don't know what image you have of an earthly father? I hope it is good, but I know that is some cases it is not always good. Even so, hold to your concept of what a good earthly father should be.

I was never a rebellious child, but I was a lazy much greater!

In Genesis chapter 3, the Father confronts the first couple, with whom He had walked in personal fellowship in Garden in the cool of the day. He had provided all they needed for life, health, joy, and their future. Now He approached them as they cringed away, having eaten of the forbidden fruit and trying to hide their shame. Yes, He was angry. He hated the sin that had infected them. He knew that they would have to suffer the consequences of their actions. Yet in the deepest mercy of His heart He provided for them, and for us.

In Genesis 3:21 when God made "garments of skin" to cover the nakedness of their shame, it was a blood sacrifice of one of the beloved animals of His own creation. God hated and still hates the sin that separates us from Himself. But His compassion is towards us. And the Father has done what only This Father can do. He took the Judgment on sin into Himself. Hold on to that statement.

The Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, eternally existent, before all creation, a perfect fellowship of love within the three, totally other from us. Yet their love had emanated outward. Which is the nature of God's agape love. It has flowed into this new creation of all that exists. "One God, creator of all things visible and invisible", as stated in the Nicene Creed. Love has flowed into all creation.

Yet, because of the pre-creation rebellion of the Archangel Lucifer, sin had entered. The enemy, in the depth of his pride filled nature, determined to destroy this new creation, and especially the vermin called mankind. It was to his enticing suggestion that the woman yielded. But the Father would not be defeated. In the last chapters of the Book of Job God opens the eyes of this human questioner of evil, to all that He is doing to set things right. The picture is far larger than Job, and certainly we ourselves, can envision. But this we know.

God chose to overcome Satan by the deepest sacrifice the Father could make. God chose the offering of HIs only begotten Son, His precious Son, in atonement for the sins of all mankind. In the death of Jesus, Satan thought that he had defeated God and destroyed this part of the Holy Trinity. But there was something far deeper that the devil couldn't overcome or defeat. By the power of God the Holy Spirit, the sinless body of Jesus was raised to life, never to die again, and to bring new life to all mankind.

But think of what is happening here. The Father, who is too often seen as wrath and judgment, has willing, and painfully, offered up His only begotten Son, to suffer humiliation, pain, and death. This is a pain, humiliation, and death that each of us justly deserves. Yet in His great mercy, knowing that we had no other means to continue life, gave Jesus to die for you, and for me.

In the motion picture film, The Passion of The Christ, Mel Gibson portrayed it well. In the scene on the cross, with Jesus' last words, is pictured a great teardrop from heaven. That is the compassion, the love, the mercy, the suffering heart that God extends to all mankind.

Don't ever feel that God doesn't know who you are or what you are going through. He did all this for you in His Son, Jesus, the Christ.

And all that He asks of you now, is not perfection, is not cleaning up your act first, not giving some offering or sacrifice. It is simply bowing before Him, humble, open, and without excuses. Come with a heart that desires to meet Jesus.

## *From Pastor Stapf and the Church Council:*



***Proposal:*** As of January 1, 2027 Chris Clarke will be designated as a Deacon and no longer as Vicar. Further, that he be given a monthly stipend.

***Reasoning:*** This change is in accord with the AALC. We had a video conference with our Seminary President, the Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins, on Friday morning asking him about this change. He felt that it was entirely appropriate, having been done in other AALC congregations and is in accord with Scripture in Acts 6, the choosing of deacons for the early church.

Dr. Leins said that Chris has fulfilled his requirements of a vicarage and is working toward ordination. Therefore, the designation of Deacon is entirely appropriate.

Further, the tasks of a deacon is serving in the ministry of liturgy, assisting with communion, and in preaching the Gospel. He also is able to baptize, to witness and bless marriages, preside at funeral liturgies, as well as other duties in the parish. All of these, Chris has done. He has also visited the sick, administered home communions, and more recently met individually with a few of our members. He has also had some involvement with community churches. All of these are tasks of a Deacon. This will also allow Chris to wear a Deacon's stole, (a "half" stole), as a symbol of his office.

***Please join us in welcoming Chris to this role as Deacon as of January 1, 2027 and supporting his ministry.***

***On Sunday November 1st, Pastor Irv and Vicar Chris dedicated the Memorial Garden. The Memorial Garden was an idea that came from Bob Petersen wanting his ashes at the church.***

***The Plaque was designed so that we could remember others. Each brass nameplate bears the name, date of birth, and date of death of a loved one. Added by congregation members.***

***We appreciate Pastor Irv's design of the garden.***









*Pastor Appreciation Luncheon Honoring Irv and Chris*














PASTOR
APPRECIATION
Thank You For All You Do!








CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
GIVE PRAISE TO GOD
YOU WILL BE
CLOSER TO HIM
AND FIND JOY
ChristLutheranOfGermantown.org




**The Advent wreath symbolizes the anticipation of Christmas, featuring a circular design with four candles representing hope, peace, joy, and love, plus a fifth candle for Christ. Each candle is lit progressively during the four weeks of Advent, marking the journey toward Christmas Day.**

**Meaning and Significance of the Advent Wreath**

**The Advent wreath serves as a visual and spiritual guide during the Advent season.**

- **Symbolism — The circular shape represents eternity and God's unending love.**
- **Candle Colors — The four outer candles are typically purple (or blue) for hope, peace, and love, with a pink candle for joy.**
- **Lighting Tradition — One candle is lit each Sunday, culminating in the lighting of all candles on Christmas.**
- **Historical Origin — The tradition began in 16th-century Germany as a way to mark the Advent season.**
- **Community and Family Use — Initially a domestic practice, it is now common in both homes and churches.**

## *From Vicar Chris - Tanzania*

I wanted to provide an update from our outreach mission to Africa. Perhaps something for the December Epistle as well?
Anyhow, below is a snippet of a conversation that I had with Pastor Leons Shirima, one of the Pastors there. It sounds like things are going well and that they finally got the gas stove running.
If you have any questions for their congregation, I would be happy to ask them for you.
I enjoy keeping our connection with Tanzania alive and well.

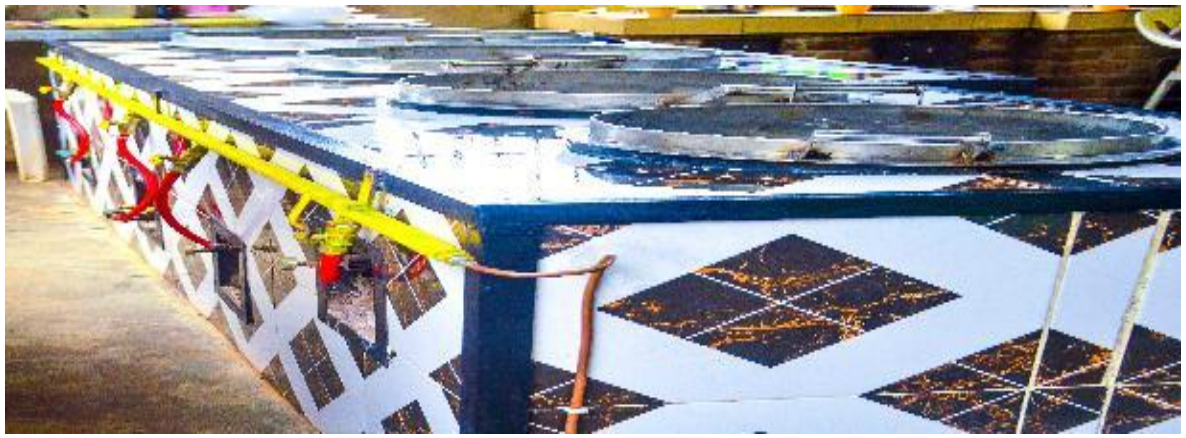
***From Pastor Leons Shirima,***
"Hello Pastor Chris. Greetings from Shiri Parish. I hope you are well. We are fine too. At last the stove is working. Sorry for the long delay. It was beyond our capacity. However we thank God now it is done. .At the school we added also two classrooms. We thank God for that.
We would like to tell you also about our new church building at Kitifu sub congregation the progress is good. What is going on is floor work (terrazzo). After that it will be fixing window glasses and paintings. We are still praying that to be completed by this year.
Here are some few photos of what is going on in our Parish.



- Shiri Building School



- Shiri Building New Church at Kitifu



- The New Stove

**Sunday, November 21, 2026 after services, we decorated the Sanctuary for the Seasons of Advent and Christmas**

**Special thanks to:**

**Vicar Chris and his family for staging all the decorations!**
**Everyone who came to help with the decorating!**
**Miss Carolyn and Miss Nelly for their delicious assortment of pastries!**







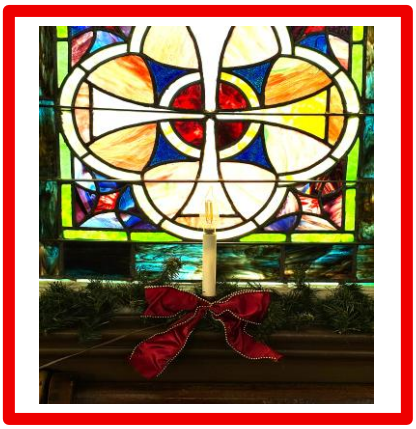


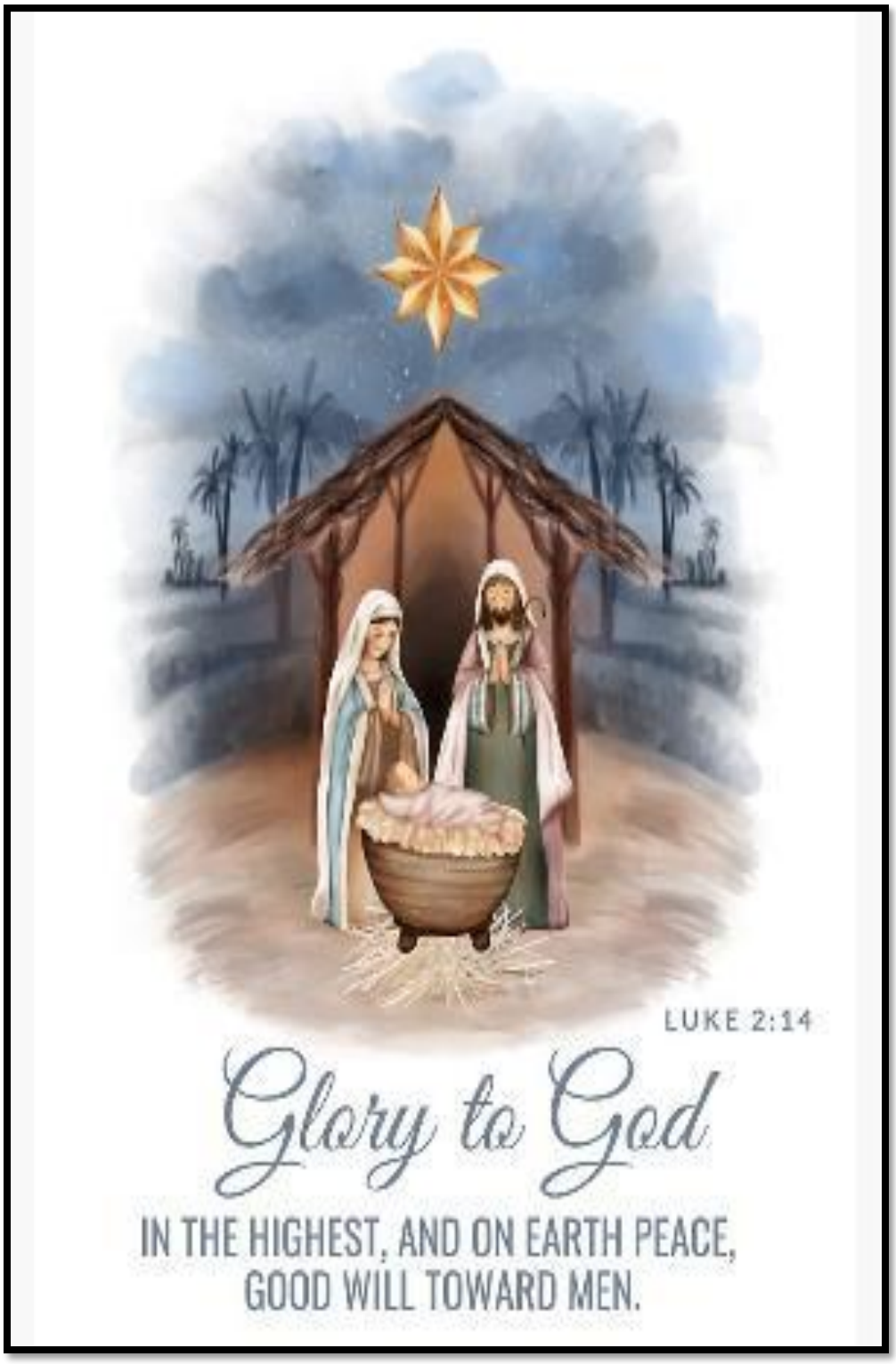











LUKE 2:14
Glory to God
IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE,
GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.





***Epistle To The Saints***

December 2026

***Christ Lutheran Church***

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