

Merry Christmas!

December 24, 2023



Pastor's Corner for December 24-30

The Real Meaning of Christmas

Put Christ back in Christmas! I'm sure you've seen this bumper sticker, Facebook post, blog title, or devotional meditation on at least one item this Christmas season. With the Christmas (or "holiday") season starting on November 1, at the latest, we can all be pretty exhausted with Christmas before Christmas actually gets here! But we should never be tired of Christmas, because the reality of Christmas for the Christian is that it is a celebration that never ends. Christmas is more than just one day meant for gathering with family and friends. If we treat Christmas as just one day, then we are no better than the secular world. Christmas is part of the foundation of our faith as the people of God!

Without the birth of the Savior, our faith wouldn't mean a thing. Jesus' name,

Immanuel, gets to the heart of the matter (Matthew 1:23), that God loves the whole world so much (John 3:16) that He didn't want us to be without Him. God knew that we could not reach Him, so He came down to us (Philippians 2:6-7). There is no greater act of love than God Himself putting on flesh (John 1:14) so that we can know Him as One who enters into our lives, knowing first-hand our struggles, fears, and even temptations (Hebrews 4:15), yet conquering them all. Christmas leads to the One Purpose that Christ came to accomplish.

Christmas is not just a single day or a moment, but it is the beginning of the life-changing, earth-shaking, heaven-shouting work that is done for all the people (Luke 2:10)! Christmas is the moment from which everything else springs forth. It is like the first note of a grand symphony, the opening whistle to the championship game, the footsteps racing down the stairs to see what awaits the joyous children; the beginning of something incredible! That One Purpose is to bring forgiveness to all people, the one gift that everyone needs (Mark 2:17). Again, Christ knew that we could not do it ourselves, so He didn't wait for us to get better, but died for us even while we were far off (Romans 5:6, 8). In Christmas, the Son of God is heading towards that grand moment of the One Purpose on the cross where He takes on our sin and gives us His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christmas is more than just a day.

Christmas is the moment that begins an eternal relationship with all who believe in Christ, who follow the one desire of the Savior (1 Timothy 2:4). Christmas is the beginning of something eternal because He comes to get us ready for that eternal home, which He is preparing for us right now (John 14:2-4). That is our confidence because we have been made heirs with Christ of the home which is His (Romans 8:16-17). Christmas is more than a day, it is eternity, it is life, it is the presence of God with us forever (Matthew 28:19).

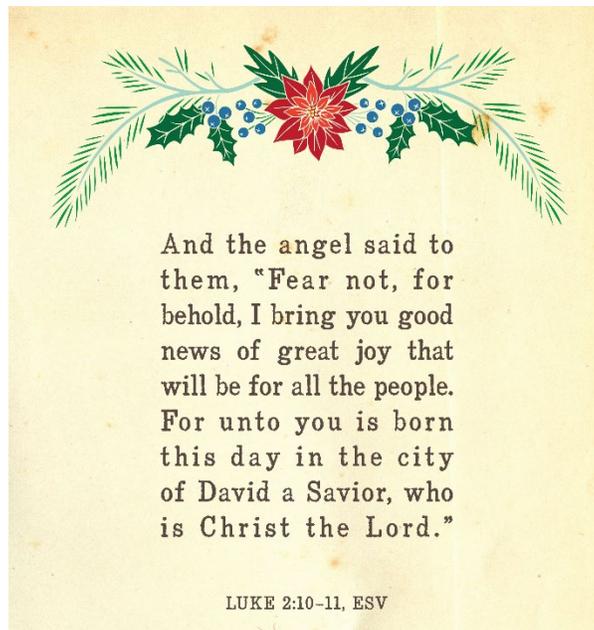
What is the real meaning of Christmas? Jesus is coming back! We absolutely should celebrate the birth of our Savior, it started something extraordinary, but it's the reminder that Jesus will come again someday (Matthew 24:36). That is our hope, just as God's people of old held onto the hope that a Savior would be born (Isaiah 7:14), you and I hold onto the hope that Jesus is coming back (Revelation 21:2-3). May we not be caught staring up to heaven, wondering what's going on (Acts 1:9-11). You

know what's going on, Jesus has come, He has died, He is risen, He is coming back.
And that's the real meaning of Christmas!

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Zach Sarrault

Please note, we will resume Sunday morning Christian education, Sunday School for children and youth, weekly Bible studies, and Wednesday Night Workshop, including dinner, in January.

Prayers of the Church



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



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

This group is designed to bring men in a similar season with similar life experiences and goals together.

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.

Saturday

This Is the Church

Saturdays, January 20, January 27, March 3 Only

9:30-11:00 am in Room 151, Family Life Center

Contact: Pastor Jonathan Blanke

Three 90-minute gatherings, Conversations around the Basics of the Christian Faith, will focus on what Christians believe and how the Christian faith can be understood in distinction from other world religions.

To register for a class, pick up a registration card at the Information Centers in the Narthex and Family Life Center Lobby, complete, and return in offering plate or place in the Church Office mailbox.

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.

The Coffeehouse for Special Needs Adults

Friday, January 12

We thank all of our volunteers who help us to have wonderful Coffeehouses! We couldn't do it without our faithful volunteers. Please come be a volunteer! Our special needs guests love to attend these events and we need lots of volunteers to make them feel special and loved.

We need Setter Uppers at 5:30 pm (both food and room), Servers at 6:30 pm, and Cleaner Uppers at 8:30 pm.



Sign Up: <https://bit.ly/3kqoHGN>

The first Coffeehouse of 2024 is **Friday, January 12** from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Family Life Center gym. Jim Linn's band, *Bona Fide Brass*, will play for us.

Questions? Contact Brenda Peterson through RCB or the church office at office@rlcary.org or 919-851-7248.

RLC Worship Servants and Training

Ushering and Greeting at the Praise Worship Service

Sundays, 11:00 am in the Family Life Center

For those who will be Greeting and/or Ushering in our Praise Worship service, please plan to attend one of the three brief training sessions scheduled in January. Meet in the Family Life Center Lobby.

Monday, January 8 at 7:00 pm
Sunday, January 14 at 10:00 am
Sunday, January 28 at 10:00 am

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.

Finance Updates

Change is coming soon...

Vanco - that provides the platform for our electronic and mobile donations - is changing the design for both online and mobile use. Our RLC Council is providing the finishing touches of personalization now and will soon publish the link to the new version. Stay tuned!

Offering Envelopes

If you typically use these for donation, the new packet for 2024 will be placed in your RLC mailbox after Christmas. Watch for it to appear. If you have not had, but

want to receive envelopes, please contact the Finance Team at finance@rlcary.org. Thanks!

Children and Family Ministry News
Upcoming Events:

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 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.

Join us for a cookie reception after the service!

December 24
3 pm
Everyone is welcome!

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

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. 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 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

Merry Christmas!



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

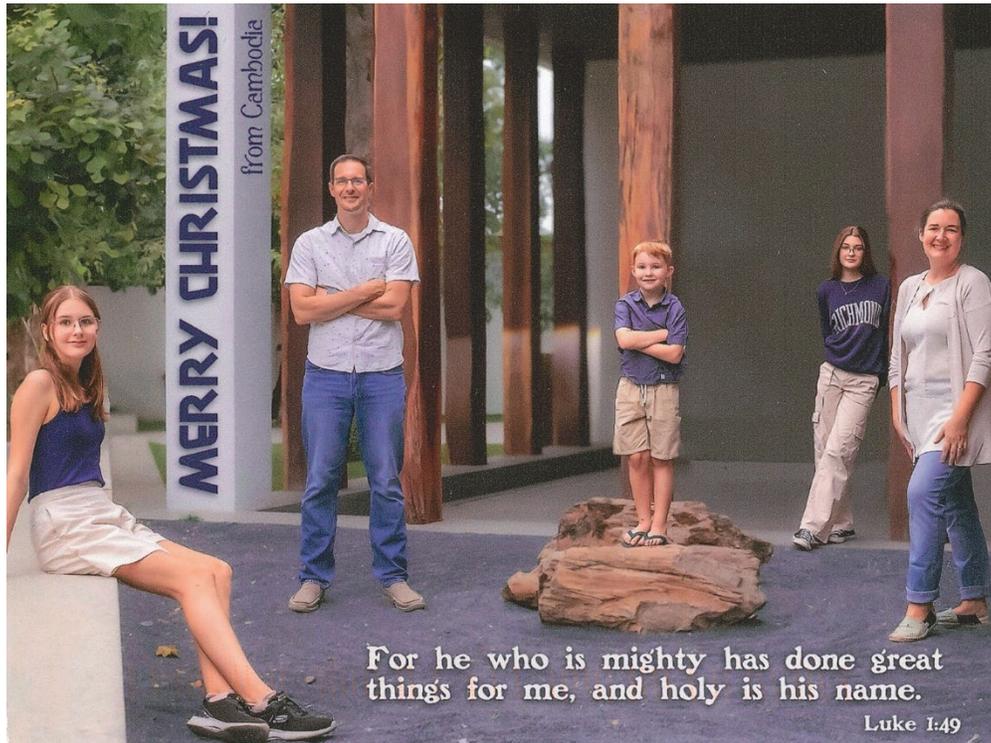
Resurrection Lutheran School



rlscary.org
Junior Kindergarten-8th Grade

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

Latest Lion's Tale



He Who is Mighty continues to do great things for Southeast Asia (and for you!). Thank you for sending us to be a part of it on your behalf.

Merry Christmas!

J.P., Aimee, Celeste, Bella, and Isaac

cimafam.com

missioncentral.us/cima

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 for Christmas Eve

Visual Faith for Christmas Day

Attendance and Giving

In-Person Worship Attendance

- Wednesday, December 13 - Old North State Brass
6:00 pm - 72
- Saturday, December 16
6:00 pm - 49
- Sunday, December 17
8:00 am - 69; 9:30 am - 131; 11:00 am - 93

Total In-Person Worship: 414

Views of Online Worship at RLC's YouTube Channel

- Wednesday, December 13 - Old North State Brass
6:00 pm - 47
- Sunday, December 17
8:00 am - 90; 11:00 am - 31

Total Online Views: 168 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: \$50,415.30

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



100 Lochmere Drive West, Cary NC 27518

rlcary.org

919-851-7248 | office@rlcary.org

*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 17, 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
- Former RLC Council Member and Newly Elected RLC Council Members
- RLC Music Director Bob Unger, Choirs, Instrumentalists, and All Who Contributed to the Christmas Music Festival Service on December 12

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
- Patricia Wellington, Chemo Treatments
- Miriam Beyer, Daughter-In-Law of *Charlotte Beyer

- *Bill Xenakis, Radiation Therapy
- Jan Bloom
- Pastor William Otto, Cancer Treatment and Surgery
- Bruce, Brother of *Ralph Klevenow
- *Meredith A.
- Michael
- *Pam Dickson
- *Stephanie Ford
- Beth Cook
- Brian, Karl, Linda, George, Charles, Baby Adalyn, Lindsay, Patti, Alex, Carla, Christiane, Quen, James, Stuart, Pat, Mary, Harold, Donald, Ken, Ted, Shannon, Virginia, Mara, Eric, Connie, Marti

For Comfort

- Friends and Family of Andy Renninger, Especially His Mother, Ellen Renninger, Aunt of *Dawn Leister
- Friends and Family of Greg Todd, Neighbor of *Linda Crandall
- Friends and Family of Lauren Call

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
- College Students Completing Classes and End of Semester Exams
- Storm and Tornado Damage, Especially in Middle Tennessee
- RLC Financial Health and Stewardship
- Steve and Lee Ann Dezern, Home Damaged by Tornado in Garner
- Those Suffering with Mental Illness, Friends and Family Affected by Suicide
- Healthy Pregnancy for Laura
- Don
- Mom, Surgery Next Month
- God's Peace

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 12/21/23