



MAY THE GIFT OF GOD’S SON fill you with Joy this Christmas and the Peace of the Lord be with you in the New Year!

YOU ARE INVITED TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS EVE AT OPEN ARMS. The candlelight service begins at 4:00 PM so that you can have time to celebrate Christmas Eve with family and friends.

NO CHILDREN’S CHURCH on Christmas Eve so our volunteer leader can celebrate Christmas with her family. Children’s Church will return on the 31st.

UPCOMING SERVICES:

December 24	Great Joy	Luke 2:1-20
December 31	Timing Is Everything	Galatians 4:4-7
	Make 2024 “The Year of the Lord” by ...	
January 7 th	<u>Worshipping Him</u> like the Wise Men	Matthew 2:1-12
January 14 th	<u>Following Him</u> like the Disciples	John 1:43-51
January 21 st	<u>Believing Him</u> like the common people	Mark 1:14-20
January 28 th	<u>Listening to Him</u> like one of God’s people	Deut. 18:15-20

UPCOMING EVENTS AT OPEN ARMS

- Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24th, 4:00 PM
- Introduction to “The Story”, January 7th
- Game Day, January 7th
- Ladies Bible Study, January 9th & 23rd
- New Member Class, “The Story” Chapter 1, Confirmation Class, January 14th
- Youth Group, January 14th & 28th
- Men’s Bible Study, January 16th & 23rd
- Lutheran School Week, January 21st – 27th
- MEAL Time, January 31st

CAN YOU HELP? Open Arms had to get a new snow removal company this year. Unfortunately, they are not able to remove snow on Sunday mornings because they already are serving other area churches. This means our parking lot may not always get plowed on Sunday mornings. We may need some help clearing and salting sidewalks for Sunday services. If you can help, please talk with one of the board members or Pastor Larry.

OPEN ARMS CALL UPDATE: The Call Committee continues to review the information about the Pastors on the Call list and should begin interviews after the first of the year.

ONE OR TWO PEOPLE are needed to help lead Children's Church one Sunday each month. Children's Church begins after the Children's Message for grade schoolers. The lesson material is provided each week. Talk with Rachel Manthei, Melva Coleman, Katie Essell or Greta Bower if you want more information about Children's Church.

IT'S GAME TIME! On January 7th the fellowship committee will be hosting an afternoon of card and board games. This will take place right after the service until 1:30pm, please feel free to bring your favorite game to share. There will be a pizza lunch provided. Sign up with Will Cantrell at 248-842-9937 or gwcantrell93@gmail.com

NEW MEMBER CLASSES – For those individuals who are interested in becoming members of Open Arms, the next New Member Classes will begin for 5 consecutive Sundays (following Worship Service) on January 14, 2024 and conclude on February 11th. The classes will be approximately 45 to 60 minutes in length, and we will be utilizing “Luther's Small Catechism (with explanation),” and a video series. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Larry or Deacon Dave.

READ “THE STORY” starting January 7th. The Story is a continuous reading of selections from the Bible in chronological order. Each of the 31 chapters reveals the God of grace whose love for His people culminated in His sacrifice of Jesus, to pay for the sins of humanity. We will introduce the first chapter on the 7th. There will be a Bible Study on first chapter on the 14th.

The Story is available in print, as an eBook or audio book. We will have a limited number of “The Story” and “The Story for Kids” books available on January 7th. You are encouraged to read one chapter a week. If you have younger children, you might consider reading one chapter of “The Story for Kids” with them each week.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY: The 2024 sessions begin on Tuesday, January 16th at 6:30 pm, in the Upper Room. The study will continue with the video series titled; “Stuff They Didn't Teach Me in Sunday School.” We will be viewing and discussing Matthew, Luke, followed by the Letters of Paul. The Men's Bible Study sessions schedule, for 2024, is as follows (all sessions are on Tuesdays, at 6:30 pm, in the Upper Room): 1/16, 1/23, 2/20, 2/27, 3/19, 3/26, 4/16 and 4/23. Please contact Deacon Dave Ferber (ferber_david@yahoo.com) if you have any questions.

SOME MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT REVELATION. The book of Revelation not only proclaims God's ultimate victory, but also addresses God's justice. Evil cannot stand before the Lord. There are a series of events that symbolically describe judgment on sinful people. Revelation is not linear. The pictures are cyclical, describing a series of events from different perspectives.

THE NEXT WEEKLY UPDATE from Open Arms will be sent out the first week of January. Pastor Larry will be taking time off between Christmas and New Year to spend with Joan and two of their adult children who plan to be home for Christmas and the start of the New Year.

PASTOR LARRY AND JOAN would like to thank the Open Arms family for your support and partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A special thank you for the Christmas card and gift card given to us last Sunday.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO ONLY USE the church entrance and exit so that no one blocks the exit used frequently by first responders during call out responses. Thanks to the Van Buren Fire Department for allowing us to use their entrance and exit during the parking lot repairs.

DAILY NEW TESTAMENT READINGS December 21st - 31st

Dec. 21 st Revelation 12	Dec. 27 th Revelation 18
Dec. 22 nd Revelation 13	Dec. 28 th Revelation 19
Dec. 23 rd Revelation 14	Dec. 29 th Revelation 20
Dec. 24 th Revelation 15	Dec. 30 th Revelation 21
Dec. 25 th Revelation 16	Dec. 31 st Revelation 22
Dec. 26 th Revelation 17	

New Testament Reading Review: Revelations Chapters 6 – 12
(Deacon Dave Ferber)

Revelations 6: Chapter 6 contains a series of actions. The Lamb begins to open the 7 seals of the scroll. After each of the first 4 seals is opened, a horse and its rider are released. The first horse is white, symbolizing conquest. The second horse is red, representing war. The third horse is black, denoting famine, and the fourth horse is pale, signifying death. When the fifth seal is opened, John sees the souls of those who have been martyred for their faith. They cry out for justice, and each soul is provided a white robe. The sixth seal reveals cosmic disturbances, with earthquakes, the sun turning black, and the moon becoming blood red.

Revelations 7: Four angels stand at the earth's center, holding back the winds. Another angel ascends from the east with the seal of the living God and instructs the other angels not to harm the earth until God's servants have a seal placed on their foreheads. John then hears the number of those sealed as 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. After this, John sees an enormous multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches, praising God and the Lamb.

Revelations 8: This chapter begins with the opening of the seventh seal. There is silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then seven angels with seven trumpets stand before God. Another angel, with a golden censer (a container in which incense is burned typically during a religious ceremony), offers prayers of the saints on the golden altar before the throne. The angel then takes the censer, fills it with fire from the altar, and hurls it to the earth, causing thunder, rumblings, lightening, and an earthquake. The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets. The first 4 trumpets cause various devastations on earth.

Revelations 9: In this chapter, the fifth angel blows his trumpet, and John sees a star fallen from heaven. The star opens the Abyss, and smoke rises with locusts that have the power to torment but not kill. They have a king, Abaddon (devil – this name stands for destruction). The sixth angel sounds his trumpet, releasing 4 angels bound at the Euphrates River. These angels command an army of two hundred million, and a third of mankind is killed by the 3 plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur.

Revelations 10: Chapter 10 provides another wonder, a mighty angel coming down from heaven, robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head. He holds a little scroll, and his feet are like pillars of fire. He shouts, and then the 7 thunders utter their voices. John is about to write what the thunders said, but a voice from heaven stops him. The angel, raising his hand to heaven, swears that there will be no more delay. John is told to take the little scroll from the angel and eat it; it tastes sweet but turns bitter in his stomach.

Revelations 11: John is given a measuring rod to measure the temple of God. But the outer court is left out, for it is given to the nations who will trample the holy city. The 2 witnesses, clothed in sackcloth, prophesy for 1,260 days. These witnesses have the power to shut out the sky and turn waters into blood. After the witnesses finish their testimony, the beast kills them. Their bodies lie in the street for three and a half days. Then suddenly, the bodies are resurrected and ascend to heaven in a cloud. At that point, the seventh trumpet sounds, and loud voices in heaven proclaim that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ.

Revelations 12: Vivid imagery is contained throughout this chapter. A great sign appears in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars. She is in labor. Another sign appears, it is a great red dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns, ready to devour her child. The woman gives birth to a male child, destined to rule the nations. The child is called up to God's throne. A war breaks out in heaven between Michael and the dragon. The dragon is hurled down to earth. The woman flees to the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God.

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