

St. Paul's Lutheran Family

December 2024
NEWSLETTER

There's a Place for You at St. Paul's!



How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

Finding joy may seem elusive in a world heavy with weariness, where challenges and heartaches persist. Especially as we prepare for Christ's arrival this Advent season, we will depart from the lectionary and create a narrative-driven Advent. This year, we will focus on the Gospel of Luke.

In Luke's Gospel, the narrative begins with Mary, a young woman chosen to bear the Messiah. Her life is suddenly interrupted, and her plans are overturned. And yet, amid her uncertainty and fear, she embraces her purpose, singing, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Mary's response reflects a powerful choice to experience joy despite the weight of her situation. Her happiness doesn't dismiss her struggles; it accompanies them, honoring the complexity of her journey.

Similarly, when the shepherds receive the news of Jesus' birth from the angels, they are overcome with both awe and apprehension. They are ordinary people living in a broken world, yet they are invited to partake in the divine joy of Christ's arrival. The angel's words echo through time: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people". Joy arrives here not as an antidote to fear but as a reassurance that there is light in the midst of darkness, hope within despair.

This story, filled with miracles, vulnerability, and profound grace, is one of God entering a weary world to bring enduring joy—not a fleeting happiness, but a joy that stands beside us in our weariness. For many of us, the Christmas season is often an emotionally charged time when we feel many things deeply-sometimes all at once. Sometimes, we experience human emotions of isolation, fear, disbelief, connection, trust, and Joy. Joy is often a companion to many other emotions. We can feel joy and many other things simultaneously: grief, anticipation, anxiety, excitement, disappointment, exhaustion. Many of us live with the myth that joy is not something we deserve or is wholly out of reach. But our joy is rooted in the truth that we belong to God. Can you tether yourself to that profound truth? You deserve to feel joy-fully.

The world needs your joy, even if you are weary. Our joy is better when it is shared. This theme, of course, alludes to a line in the familiar Christmas hymn, "O Holy Night," which has a fascinating history. The song was initially written by a French poet who was an atheist, and a Jewish composer supplied the music. The hymn was later translated into English by an American Unitarian minister. In the 1800s, it became a famous hymn for Christian abolitionists due to its language in verse 3. Like Mary's song, the hymn reminds us that justice and joy belong together. Sometimes, our joy is an act of resistance.

1201 Saliman Rd. Carson City, NV 89701 PO Box 20876 Carson City, NV 8972 Church Office Hours

Carson City, NV 89701 Carson City, NV 89721 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00

As we reflect on the promise of joy given to Mary, the shepherds, and all who wait, we're reminded that joy does not always look like laughter or ease. Sometimes, it's a quiet resilience, a determined hope, or a deep peace. In this season, may we find the courage to embrace joy, knowing that even in the world's brokenness, God's love and light offer us a reason to rejoice.

And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and joy. We will seek a "thrill of hope" in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even and especially if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.

Amen.





On December 13th and 14th, Holy Cross Lutheran Church will present a live nativity scene from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church 4895 S. McCarran Blvd. Reno, NV 89502 775 827-4822

Council Corner Louise Griffith,

President

President's Report for December

This article is dedicated to communicating the actions, decisions, and future action items of the Church Council. It is intended to give the congregation the highlights of the Church Council meeting.



Financial Report:

	October 2024	Total Year-to-Date
Total General Fund Income	\$12,962.66	\$74,987.24
Total General Fund Expenses	\$18,334.93*	\$66,618.08*
Difference	\$-5,372.27	\$8,069.16

^{*}Note: Includes cost of relocation for Pastor Paul. Expense was paid by the relocation savings account.

At the Council Meeting:

The Church Council continues to update church policies, including the employee handbook and the Constitution Bylaws. The policy "Storage of Church Records Following ELCA Guidelines" was approved. The form for new membership was updated. There is also a small group that has taken on the project to update our membership, friends, and family database. They will be asking for updated information from everyone, so we can make sure we have the most current information. The information they collect will be held is strict confidence and will not be shared with anyone outside of St Paul's.

The copy machine was very old, and we could no longer get parts to repair it. We approved a lease on a new copy machine and will be receiving it soon.

The Council will not meet during the month of December. We will meet again in January 2025.

Installation Service of Pastor Paul and Lay Led Services

The installation of Pastor Paul was a huge success! Thank you to all who helped with food, set up of the Fellowship Hall, participation during the service, choir, Pastor Mary Lou for responding to our SOS call and preaching, Pastor Sarah Johnson who led the installation, Vicki Hamilton and the youth group, and, of course, our incredible Office Manager Brette for all of the work on the bulletin. Thank you to Judy and Heidi for working on the stains in the carpet. It was a wonderful celebration to usher in a new chapter for St Paul's.

During November, we had two lay led worship services. One was led by the youth group and one was a Bible reading highlighting the life of Jesus and hymns to celebrate Christ the King Sunday. Thank you to the youth group for the service on November 10th. You were awesome! Thank you to Jay Olshen, Judy McPhail, Deanna Fine, Linda Wilson, Dorothea Phelan, Holly McPhail, Dave Lingensjo, and Traci Angel for your leadership and participation in the November 24th service.

If you are interested in helping lead or participate in a lay led service, please contact Pastor Paul.

The Church Council wishes you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

May the light of Christ be with you all! Louise Griffith, President

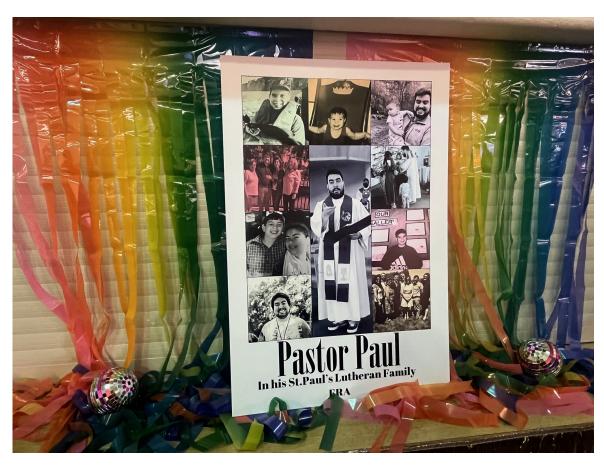
A Fond Adieu to Our Beloved Interim Pastor-Pastor Mary Lou Petitjean







THE INSTALLATION OF THE REVEREND PAUL M. LARSON NOVEMBER 16, 2024











Greeters

December 1 Judy McPhail

December 8 Louise and Greg Griffith December 15 Brian and Diane Marley

December 22 Marla Johnson

December 24, 3:00 p.m.

Rachel Olson and Family

December 24, 7:00 p.m. Judy McPhail

December 29 Nick Cotsonis

Readers

December 1 Linda Wilson December 8 Kim Neiman

December 15 TBA

December 22 Nick Cotsonis

December 24, 3:00 p.m. Ken Beaton December 24, 7:00 p.m. Steve Ranson

December 29 TBA

Communion Assistants

Volunteers for all dates TBA

Livestreaming Team

Nick Cotsonis and Holly McPhail

Musicians

Dave Lingensjo, Principle Musician Vicki Hamilton, Organist Carol Arneson, Choir Director

Altar Guild

December 1 Joan Schultz and Mary DeFelice December 8 Carol Arneson Other volunteers and dates TBA

Counters

December 1 Judy McPhail and Deanna Fine December 8 Jeanne Russell and Jay Olshen

December 15 Judy McPhail and

Carol Arneson

December 22 Deanna Fine and Dorothea Phelan

December 24, 3:00 p.m.

Jay Olshen and Mary DeFelice

December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Jean Opperman and

Judy McPhail

December 29 Steve Ranson and

Shirley Rickard

Acolytes

Clay Woslum and Greg Griffith

Youth Acolytes

December 1 Steven and Garan December 8 Kellsey and Destiny December 15 Kellsey and Corbin December 22 Alana and Destiny December 24, 3:00 p.m. Garen December 24, 7:00 p.m. Niko December 29 Steven and Shay

Ushers

All dates are open for volunteers.

Ministry Leaders

Altar Guild: Vicki Hamilton Greeters: Ruth Fitzgerald

Worship and Readers: Judy McPhail

Counters: Mary DeFelice Youth Acolytes: Traci Angel Card Ministry: Marla Johnson

Volunteers are needed for all worship service positions, especially readers, communion assistants, and ushers.
If you can serve, please contact the appropriate ministry leaders. Thank you!



Finance Committee Members Wanted

Are you skilled in finance or have experience in managing budgets? Do you have a heart for stewardship and supporting the mission of our congregation? If so, we invite you to consider speaking with Pastor Paul or St. Paul's Treasurer Sharon Gesick.

As a member of this committee, you will play a key role in shaping the financial health and future of our congregation. Your expertise will help ensure we manage our resources wisely and support the programs that allow us to effectively serve our community.



As a congregation, we are especially looking to the future, in developing stewardship initiatives to inspire generosity, collaborate on fundraising campaigns and grant opportunities, and provide guidance for long-term financial planning.

You don't need to be a CPA to contribute—your passion for responsible stewardship and your willingness to share your knowledge is what matters most. Together, we can build a stronger foundation for our congregation's future. Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve!



St. Paul's Lutheran Family is blessed with many volunteers who month after month, year after year get the job done at out church whether it be serving at worship services, repairing what's broken around the property, hosting the after service Coffee Hour, volunteering to write cards to the shut-ins, working with our youth, making beautiful crocheted blankets and lap robes, serving on the Executive Committee or Church Council, conducting Bible studies, or accompanying the Pastor on visitations.

However, these wonderful volunteers need help, and they need a break. It's time for everyone to step up and volunteer to serve in one of the many ministries at St. Paul's.

Remember: The church is **not** a building. **You** are the church and you, your time, and your talents are needed at St. Paul's.

Please contact Pastor Paul or a Ministry leader if you can volunteer in 2025. Thank you!



Thank you to everyone who served
St. Paul's Lutheran Family in 2024.
A special thank you to Judy McPhail and Heidi Jones
for keeping our building clean.
You truly made a difference to us all!
God bless you!

December Birthdays



- 5 Liam Little
- 10 Cody Lopez
- 11 Gary Johnson
- 12 Bill Anderson
- 16 Amanda Chambers
- 16 Jan Enders
- 19 Joan Schultz
- 21 Bob Chambers
- 23 Karrie Alexander
- 24 Meghann Adams
- 24 Rosette Motlz
- 26 Steven Overlock
- 30 Christopher Moltz



GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING!



Many thanks to all those who continue to tithe and give offerings to our church.

Your faithfulness to St. Paul's is appreciated beyond words.





FIREFIGHTERS/PEACE OFFICERS

Brian Hillenbrand, Tina Sherman, Mark Dickens, John Gould, Michael Gould, and Jason Wildblood.

SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

Brandon Luterick, Heather Joyner (Johnson), Peter Elverum, Sarah McGee, Bryce Stimpka, and Olivia Lesperance,

WELCA Bible Study meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

For more information, contact Vicki Hamilton.

STITCHERS will meet on Tuesday, December 10th, but not on December 24th.

Merry Christmas!



Stitchers donated fifty-five quilts to Advocates for Domestic Violence. We also donated quilts to go under the youth's Christmas Angel Tree.

Shirley Rickard



All youth who are in the 6th through 12th grade are welcome to join the Youth Group! Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Sunday after our worship service.

If you know anyone who is interested or has any questions,

Christmas Angel Tree

We have adopted ten kids in our community who are in need of Christmas. We want to give each person Christmas gifts and a new outfit. We have soccer players, outdoor lovers, and sports playing youth. The amazing quilting ladies are gifting each child a new quilt!



please send your donation to the church, and the youth will be happy do the shopping! If you are going out and about to shop, please bring your **unwrapped** gift with the angel ornament attached to it to the church by **Sunday**, **December 6**th. Please place all gifts under the tree.

If you have any questions, please contact me. – Traci Angel.

Thank you!



Santa and His Friends

The Youth Group will be out and about to see some of our family members this Christmastide.

If you know anyone who would like a special visit, please reach out to Traci.

We love to fill our cars with goodies and spread the cheer to our members!



Special Christmas Youth Sunday & Coffee Hour Brunch

The youth and kids will be putting together our Youth Sunday on December 15th with a special Coffee Hour and Brunch directly after the Christmas Program.

We look forward to seeing you all. ~ Traci Angel





Mark your calendars!





WHAT IS ADVENT?

Advent is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming, or birth of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Celebrating Advent typically involves a season of prayer, fasting, and repentance, followed by anticipation, hope, and joy.

Many Christians celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for Christ's first coming to Earth as a baby, but also for his presence among us today through the Holy Spirit, and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of the age.

The word *advent* comes from the Latin term *adventus* meaning "arrival" or "coming," particularly the coming of something having great importance. Advent season, then, is both a time of joy-filled, anticipatory celebration of the arrival of Jesus Christ and a preparatory period of repentance, meditation, and penance.

Advent marks the beginning of the church year. In Western Christianity, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, or the Sunday which falls closest to November 30, and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24. When Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, it is the last or fourth Sunday of Advent. Thus, the actual season of Advent can last anywhere from 22-28 days, but most commercial Advent calendars start on December 1.

For Eastern Orthodox churches that use the Julian calendar, Advent begins earlier, on November 15, and lasts 40 days rather than four weeks (in a parallel to the 40 days of Lent prior to Easter). Advent is also known as the Nativity Fast in Orthodox Christianity.

https://www.learnreligions.com/meaning-of-advent-700455



The Birth of Jesus

² In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven," and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

Luke 2 NRSV

OUR CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

By Angela T. !Khabeb Originally published in 2022, "Living Lutheran"

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2:10-14).

Our oldest child, Konami, was confirmed this year. It's hard for me to believe that my little baby is now in high school. I remember when my husband, Benhi, gave Konami his first haircut. He was about 2 years old and had a gorgeous thick, curly, brown afro. But when it was buzzed off, his little toddler face all but disappeared. It was as if he had instantly matured. It felt like my baby was gone and there was a little boy standing where my toddler used to be.

Certainly it is our hope that our children will live abundant, long lives. It's our prayer that each of them will reach their fullest potential as they grow into adulthood and beyond. Oh, but the mommy in me cherishes the "baby" I see in each of my children's faces. Even though I might complain about being overwhelmed at times with the challenges of parenthood, I do relish our tender moments with our children and wish they would last forever.

I wonder if we do the same with Jesus? It's so easy to worship the babe in the manger. It's so simple to come and adore the newborn king. On some level, do we try to keep Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothing? But if we stay at the nativity, we miss the opportunity to, like Jesus, grow in wisdom and favor.

Do we try to keep Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothing?

The manger is lovely. But baby Jesus was born in the shadow of the cross. As his disciples, we follow this babe into the wilderness for 40 days where we witness our Savior being tempted by Satan. We don't want to go there. We want to stay at the little town of Bethlehem. Perhaps we want a Jesus who will keep us comfortable, unchallenged. Not even Mary and Joseph had that luxury. When they brought Jesus to be presented at the temple, Simeon held infant Jesus and prophesied. His prophecy also included a word for Mary: "a sword will pierce your own soul too." During Jesus' preteen years when his family visited the temple, we read of Mary and Joseph who are anxious to find their missing son, only to find him in his Father's house where he was astounding the teachers with his understanding and his answers. If Jesus' ministry wasn't comfortable for his parents, should we expect any different? Our Savior calmed the sea and rocked the boat. We really can't have one without the other.

That little baby Jesus grew strong in wisdom and favor, and our faith should grow as well. The cross is in the crèche. Therefore, the Christmas miracle calls us to be a friend of sinners, to judge not and to give of ourselves. The Christmas miracle calls us to face rejection and embrace the cost of true discipleship. It calls us to face betrayal, just like Jesus did.

So as we continue to sing our Christmas hymns, remember that behind every word, every note, every verse is Jesus' entire ministry. Within each joyful melody is the life, death and resurrection of the newborn king. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus 2,000 years ago, remember that we are part of the Christmas miracle. The Christmas miracle is in our midst. God has revealed God's self to us through Jesus. We celebrate the radical, awesome, incredible proclamation of the incarnation—the Word continues to dwell among us!

Jesus is born today and every day. Jesus is born in his gathered people. Jesus is born in you. Jesus is born in me. Jesus is born in us.

Angela T. !Khabeb is an ELCA pastor living in Minneapolis. She enjoys an active home life with her husband and three children.

Christmas Poinsettias

Since last year's poinsettia plan worked out so well, the Altar Guild will repeat it this year.

We have ordered poinsettias at an approximate total of \$115.00.

We're asking the congregation to make donations for the purchase.

Along with the donations, memorial and other dedications will be accepted for the Christmas bulletin. Any funds beyond the purchase of the flowers will be donated to St. Paul's General Fund.

If you have any questions, please contact me.
Thanks! Joan Schultz

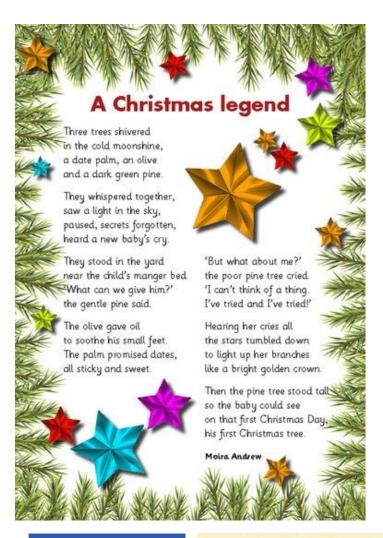
In memory or celebration of:

	-			
From:			 ,	

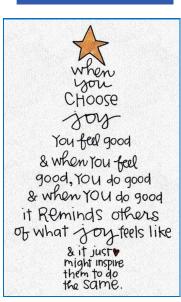
Please make cheques payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Family Memo line: Christmas Memorial Gift

You can place your filled out forms in the collection plate on Sundays, drop them off at the church office during office hours, or mail them to the church's Post Office Box.





"Christmas
is forever,
not for just
one day.
For loving,
sharing, giving,
are not to
put away."



"For it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself."

—CHARLES DICKENS

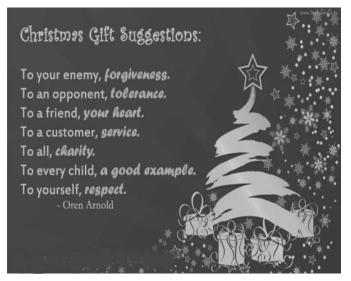




I was just counting my blessings, and thought you should know you are one of them.











Other Christian Charities

https://www.compassion.com https://www.foodforthepoor.org https://www.bread.org/

https://impactwise.co/best-christian-charities/

Worthy Charities in Carson City Advocates to End Domestic Violence https://www.aedv.org/

FISH Friends in Service Helping https://www.nvfish.com/

Feeding Pets of the Homeless https://petsofthehomeless.org/

Ron Wood Family Resource Center https://carson-family.org/

Catmandu Cat Shelter https://www.catmanducc.org/

Scaredy Cats Trap Neuter Release https://www.scaredycatstnr.com/

Nevada Humane Society
https://www.nevadahumanesociety.org/





Please don't forget the people of Ukraine this Christmas! They are fighting for their lives.

You can help with humanitarian aid via:
https://www.lutheranworld.org/
World Kitchen
wck.org/





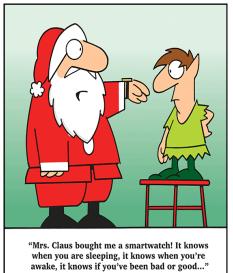
























Sunday

Worship 9:00 a.m. Youth Group First and third Sunday after worship

Sundays

NA 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 3rd
WELCA Bible Study
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Contact Vicki Hamilton for more information.

Stitchers

Tuesday, December 10th

No meeting on December 24th

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Contact Shirley Rickard for more information.

Tuesdays

Confirmation Class at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25th Christmas Day Church Office is closed.

Wednesdays, December 4th, 11th, 18th Choir Practice, 6:00 p.m. Contact Carol Arneson for more information.

Wednesday, December 31st New Year's Eve

Thursday, December 18th
Executive Meeting, 6:00 p.m.
No Council Meeting in December



A Google calendar is posted on St. Paul's website with all the events happening at our church.

https://www.stpaulslutheranfamily.com/



Worship services are held each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

This month services:

December 1 First Sunday of Advent December 8 Second Sunday of Advent December 15 Third Sunday of Advent December 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Eve

December 24, 3:00 p.m. December 24, 7:00 p.m.

December 29, First Sunday after Christmas

Our worship service is live-streamed via YouTube.

Directions for YouTube:



Copy and paste this link into your web browser.

https://www.youtube.com/@st.paulslutheranfamily7828

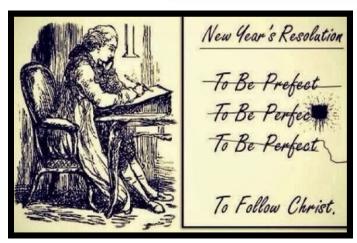
The link will take you to St. Paul's YouTube channel where you can watch the live service.

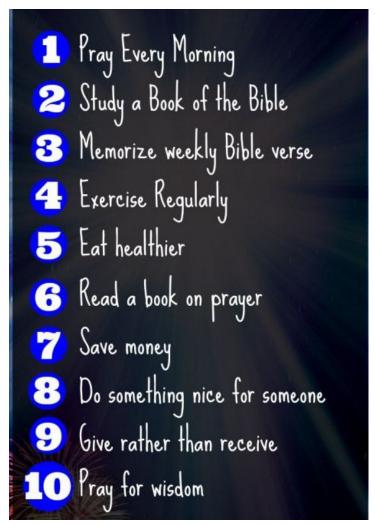
To watch recorded services, click on "Playlist" and then choose the Sunday service/video you want to watch.



Wishing each and every one a very Meowy Christmas!
Brette and the Furballs—
Edward, Rowdy Anne,
Tallulah, and Neville.
And Happy New Year too!







Less

Talking Television **Planning** Soda "Being Connected" Junk Food Complaining Excuses Worrying **Doubting Procrastinating** Frowning Selfishness Weakness Ignorance Ungratefulness Of the World

More

Listening Reading Doing Water Putting the Phone Down Fruits and Vegetables Encouraging Responsibility Hoping Believing Achieving **Smiling** Giving Confidence Understanding Thankfulness of God

