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MT. ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)

4065 Mt. Zion Rd. Lucas, Ohio 44843 419-892-2023

Sunday School at 9:15a.m. ~ Morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Email us at mtzionlutheran1@embarqmail.com Visit our website at www.mtzionlutheranchurch.org

Join us on Facebook at Mt Zion Lutheran Church

Advent or Why aren't we singing Christmas Carols

There are many beginnings of the year. There is the secular New Year, January 1 with much celebration. There is the practical new year, the beginning of church activity year usually early September as congregants return from summer vacation and schools resume. For Jews, Rosh Hashanah in September-October marks the beginning of the new year. In Eastern Orthodox practice the year begins September 1, the beginning of the tax year in the Byzantine Empire. Since about the beginning of the seventh century, however, the Western church begins its new year with Advent, the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

What is this season of Advent, How did it come about and why does it have an end times character about it? Some people may know that the Advent season focuses on expectation and think that it serves as an anticipation of Christ's birth in the season leading up to Christmas. While this is part of the story, there is much more to Advent. The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming," "approach," which is a translation of the Greek word *parousia*.

Throughout the centuries the meaning and celebration of advent has changed. Originally, it was a preparation season for the baptism of new Christians. Then, in the 6th century it was linked to the coming of Christ. However, the "coming" they had in mind was not Christ's first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming in the clouds as the judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was explicitly linked to Christ's first coming at Christmas.

Today, the season of Advent lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Advent has come to have a threefold meaning for the church: 1) Past: the advent of our Lord in the flesh at Christmas; 2) Present: the advent of the Lord in Word and Sacrament; and 3) Future: the advent of our Lord in glory at the end of time to judge. The first of these comings was in the past, visible in the weakness of a human infant; the second is present, invisible but in spirit and power; the third in the future glory and majesty that will be visible to everyone. If there is one single note that runs through all the meanings, it is that of joyful anticipation. You will find that spirit in the ancient hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel*, which will replace our hymn of praise during this advent season.

The theme of Advent then is waiting, waiting for God, waiting with sometimes rising impatience, deepening frustration, and frequent disappointment. We wait, we hope, we look. The season gives voice to the impatience God's people feel at least from time to time but which they



may be hesitant to express to God. The purpose of Advent is to rouse once again in the people of the Church the anticipation of the End and of the great Day of the Lord, and to bid them be prepared for it. The waiting of Advent is a real waiting, an expectancy of an event that has not yet taken place, an event that still lies ahead of us. Advent allows us to experience the already (Christ in the flesh) but not yet (the glorious return) in one season.

Over the course of the four weeks, Scripture readings move us through this journey of preparation and waiting. The readings which highlight Christ's coming in the past focus on the Old Testament prophecies of his incarnation at Bethlehem. The readings, which highlight Christ's coming in the future, focus on his "second coming" on the Last Day at the end of time. And the readings that highlight Christ's coming in the present focus on his ministry among us through Word and Sacrament today. Martin Luther encouraged families to observe Advent as a time for them to teach their children about the coming of Christ. The First Sunday, Advent Sunday, focuses on eschatology (end times) and the looking to the end of all things. The Second and Third Sunday both focus on the ministry forerunner, John the Baptist. The Fourth Sunday takes as its theme events that prepared immediately for Jesus's birth.

During this time the liturgical paraments and vestments will change to blue to recognize Advent as a time of anticipation and hope. The color violet can also be used as a symbol of preparation and repentance as well as the royalty of the coming King. Additionally, you will see an advent wreath and the lighting of the candles each Sunday of Advent. The Advent wreath has its roots in the pre-Christian practices of northern Europe. People sought the return of the sun in the dark time of the year (at the winter solstice) by lighting candles and fires. As early as the middle Ages, Christians used fire and light to represent Christ's coming into the world. Using this same symbolism, the Advent wreath developed a few centuries ago in Germany as a sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wreath, a circle, came to represent the eternal victory over death through Jesus Christ. The evergreens were a sign of the faithfulness of God to God's people, even in death, and the lighted candles were a reminder of the light of Christ brought into the world. Most Advent wreaths use three colors of candles – purple, pink, and white. The first candle lit is a purple one and is the prophets candle or the candle of hope (Romans 15:12-13), our hope found in Christ. The second week of advent is also purple and is the Bethlehem candle or the candle of preparation (Luke 3:4-6), our preparing for his coming again. The third week has us lighting the pink candle, it is the Shepherds candle or the candle of joy (Luke 2:7-15), the joy of the incarnate savior. The last purple candle on the outside of the wreath is the angel candle or the candle of love (Luke 2:10b-11), God's love shown in the person of Jesus Christ. On Christmas eve (or day) we light the center white candle which is the Christ candle, which reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins. His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth! *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’”* ~ John 1:29

Unfortunately, today, Advent gets swallowed up by the world with its frantic gift shopping, putting up Christmas lawn decorations and anticipating the arrival of Santa Claus. Maybe this year, we can be a church who slows down and takes the time to prepare our hearts with hope, peace, love and joy. Let us be prepared, not just for holiday parties and decorations, but for the coming of the king. To help in that end, we have available several different devotionals for Advent. We have devotionals for adults, devotionals for teens and an advent calendar for the children. Please take advantage of these resources to help truly prepare for the coming Messianic feast that we may enter into Joy!

The Real 12 days of Christmas

Did you know that for the Christian Church, Christmas starts on the 25th and ends 12 days later on January 6th with the Epiphany (the arrival of the Magi)? That is right, the opposite of the way the world celebrates Christmas. Every year, Christmas displays and Christmas music begin earlier and earlier and then comes to a screeching halt on December 26th. However, in the church we are just beginning our celebration after the 4-week preparation of Advent.



The "real" 12 days of Christmas are important not just as a way of thumbing our noses at secular ideas of the "Christmas season." They are important because they give us a way of reflecting on what the Incarnation means in our lives. Christmas commemorates the most momentous event in human history—the entry of God into the world he made, in the form of a baby.

Would it surprise you to know that up until somewhere between the 4th and 6th Century the church did not celebrate Christmas. Epiphany was the celebration of the church since AD 325. Events began to spin off from Epiphany. By the sixth century, Dec. 25 had become the celebration of Christ's birth. His Baptism was celebrated after Epiphany, so Epiphany itself focused on the arrival of the kings who, not being Jews, give it the significance of the appearance, or manifestation, of the Messiah to the Gentiles. Divisions cease. Jesus appeared not only as the Chosen One of Israel but the Lord of all nations.

So from Christmas Day onward, all the fun and festivities are just beginning! However, it is a rollercoaster ride with celebrations and feasts of saints and martyrs. These 12 days help Christians remember that the life of faith is full of challenges and hardships but also contains plenty of reasons to celebrate as we remember the heroes and heroines of the church, and most importantly, our Lord and Savior. You have twelve more days to celebrate, so leave those decorations up, right on up through Twelfth Night (Jan. 5–6). Simply put, the appearance or manifestation of God is just too big to contain in one day! That's why the Church doesn't. Instead, it extends the celebration of God's coming among us to twelve days, starting at Christmas. Don't let the world, the mall, or any calendar tell you any differently!

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Pastor would like to pass on to all who were thinking about giving to him and his wife this Christmas season to instead consider donating to the NALC Disaster relief fund or the Church's renovation fund, or the Lucas food Pantry. He appreciates the thought but would rather the money go to those who need it this year. Thank you

Vulnerable Love

God throws open the door of this world – and enters as a baby. As the most vulnerable imaginable. Because he wants unimaginable intimacy with you. What religion ever had a god that wanted such intimacy with us that he came with such vulnerability to us? What God ever came so tender we could touch him? So fragile that we could break him? So vulnerable that his bare, beating heart could be hurt? Only the One who loves you to death.

—Ann Voskamp, *The Greatest Gift*

THE SONG: The Twelve Days of Christmas

The popular song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is usually seen as simply a nonsense song for children with secular origins. However, folklore has it as a song of Christian instruction, perhaps dating to the 16th century religious wars in England, with hidden references to the basic teachings of the Christian Faith. They contend that it was a mnemonic device to teach the catechism to youngsters. The "true love" mentioned in the song is not an earthly suitor, but refers to God Himself. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person who is part of the Christian Faith. Each of the "days" represents some aspect of the Christian Faith that was important for children to learn.

However, many have questioned the historical accuracy of this origin of the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. While some have tried to debunk this as an "urban myth" out of personal agendas, others have tried to deal with this account of the song's origin in the name of historical accuracy (see Snopes on The 12 Days of Christmas). There is little "hard" evidence available either way. Some church historians affirm this account as basically accurate, while others point out apparent historical and logical discrepancies.

The view of the song as a secret catechism is most likely legendary or anecdotal. Without corroboration and in the absence of "substantive evidence," we probably should not take overly rigid positions from either perspective. However, this should not prevent us from using the song in celebration of Christmas. Many of the symbols of Christianity were not originally religious, including even the present date of Christmas, but were appropriated from contemporary culture by the Christian Faith as vehicles of worship and proclamation. Perhaps, when all is said and done, historical accuracy, as important as that might be on one level, is not really the point. Perhaps more important is that Christians can celebrate their rich heritage, and God's grace, through one more avenue during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Now, when they hear what they once thought was only a secular "nonsense song," they will be reminded in one more way of the grace of God working in transforming ways in their lives and in our world. After all, is that not the meaning of Christmas anyway?

On the 1st day of Christmas my true love sent to me...A Partridge in a Pear Tree:

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, much in memory of the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but you would not have it so" (Luke 13:34)

On the 2nd day of Christmas my true love sent to me... Two Turtle Doves

The Old and New Testaments, which together bear witness to God's self-revelation in history and the creation of a people to tell the Story of God to the world.

On the 3rd day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Three French Hens

There are two versions of what the three French hens stand for. Some say they are the three Biblical virtues the author Paul espoused in 1 Corinthians 13:13: Faith, Hope, and Love. Others claim the three French hens represent the three precious gifts the Wise Men brought: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and inspire us to bring our best to Christ.

On the 4th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Four Calling Birds

The Four Gospels: 1) Matthew, 2) Mark, 3) Luke, and 4) John, which proclaim the Good News of God's

On the 5th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Five Gold Rings

The first Five Books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah or the Pentateuch: 1) Genesis, 2) Exodus, 3) Leviticus, 4) Numbers, and 5) Deuteronomy, which gives the history of humanity's sinful failure and God's response of grace in the creation of a people to be a light to the world.

On the 6th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Six Geese A-laying

The six days of creation that confesses God as Creator and Sustainer of the world (Genesis 1).

On the 7th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Seven Swans A-swimming

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: 1) prophecy, 2) ministry, 3) teaching, 4) exhortation, 5) giving, 6) leading, and 7) compassion (Romans 12:6-8; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11)

On the 8th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Eight Maids A-milking

The eight Beatitudes: 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, 2) those who mourn, 3) the meek, 4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, 5) the merciful, 6) the pure in heart, 7) the peacemakers, 8) those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. (Matthew 5:3-10)

On the 9th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Nine Ladies Dancing

The nine Fruit of the Holy Spirit: 1) love, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) kindness, 6) generosity, 7) faithfulness, 8) gentleness, and 9) self-control. (Galatians 5:22)

On the 10th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Ten Lords A-leaping

The ten commandments: 1) You shall have no other gods before me; 2) Do not make an idol; 3) Do not take God's name in vain; 4) Remember the Sabbath Day; 5) Honor your father and mother; 6) Do not murder; 7) Do not commit adultery; 8) Do not steal; 9) Do not bear false witness; 10) Do not covet. (Exodus 20:1-17)

On the 11th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Eleven Pipers Piping

The eleven Faithful Apostles: 1) Simon Peter, 2) Andrew, 3) James, 4) John, 5) Philip, 6) Bartholomew, 7) Matthew, 8) Thomas, 9) James bar Alphaeus, 10) Simon the Zealot, 11) Judas bar James. (Luke 6:14-16). The list does not include the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders and the Romans.

On the 12th day of Christmas my true love sent to me...Twelve Drummers Drumming

The Twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed: 1) I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. 2) I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. 3) He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. 4) He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell [the grave]. 5) On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 6) He will come again to judge the living and the dead. 7) I believe in the Holy Spirit, 8) the holy catholic Church, 9) the communion of saints, 10) the forgiveness of sins, 11) the resurrection of the body, 12) and life everlasting.

The Semi-Annual Congregational meeting will be on
January 27, 2019 after Sunday Service.

Christmas Eve candlelight church service will be at 7:30 pm on
December 24th.

During the month of December, you are encouraged to greet and pray for these members and friends of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

***If there is anyone you would like to add to our Birthday/Anniversary list please contact the Church Office with your request! Thank you!*



3	Tammy Cooper	20	Alex Hunt, Mylah McKenna
7	Sheri Culler		
8	Easton Hall	21	Erica Westfield
13	Joyce Boggs	27	Zachery Winters
14	Zach Stallard		

5 Kevin & Sarah Smith
 8 Dean & Janeith Cook
 10 Jon & Vanessa Barrett
 20 Harold & Cynthia Anschutz
 27 Nate & Amity Arnold



During the month of December, we THANK these members who are offering their service to the church in various ways:

Lector

2 Mike Dourson
 9 Bill Grubaugh
 16 Kim Smollen
 23 Lee Cook
 24 Christmas Eve
 30 Kathy Grover

Acolyte

Shelby Grover
 Ryan Culler
 Atticus Hall
 Paige Arnold
 Grant Barrett
 Jessica Grover

Fellowship Time

Freda Steward
 Amity Arnold
 Ayesha Fraizer

 Martha Dourson

Ushers

Communion

Dave Culler

Offering Counters

Martha Dourson & Nate Arnold

Altar Guild

Susan Laps & Marie McKenna



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS



Members: Janet Grover, Grace Kintz, Lucille Maglott, Ethel Oaklief, Al and Mary Fowler, Joannie Smith, and Bill Grubaugh. Family and others: Mark Alt (Uncle of Kathy Grover), Patricia Dourson (Mother of Member), Darell Harless, Tom Lyons, Rev. Sanford Mitchell (Retired Pastor, Trinity – Ashland), Richard Orewiler, Sara Schwendeman, Jameson Taylor (Son-in-Law of Bill and Jan Grubaugh), and Kay Zgela.

The Perfect Gift

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said, “Love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction.” At Christmas we celebrate God coming to earth to look outward with us in the same direction, from our perspective and experience.

Jesus was an ordinary person: He learned to talk and walk like any toddler, learned a trade from his father and acquired the habits of faith from his family. In adulthood, Jesus experienced life as we all do: the challenge of hard work, grief at a loved one’s death, heartache over oppression and the world’s great needs – but also joy in celebration, fellowship with neighbors and deep friendship.

God personally knows our every experience, emotion and need – because Jesus, while fully divine, lived as a full human being. He has gazed at the world, life and even death from our direction, giving us the perfect Christmas gift: love.

A very big “**Thank You**” to everyone that contributed to this year’s Samaritan’s Purse campaign. The Sunday School children filled boxes with gifts that go to children all over the world. And a very special thanks to all that filled boxes, provided items, and helped in any way. Great job, Mt. Zion!



Nov. 5, 2018

Attendance: Nate Arnold, Audrey Cook, David Culler, Martha Dourson (via phone), Mary Fowler, Ralph Hall, Pastor Eric Steward.

Pastor Eric opened the meeting with devotions.

Minutes were handed out. Motion to accept minutes made by Ralph, seconded by Mary. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

For the month of October receipts of \$7,877.75 expenses of \$8,034.91. We were -\$157.16 for the month and -\$3,999.13 for the year.

\$200 was paid to the NALC Mission District. It should have been \$250 so we will be sending another \$50.

\$379 was collected for the Gideons.

Motion to accept treasurer's report made by Ralph, seconded by Nate. Motion carried.

PASTOR'S REPORT - for July and August

Pastor Eric gave his report.

Home Communion – 3

Home Visits: 4

Funeral: 1

Hospital Visits: 1

Sermon's preached: 4

Children's Sermons: 4

Administrative – misc. paperwork, phone, email

Adult Sunday School – 4

Catechism: 2

Wed. Bible Study @Mt. Zion: 5

Church Council – 1

Food pantry: 1

LAMA: 1

School Sporting events: 4

Youth Harvest Party, Chili Cookoff/Pumpkin Carving (winner of the chili cookoff)

Reformation Lunch, NALC Candidacy Committee Meeting (Columbus)

The Community Thanksgiving Service will be held at Grace Bible on Tuesday, Nov. 20.

There are 5 youth attending catechism. 3 from Mt. Zion and 2 from St. Michael's

RENO UPDATE

Walk, handrails and the storm window on the stained glass window have all been completed.

There have been several requests for some kind of striping on the edge of the steps at the John Fox Room entrance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

No Reports

OLD BUSINESS

Martha told Adam Hall to get with Pastor Eric regarding how to present his idea of Mt. Zion becoming partners with On The Outs.

We need a chair person for the Fellowship Committee. Possibly will be handled by Mary Tomlinson, Kathy Culler and Martha Dourson.

Pastor has not received any response from those he has asked if they would be willing to be a communion helper.

NEW BUSINESS

What's next for Mt. Zion Church? Brainstorming of ideas of a vision.

The focus of Mt. Zion is to spread the Word of Christ.

We could offer some classes here. (Ex. CPR, after school tutoring, GED)

Ice Cream Social in the summer

Any questions Bible Study could be held at Mt. Zion

We discussed the question: Mt. Zion is a church that....

Welcomes all

Community/outward focused

Friendly

Like a family

Has a great youth group

We need to answer the question: Why don't people come?

Pastor will survey the youth anonymously to hear their reasons for not wanting to stay for worship.

What would you like to see at worship.

This discussion will continue next month.

Motion to adjourn by Ralph. Second Mary.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Cook, Council Secretary

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

You're invited to Pastor Eric and Freda's Open House at their home,
958 Mowery Rd., Perrysville, on December 15th from 2-6 pm.



Grateful or Greatful?

It's hard to believe Thanksgiving was only a few days ago, with all the turkeys, pumpkin pies, ... and football, and the Christmas decorations are already up. It's also a time that most of us, as Christians, take time to count our blessings. While that's a wonderful thing to do, I am sure that many of us would advocate that being grateful should be a part of our character, not a holiday feeling.

Being grateful not only recognizes God's many gifts to us; it is actually beneficial and healthy. It is a feeling that confirms that our identity is in Christ and from him, our lives are blessed. That is not to say that we will not experience hardships or sadness along the way. We have, or will, face many challenges and losses in our lives. But God loves and forgives us like no other. He gives us hope and the ability to forgive others. But is feeling grateful really a healthy habit?

Several years ago there was a neighbor of an elderly woman who for various reasons did not enjoy living beside her. She would ask him to pick up trash in his yard, point out that his grass needed mowing, or that paint on his house was peeling. He was not grateful for these seemingly constant requests. Instead, he became so angry with her that he began to do things to intimidate her, like throwing rocks and trash on her yard. He became obsessed with "putting her in her place". When he broke some of her windows, he was charged and arrested. While in jail, he expressed his anger towards this neighbor over and over... and soon collapsed from a massive heart attack. Hatred had consumed him; he could not forgive her. He was not grateful. Where did it get him?

So as we reflect on our Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays this year, let us realize we ought to be thankful, be grateful, not only for this season, but for every day of the year. God has given us so much – not only the gift of his Son but his enduring love and forgiveness that are with us always. Let us always be grateful for these gifts that we can use and pass on...gifts that keep us rooted and renewed in body, mind and spirit.

(and by the way, greatful is really a misspelling of grateful).

Martha Dourson, Council President

Five-Pointed Star

The star of Bethlehem is often shown as a five-pointed star. Roughly shaped like a human being, it symbolizes Christ's incarnation. It also calls to mind the wise men's journey: "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him'" (Matthew 2:1-2, NIV).



December 2018

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1
2 <i>Catechism 6-8</i>	3 <i>Pastor in class 2-5 Karen in office 9-12:30</i>	4 <i>Pastor in class 2-5 Karen in office 9-12:30</i>	5 <i>Pastor in office 11-6 Advent at 7 Mt. Zion</i>	6 <i>Pastor in office 10-5 Elaine in office 8-1</i>	7 <i>Pastor in class 11-1 Pastor in office 2-5 LAFP Delivery</i>	8
9	10 <i>Pastor in class 2-5 Karen in office 9-12:30</i>	11 <i>Pastor in class 2-5 Karen in office 9-12:30</i>	12 <i>Pastor in office 11-6 Advent at 7 St. Michael</i>	13 <i>Pastor in office 10-5 Elaine in office 8-1</i>	14 <i>Pastor in class 11-1 Pastor in office 2-5 LAFP Delivery</i>	15 <i>LAFP Distribution</i>
16 <i>Catechism 6-8</i>	17 <i>Karen in office 9-12:30</i>	18 <i>Pastor in class 11-5 Karen in office 9-12:30</i>	19 <i>Pastor in office 11-6 Advent at 7 Mt. Zion</i>	20 <i>Pastor in office 10-5 Elaine in office 8-1</i>	21 <i>Pastor in office 2-5</i>	22
23	24 <i>Karen in office 9-12:30 Christmas Eve Service</i>	25	26 <i>Pastor in office 11-6</i>	27 <i>Pastor in office 10-5 Elaine in office 8-1</i>	28 <i>Pastor in office 2-5</i>	29
30	31 <i>Karen in office 9-12:30</i>					

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
4065 Mt. Zion Road
Lucas, OH 44843



Reindeer Cookies



2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1-1/4 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup butter, cubed
1-1/2 cups packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons water
2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
2 large eggs

1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1 can (16 ounces) chocolate frosting

DECORATIONS:

Candy eyes
Reese's mini white peanut butter cups
Miniature pretzels
Peanut butter M&M's

Whisk together flour, baking soda and salt. Place butter, brown sugar and water in a large saucepan; cook and stir over low heat until butter is melted. Remove from heat; stir in chocolate chips until smooth. Stir in eggs and extract. Stir in flour mixture. Let stand until firm enough to shape, about 15 minutes.

To freeze dough, shape level tablespoonful of dough into balls; flatten each to 1/4-in. thickness. Place in a covered container, separating layers with waxed paper; freeze until firm. (May be frozen up to 3 months.)

To bake, preheat oven to 350°. Place frozen dough portions 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake until set, 12-14 minutes. Remove from pans to wire racks; cool completely.

Spread cookies with frosting, reserving a small amount for mouths. Decorate faces with candy eyes; add peanut butter cups for snouts, pretzels for antlers and M&M's for noses. Pipe mouths with reserved frosting.