



## From the Pastor's Desk...

## Christmas 2025

"He came anyway"

"...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

If you want to miss the point of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, think that it had to happen. If I want to lose all wonder and joy in this season, all I have to do is believe that I deserve it; that God owes me His Son and the forgiveness of Sin that He brings; that a loving God can and should do nothing other than forgive and give me eternal life.

If I were asked what my favorite is of the four Gospels, I would probably have to say the Gospel of John. Though it may lack the clean storytelling of the other three I find John's telling to put the heavy theology of the coming of Christ "in the flesh", the incarnation on the bottom shelf with clarity. This is true even if his clarity boggles the mind because we don't easily accept what he says clearly.

The Gospel of John doesn't begin with the Baby in the manger and the shepherds and angels or even Kings/Magi/Wisemen. It begins in the darkness before creation and brings the full universe and all that exists into focused purpose. In the midst of this he writes (inspired of course by the Holy Spirit):

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:9-13(ESV)

We were in darkness. I was in darkness. Yet He came. When He came we were blind to see Him even though we walk around in the light that He created! He had chosen a specific nation of people and promised to them "You will be my people and I will be your God." Yet not only did they refuse to obey their God they rejected Him when He came.

He did not have to come. They deserved darkness, death, but he brought light anyway. He didn't wait for them to "straighten up and fly right" He came while they were still sinners and even died for them. For us. He chose. The most rebellious, recalcitrant, people who had refused His every rightful assertion of authority as God were chosen by God while we were still sinners. We don't deserve the incarnate God, Jesus...But He came anyway.

In Christ,

Mark

# The SHINE Program Presents: 'A Christmas Yarn'



## November/December Calendar

|               |                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>Dec 21</u> | Fourth Sunday of Advent            |
| <u>Dec 21</u> | 6:00p Crosscurrent Christmas Party |
| <u>Dec 23</u> | 5:00p Crosscurrent Caroling        |
| <u>Dec 24</u> | OFFICE CLOSED                      |
| <u>Dec 24</u> | 7:00p Lessons and Carols           |
| <u>Dec 25</u> | OFFICE CLOSED                      |
| <u>Dec 31</u> | OFFICE CLOSED                      |
| <u>Jan 4</u>  | 10:30a Officer Installation        |
| <u>Jan 6</u>  | 5:30p Outreach Committee           |
| <u>Jan 6</u>  | 6:30p DEACONS                      |
| <u>Jan 6</u>  | 8:30p TRUSTEES                     |
| <u>Jan 14</u> | 4:00p SHINE Returns                |
| <u>Jan 18</u> | Congregational Meeting             |
| <u>Jan 19</u> | 5:30p SESSION                      |
| <u>Jan 23</u> | Youth at EPIC Winter Retreat       |
| <u>Jan 24</u> | Youth at EPIC Winter Retreat       |
| <u>Jan 25</u> | Youth at EPIC Winter Retreat       |

## Weekly Meetings...

Wednesday Evening 4:00pm  
**SHINE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM**  
**Family Dinner at 6:00pm**  
**Resumes in January**

Thursday Evening 6:00pm  
**Praise Team Practice**

Friday Morning 7:30am  
**Men's Group @ Eat 'n Park**

Sunday Morning 9:15am  
**Adult Sunday School**  
**Confirmation Class**

Sunday Evening 6:00pm  
**Crosscurrent Youth Group**

**Pastor Mark will be out of the office on vacation December 12/29-12/30.**



**In the event of winter weather, please check your email and expect a phone call from your district elder or deacon.**

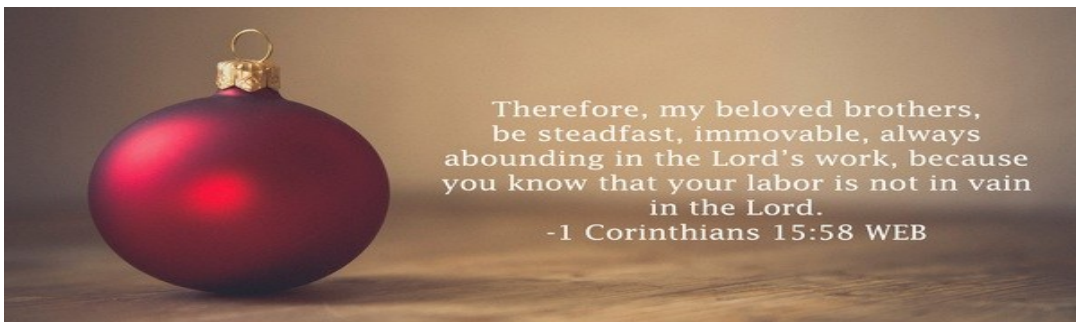
Everyone is invited to join the Youth as we go Christmas Caroling to the Shut ins!

Monday, December 22nd  
Meet at church at 6pm!





Service abounding..... This holiday season was spent in service to others. Crosscurrent youth assembled 'Cake in a Pan' packages to be delivered to our local food pantries and decorated Christmas Cards with festive thoughts and decorations to be delivered to our local nursing homes and shut ins. The Family Ministries Committee with the help of the congregation at our All Church Christmas Party assembled 'Bags to Dishes', which are shelf stable complete meals in a bag that will be delivered to our local food pantries. Our focus this season was on helping to combat food insecurity. Thank you to all who donated and participated! We also enjoyed a meal, some games & fellowship at the Christmas Party! A good time was had by all.



Christ the Savior is Born!!

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

**Crosscurrent Youth Group** What fun we have had the past month! We had a work day where we did some yard work for some members of the church. A few of the youth had the opportunity to get First Aid/CPR Certified thanks to Ms. Chrissy. We also had the opportunity to have a blast at our Friendsgiving. We had a create your own tater tot bar with lots of fixin’s. We colored, talked about how God is with us and played a round of sardines. We did find Andy though!! Thank you to all who came to our Pancake/Sausage Fundraiser Luncheon. We had a great turn out and the kiddos were amazing servers! All proceeds will help us get to Winter Retreat in January 2026. Our Soup and Fudge Fundraiser, also for Winter Retreat was a huge success! We met our fundraising goal and will be headed to Winter Retreat in January! Thank you, thank you! We have so much coming up the next few weeks. We do ask you to keep all the Youth in prayer as we continue to learn, grow and serve together.

**SHINE** Our SHINE musical, “A Christmas Yarn” was a huge success even though the storm cancelled our opening night. God provided us with a beautiful Sunday performance. Thank you to all who helped with SHINE this semester, you are great blessings!

As always I ask you to please keep all the children and youth in our community and beyond in prayer.

Your sister in Christ,

*Joel Cunniff*

Director of Children and Youth Ministries

