ST. PAUL'S
BLESSED ON PURPOSE

November 2026

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church Chilliwack, BC

Advent! What's That?

On this rainy November morning, early in the month, as I begin to plan for the Church Year seasons of Advent and Christmas my mind is saying, "where's the snow!" Over the past 20ish years, the cold and possible snow of the Alberta foothills or being way up North have been a good reminder of the fact that Winter is coming and therefore Advent and Christmas are just around the corner! As I begin to prepare to share the joy of these seasons, yes, the leaves are falling but, something just feels odd. I guess that's what I get for being a flatlander most of my life! (On the very night of writing these words the forecast is for Atmospheric Rivers of Rain and a major snow dump in the mountains! "There's the snow!")

Wanting to take a quick peek at what the world thinks about Advent I typed the word Advent into all wise Google search engine, and the first thing that popped up was four Whiskey ads (with Santa involved, however, not imbibing) and a plethora





of Advent calendars ads (selling dumplings, socks, and Jurassic Park mini dinos, puzzles and a whole raft of other trinkets). No, that's not Advent!

Just below that was the definition for the word Advent, as, "the arrival of a notable person", (to which I thought now we're getting somewhere) "or thing, or event: with the added example *"the advent of television"*." I thought too soon! That's not Advent either!

Our present world doesn't truly know about the season of Advent. It wasn't until I got down to the Encyclopedia, or rather Wikipedia, that the truth was revealed. "Advent is a season observed in most Christian denominations as a time of waiting and preparation for both the celebration of Jesus's birth at Christmas and Jesus's return at the Second Coming."

Way to go Wikipedia! It even got the fuller meaning of the word correct. It's not just for Jesus first coming that we prepare to celebrate in the

season of Advent but also for His second coming which could in fact come this year even before we get into the season. Only the Father knows!

Even before the modern hype of All Hallow's Eve I've been hearing numerous Christmas advertisements, with their shopping mall canned Christmas music chiming in the background. Rush, rush, rush. Such is our world. Rushing us toward the materialism of the season. Not that gifts are wrong! Not at all! Jesus first coming is all about a gift, the Gift of a Saviour for all humanity! But starting to pound away at Christmas buying more than two months beforehand encourages, well encourages one to be looking in all the wrong directions for that Gift for all! And it stokes our felt need to receive something quickly because supposedly we'll bust if we must wait! More plastic please, give me more fake stuff please, and do it quickly! And our world, with our Evil Foe pulling the strings, is all too happy to encourage such action that all might totally miss their true Gift!

That's our world and its desire to address our impatience with fakes. But the waiting part of both the Advent and Christmas seasons is one of their main blessings. Waiting for the real thing, and battling through our need for immediate gratitude, is part of the joys of the season. Why? Because the Gift we await and the Gift that remains with us after all the wrapping is long gone is the Gift that keeps on giving. Both now and forever!

In Advent, beginning on Sunday, Nov 29th, and including it, we have 25 Advent calendar days to prepare our hearts for our Gift before we arrive at Christmas Eve and celebrate the arrival of a baby?!?! Yes, a baby? That baby they say was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger? Yes! But if that baby is only like you and me the shine of the gift will quickly pass. However, this baby is both like us, being fully human, and totally unlike us, being fully God. God and Man in the same little swaddling package, was sent to grow, become and do the very thing for which the Father sent Him. To free us and give us hope unending!

Plastic and running after immediate gratification can never give us that for which our hearts yearn! Never! Only the true Gift from our Father can make that happen.

But what's with the other part I was mentioning? The part about the Gift that remains with us after all the wrapping is long gone.

Did you know that the season of Christmas begins Christmas Eve and does not end on Christmas Day? That would be like throwing the Baby out with the bath water! The Christmas season runs way past the 25th. In fact, every year the season doesn't stop at the end of the calendar year but takes us into January and concludes the day before the 6th.

Why? Because, although the rest of the world is already looking ahead to the next buying season, Valentines Day, we're hanging out for the 12 days of Christmas with this world's One and only True Valentine! This Jesus who lived amongst us, and therefore understands all that we face, who died, and then came back to life three days later, just as he promised! So, our Gift is alive now and forevermore, never to die or break (as all fake gifts do) but resides with all who truly see Him for who He is and what He has done.

This Advent and this Christmas, walk, don't run. Wait, don't rush and be oh so blessed by two seasons that truly point you to the Gift who meets your every need of hope and freedom, the God Man, Jesus of Nazareth.

In Christ Jesus, our soon coming King,
Pastor Haberstock



Eat, Share, Care



We're delivering Christmas treats to our neighbors at The Village and to special friends in our church family who could use a little extra love.

Please bring cookies or bars to any of the Advent Evening Services or drop off at the office by December 16. No nuts please

A SPECIAL SEASON WITH MANY SPECIAL WAYS TO CELEBRATE





The LWML Society would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your support for the BC Mission Boat kits. 80 were completed and have been sent on their way. Please start saving up for next year as we do intend to do this again next fall. Monthly meetings continue the second Thursday of each month. Currently we are looking at the women who were part of the genealogy of Jesus. All ladies are welcome to attend.

We will be hosting our annual Christmas party at our December 10th meeting. The annual trivia game will be making a reappearance. Hope to see you there.

Sip 'n' Stitch resumed back in September. All crafters are welcome to attend. We love to have new attendees. Please note that we will not be getting together in December.



Altar Guild

We are gearing up for the Advent season with the church decorating happening on November 28th at 10:30. All are welcome to help. As the saying goes, many hands make the work light.

Recently the Altar Guild was blessed with some Christmas decor that includes nativity sets and decorations for the tree. We will have these available for sale, by donation, starting on November 15th after the service. They will be displayed in the library. The annual Poinsettia fundraiser is also happening. We will have a choice of white or red poinsettias available for $15. Orders must be placed by December 13th. *Marjorie Nielsen*

Library

Several new books have been added to our collection. These include: "Cold Case Christianity" and "Forensic Faith "which are written by a former atheist and homicide detective. We also added When People Are Big and God is Small as recommended by Pastor Keith. Come check out our selection. Now is the time to get cozy with a hot drink and a good book.



Men's Fellowship

All men and teen boys are invited to this time of devotion, fellowship, food and friends at our monthly gathering just for the guys. Men, this is an ideal time to invite those friends and family who do not regularly attend church. The Men's Fellowship is a chance to introduce them to a great group of men in our church community.

Children's Ministry

Sunday School has organized a special family Christmas event to celebrate the season.. All families with children and teens are invited and please do bring along friends and family. We will meet from 4-6 pm on December 12 so no one is travelling home late on a potentially stormy night. We'll have Christmas crafts, some games, a delicious dinner and a seasonal movie that is appropriate for all ages. Those planning to attend are asked to please register by emailing the office at info@chilliwacklutheran.com so we can prepare enough food and materials. *Emma Underhill*





GIFTS FROM THE HEART

Your gifts have the power to change lives this Christmas! Share God's love with the world and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others with Canadian Lutheran World Relief's **Gifts from the Heart!**

Here's how it works:

1. You choose just the right gift for that person on your list, like a pair of goats or a flock of chickens!
2. We'll send you a beautiful card you can share with your loved one to tell them about the special gift made in their honour.
3. Your gift changes lives — thank you!

Gifts from the Hart catalogues are available from the bulletin board at the entrance to the church. You may also give online at Gifts from the Heart — Christmas Gift Catalogue 2026 | CLWR



Young-at-Heart

Our senior's potluck lunch and fellowship meets on the 2nd Friday of each month. In December, that means we'll gather on December 11 and we will welcome some special guests – the Chilliwack Harmony Chorus. These talented barbershop style singers will perform many of your favorite Christmas tunes and then the chorus members will join us for lunch. We do not check ID at the door so everyone is welcome to attend this festive event and please do invite family and friends for this musical treat. If you are bringing food for the potluck lunch, please bring an extra helping or two so we can have plenty to share with our guests.

And for the youngest among us

Our Moms' and Tots' group has been meeting twice a month at the Rohde Family Farm. While the little ones enjoy a story time led by Amanda Gervias, the moms (and grandmas) share a time of devotion and fellowship. Thank you to Rose Rohde for hosting these delightful gatherings. On December 3 the group will meet for the final time this year and celebrate the season in style. All ladies and their little ones are most welcome. For the farm address please check your church directory or contact the office at info@chilliwacklutheran.com



Youth Update

This year our Youth teamed up with Young Adults to enjoy the annual trip to the Chilliwack Corn Maze in October. We had 10 people total come out and many completed the maze in record time this year. The giant bouncy pillow was a Youth favourite for 2026 and there were many socks that needed cleaning afterwards!



As most of you know, we have not been successful in filling our staff Youth Leader position for 2026/27. As a result, I have decided I will be taking a break as Youth Director at St. Paul's at this time. We thank you for your continued prayers for our Youth and for God's direction in this ministry.

Amanda Gervais

Stewardship Report

For the past year our committee has been working on educating people about what stewardship is. This was done with gentle reminders through the Stewardship Corner every month.

Our prayer was that people give up ownership of "things" in this life and concentrate on our purpose. Spreading God's word to those who have yet to hear.

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" *(Psalm 24:1)*

Stewardship is about managing everything that God gives us, including ***time, talents and treasures***.

The committee has been working on a new website and has now moved to getting others involved to get the ideas and template in a format that is easy for the office to change regularly.

Another area that we have looked at is reoccurring e-transfer for our offerings and donations. Some financial institutions this has been easy, others have been more challenging. We also want to offer other ways for people to give their funds to the church that is convenient for them. Stay tuned.

It is important to take the ***time*** with your church family to get to know each other and to rejoice in each other's highlights and to help shoulder the lowlights. This past year we have been working on encouraging people to come together and care about our church family. We sponsored the "Fall kick off" with providing a salmon and gourmet hot dog luncheon. Coming up the Stewardship committee will be decorating and organizing the Christmas luncheon program, another opportunity to come together and to get to know our church family better. Please bring your family, extended family and friends. All are welcome!



At this time of year many people are thinking about Christmas and the giving of gifts. Being a wise steward also includes managing our funds (***treasures***) well so if you want to donate to various charities, ask the church office for the many groups that have been vetted and receive a tax deductible receipt for your gifts. Also, please prayerfully consider your offerings to the church as we use them in service to the Lord.

Just like each of us has to manage our ***finances***, so does the church. Please pray for our leadership as they look at the budget for 2027. Help them to hear God's will for how the money collected is spent that the word of God should be proclaimed to all.

As we quickly head to the end of the year, we would like to thank all those in the congregation that go above and beyond to share their ***talents.*** There are so many people that use their ***time*** and ***talents*** to keep the church moving forward for the Lord. Cleaning, worship, singing, Sunday school, bible studies, LWML, men's group, young adults, hospital visits, young Moms, alter guild, and many, many others. May the people who walk through the doors of St. Paul's see Christ in action and come to know him as their Saviour.

Submitted by the Stewardship committee
Paul & Sheri Schenderling and Donna Little



Missions And Local Relief

Our next Mission Lunch is coming up quickly and will support the Child Feeding Program in Pan De Vida. The program provides disadvantaged children with nutritious meals in eight churches several times a week. Just $1.50 can provide a substantial and healthy meal for a child. The feeding stations have between 40 to 80 registered children attending in each of these churches. The children also hear Bible stories and participate in prayers and Christian singing.

After the worship service on November 29, you are invited to head downstairs for a delicious taco/burrito bar lunch. Donations are encouraged and all proceeds will go to the Child Feeding Program. We will be able to accept your donations by cash, etransfer or credit/debit card. Please designate your gifts to the Nicaragua Child Feeding Program.

Our first Mission Lunch of the new year will be on Sunday, January 31 when we will focus on the work of the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots (LAMP) This is a cross-cultural ministry sharing Jesus Christ with God's people in remote areas of Canada and it is the mission project adopted by our Sunday School for 2027. We will have some very special guests that Sunday who have experience with a LAMP mission team. Please come and hear how this ministry is reaching people for Christ in the most remote areas of our country.

With Lent and Easter coming up quickly in the new year, we have also begun work on plans for the Easter breakfast. The Schenderling family has once again volunteered to prepare this fabulous meal so you know you are in for a treat that day. Proceeds from donations at the Easter breakfast will go to support the work of Lutheran Church-Canada in Ukraine through the synod's mission auxiliary Concordia Lutheran Mission Society.

Locally, we will continue to support the good work of the Chilliwack Community Cupboard. The Cupboard is a volunteer run organization which provides food, clothing and other necessities to disadvantaged families with children in Chilliwack. Please continue to support this effort by leaving your donations of food and gently used clothing in the collection box at the church. The cupboard will also accept gently used toys at this time of year. Please make sure all donations are in like-new condition.

We also want to reach out to our neighbors at The Village supportive housing complex next door to the church. The Village provides stable housing for both adults with stable mental illnesses and youth who are aging out of foster care. This vital work is provided through Chilliwack Community Services. WE are planning to give each resident of The Village a plate of Christmas goodies, along with our prayers for a blessed Christmas in which they all come to know the love of God through Jesus Christ. Please bring baking such as squares and cookies to the Advent evening services or leave them at the office on Sundays or during office hours. We will be making up these plates of goodies after the last Advent evening service on December 16. We will also prepare some plates for those in our congregation who could use a little extra love at this time of year, including our shut-ins.

Mission and Local Relief Ministry Team
Kris Hilderman and Barb Schmidt



GOT QUESTIONS?
WE'VE GOT SOME ANSWERS

On February 6 we will have the privilege of hosting a seminar presented by Creation Ministries International. The creation seminar will be led by Clarence Janzen, a retired high school science teacher who resides in the Fraser Valley.

After the one-hour presentation there will be a time of fellowship and then an opportunity for questions and discussion. There is no charge for this event, but we will be taking a free will offering to support the work of Creation Ministries International.

Those of you who have attended our Sunday morning Genisis study will recognize some of these themes, but the CMI seminar will delve deeper into the scientific findings that support our believe in a Biblical creation as taught in the book of Genesis. If you've got questions, this is a wonderful opportunity to learn some answers. Please do invite friends and family.



Lent is not far away …. Really!

While it might seem odd to talk about Easter in the Advent/Christman edition of our newsletter, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is only 35 days after Epiphany!! That means we're already planning for this season of repentance and reflection.

We will begin the season as usual on Ash Weddnesday, February 10 with an evening service at 6:30 pm. This will be followed by weekly Lent Midweek Services each Wednesday evening until March 17.

Palm Sunday falls on March 21 next year, followed by Easter on March 28.

Quick Guide to December at St. Paul's Lutheran Church



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Pastor Keith Haberstock





December 2026

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
		1	2 12:00 pm Canasta **6:30 pm Advent Evening Service & Fellowship**	3 **10:30 am Moms & Tots Christmas party**	4	5 **Men's Christmas Fellowship 7:00 pm**
6 **10 am Worship Service**	7 12:00 pm Bridge 6:30 Rock Choir	8	9 12:00 pm Canasta **6:30 pm Advent Evening Service & Fellowship**	10 **6:30 pm Ladies' Christmas Party**	11 **11:30 am Young at Heart lunch with *Harmony Singers*** *Hall rented 4:30-8:30 pm*	12 **4:00 pm-6:00 pm FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVENT**
13 **10 am Worship Service**	14 12:00 pm Bridge 6:30 Rock Choir	15	16 12:00 pm Canasta **6:30 pm Advent Evening Service & Fellowship**	17 **6:30 pm Sip 'n Stitch**	18	19
20 **10 am Worship Service** **Christmas Potluck lunch**	21 12:00 pm Bridge 6:30 Rock Choir	22	23 12:00 pm Canasta	24 **6:00 pm CHRISTMAS EVE Candlelight Service**	25 **11:00 am CHISTMAS DAY Communion Service**	26
27 **10 am Worship Service**	28 12:00 pm Bridge 6:30 Rock Choir	29	30 12:00 pm Canasta	31		