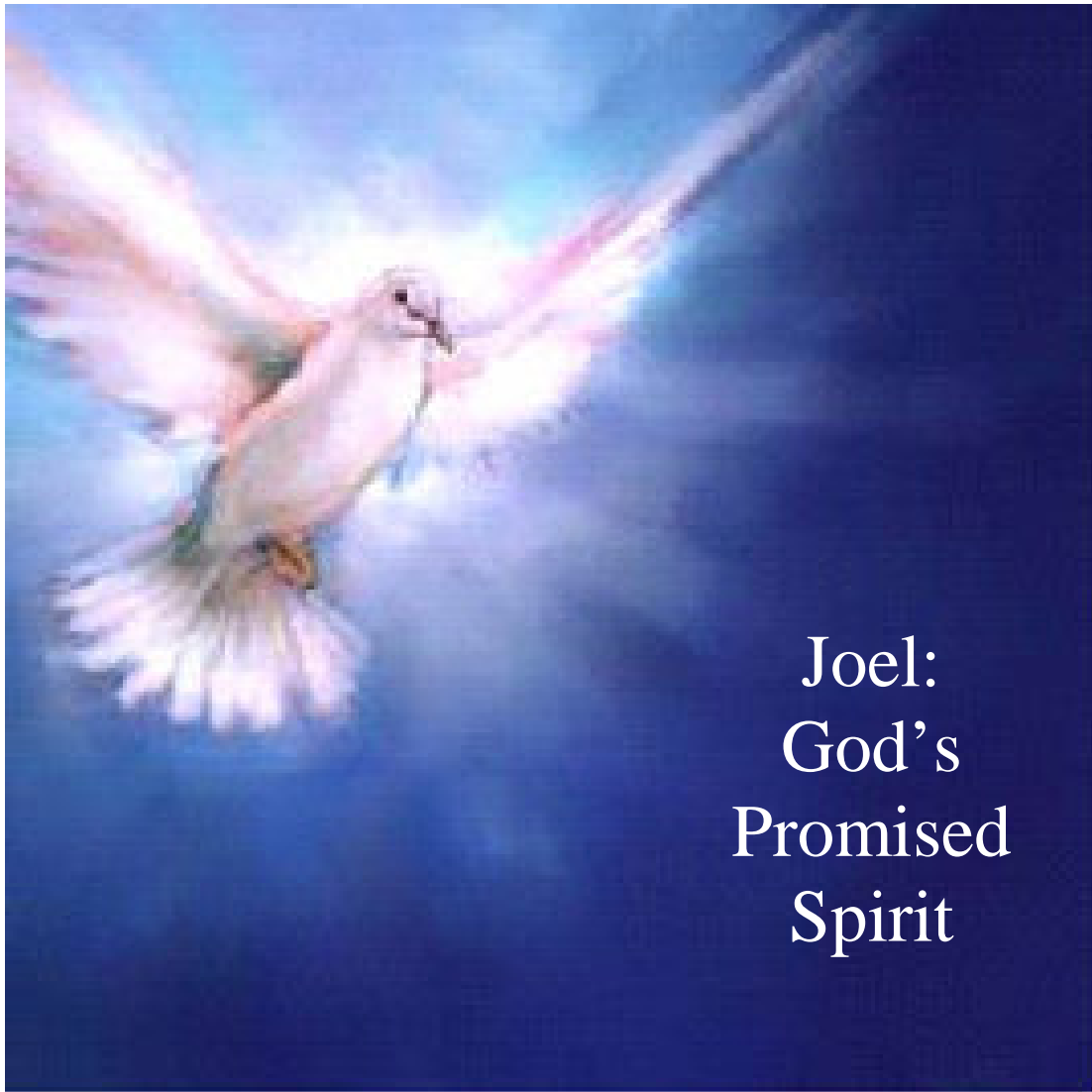


A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



Second Sunday of Advent
December 6, 2020

• **Prelude** **“When Love Was Born”** **Larry Harter**

• **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

• **Welcome and Children’s Message** **Pr Mel**

• **Second Week of Advent**

Use this blessing when lighting the first two candles.

L: Blessed are you, God of hope, for you promise to bring forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse who will bring justice to the poor, who will deliver the needy and crush the oppressor, who will stand as a signal of hope for all people.

L: As we light these candles, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the hope of all nations.

L: O people of hope, come,

C: let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Renewing God,

C: You have come into our world to live among us, yet we often lose sight of this and seek to manufacture our own truth. We are afraid to share your word lest others judge or mock us. We ignore your wisdom because it isn’t convenient. We allow ourselves to be defeated by despair. Forgive our negligence and breathe new life into our heavy hearts.

P: God knows our every weakness and still loves us and upholds our life. May your sins be forgiven, your past forgotten, and your hope restored in the name of our incarnate savior, Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

The service continues with gathering song.

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 - = Please be seated

December 6, 2020


Page 2 of 17

* **GATHERING SONG**

“Spirit of Gentleness”

ELW 396

Refrain



Spir - it, Spir - it of gen - tle - ness, blow through the wil - der - ness



call - ing and free; Spir - it, Spir - it of rest - less - ness,



stir me from plac - id - ness, wind, wind on the sea.



1 You moved on the wa - ters, you called to the deep,



then you coaxed up the moun - tains from the val - leys of sleep;



and o - ver the e - ons you called to each thing:



Refrain
“A - wake from your slum - bers and rise on your wings.”

* **GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

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*** KYRIE**

A: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: For this Holy House, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: Help, save, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... Steadfast God, You never abandoned your people when they were at their lowest. Hold your promises before our eyes that they might shine brighter than any darkness which threatens to overcome us, for the sake of your son Jesus.

C: Amen.

• SCRIPTURE READING: Joel 2:12-13, 28-29

P: Our scripture reading this morning is from Joel, Chapter 2.

C: Glory to you, O Lord. (*Spoken*)

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

²⁸Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)

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* **SERMON**

Pastor Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who lived out God's perfect will, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, amen.

I don't have many dreams, at least I don't remember many. In this passage from Joel we hear that our old men will dream dreams and our youngsters will have visions. To tell the truth, I'm not real comfortable with all this talk of dreams and visions. I grew up in an era where talk of visions usually meant one of my high school friends had taken a bad trip on something. About the only other time I ever heard of visions was in the Christmas poem The Night Before Christmas, where all the Children were snug in their beds while visions of sugar plums danced in their heads. I'm pretty sure, Joel isn't talking about taking illicit drugs or dancing fruit either...

I did read the entire book of Joel to prepare for this sermon and I think Joel is talking about something much more profound. If this text sounds familiar to you it should. On the day of Pentecost, when people from all over the known world gathered in Jerusalem, Peter quoted these very words from the prophet Joel as the Holy Spirit was in fact being poured out on all the people gathered in Jerusalem as the Apostles were speaking in their own languages. On that day of Pentecost, people from every country heard God's Word being spoken to them in their own native languages, probably for the first time. As the Apostles spoke the people

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heard about the mighty and saving acts of a God, who wasn't full of wrath, but ready and able to forgive their sin and bless them beyond measure. Was the day of Pentecost the great day of the Lord Joel described in his prophecies? Just one day and it's all over? I think Joel was describing a time when God's Word would be on every tongue and spring forth from every person's lips. It would be a time when God would be present among all people and the Community of God would be the entire Community of every tribe and every nation from all corners of this planet.

Clearly that's not the time we live in right now. With endless wars, political strife, economic woes, not to mention widespread pandemic, it's a sad time we live in right now. People all over the world are divided. People in our own country are divided over racial, political, and economic lines. We've just had a president whose campaign slogan was "Make America Great Again." Rather than uniting Americans we only became further divided.

The times we live in are not much different than the time of the prophet Joel. Most scholars place Joel in the time right after the Hebrew people were allowed to return to Jerusalem after their long exile. They returned to find the place almost totally destroyed. The fields had not only been burned, they were also salted to ensure nothing would grow for years to come. This was done to ensure the conquered people would remain in poverty for a long time. The buildings were

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destroyed, including their beautiful Temple, which had once been the centerpiece of the region. The people were even more divided than we are today. The ones who were left behind during the exile had intermarried with foreigners and adopted some of their gods and religious practices, while those returning from captivity had spent 70 or more years trying to keep their faith pure from all outside influences. You can imagine how divided these people were on just their religious beliefs alone. It was time to Make Israel Great Again... How could Joel and the Hebrew people do that in the midst of such devastation? Joel's answer was to repent. Return to the Lord your God with fasting, weeping, and mourning. In the mind of the ancient people these aren't three separate things, they describe one action. It's not about the outer appearance of piety, it's about a change of heart. Fasting, weeping, and mourning are all outer manifestations of the people's inner state of their hearts. When they returned to their once great Jerusalem, they realized how far they had fallen.

How far we have also fallen. I've been reading a book by Shane Claiborne called *Irresistible Revolution*. In that book Claiborne says we've tamed and domesticated Jesus to the point that the early Christians wouldn't even recognize our religion as Christianity. In some ways I think he makes a good point. Most American Christians believe in Jesus, but we seldom follow Jesus, says Claiborne. He says we're a country of believers not followers. Where Jesus lived, ate, and

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befriended sinners, tax collectors, the poor, and the sick; we instead insulate ourselves from them by making donations, writing big checks, or serving them from across the divide of the serving line. When was the last time you made a friend of someone who was homeless or an addict, or an outsider? My personal involvement is quite limited to serving them at the FISH Pantry or helping at the Grace Resurrection Soup Kitchen. I know I'm convicted by Claiborne's words. While I help feed "them," I fail to get to know them... I, like most Christians, keep the boundary clear and strong. It's us and them, not just us... Shane Claiborne founded a ministry in north Philadelphia called the Simple Way, where he and his companions share what they have with the poor. They invite them into their house of worship and share meals, help school children with homework after school, and also play with them on the streets of Philadelphia. They make sidewalk art with chalk and open up fire hydrants in the summer to play in the water. They live among the poor and have developed community where everyone is respected and valued.

Our President's campaign slogan was Make America Great Again, but I want us to have a slogan of how we can "Make The Church Great Again." This isn't easy, nor is it safe. Jesus wasn't crucified for helping the poor and needy. He was crucified for lifting them up as the blessed ones of God. Joel's call for repentance is our call today. If you wonder why the Church is dwindling, I will

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tell you it's not because we've made Christianity too tough or too demanding. We've made it far too easy. Jesus didn't call his followers to a life of endless happiness. He called us to pick up our cross and follow him. He didn't just help the homeless, Jesus was homeless. He once said the fox has his hole, the birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. People in Greenville sleep on the streets while Darke County has no homeless shelter. I wonder why that situation is allowed to exist... Yes, many are addicted to drugs, but does that make them less than human? Maybe when the Church today begins to repent; to return to the Lord our God with fasting, weeping, and mourning God will once again come to His Church and bless it. The Church today isn't great because we've made it too easy. Everyone applauds when donations are raised, but why do we allow the conditions that give rise to such disparity to exist in the first place. Someone much smarter than me once said the earth has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed.

When Jesus returns to earth in His glory, what will be the state of the Church he gave his life to start? Will he find a Church that truly takes care of every need or one where we have insulated ourselves from the poor through our giving, but never got to know the least of these, our brothers and sisters in Christ? The good news is that the Church can still return to Jesus. We can still reread the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus says the blessed are the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, and

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the grieving and actually believe what Jesus is preaching. Jesus didn't just raise money to give to the poor, he became poor. Think about what Jesus gave up when He was in heaven with his Father and the Holy Spirit. He gave up all of that to be born a baby in a stinky manger. Just like every one of us, Jesus came into this world with nothing... He didn't just identify with the poor, he became poor so that you might gain God's riches.

It's not too late for the Church to repent. Joel reminds us that God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting in punishment. The pouring out of God's Holy Spirit wasn't just a one time event. It happens every time God's people actually follow God's Word, which is of course, Jesus Christ. May you hear these words from the prophet Joel and return to the Lord your God. May we, as part of God's Church start asking why there are homeless people in the richest country that ever existed. May we open our hearts to the true message of Jesus and move from believers to followers. Then we will see for ourselves just how gracious and merciful our God really is. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

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* **NICENE CREED**

The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

* **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The Peace is shared at this time.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

* **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: In the season of tinsel and twinkling illusions, grant us a deeper joy that endures throughout these days, the burning promise of our coming savior. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: In the spirit of St. Nicholas, whose death we commemorate on December 6th each year, use us to minister to those in need, providing for their lack without seeking recognition or thanks, but only the fulfillment of recognizing our connection with all of your children. God of hope,

* = Please stand if able

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C: Hear our prayer.

L: The earth is forgiving, even as its creator is, renewing what has been depleted and repairing what has been damaged. Make us partners in the recovery of this planet from the ravages of our abuse and neglect. Accept our repentance for all that we have done. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: When we lose our visions, we are tempted to give in to despair. Rekindle your light within those who have given up, and work through us to reach out to the lonely, sad and discouraged. Bring an end to this pandemic and speed both the healing of those infected and the distribution of vaccines to the most needy. Send your healing spirit to all those who need it, especially... God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: With Nicholas, bishop of Myra, and all your faithful saints, we join our voices with the heavenly chorus praising the One who delivers and delights our hearts with the promise of eternal life. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Our eyes await the fulfillment of all your promises, the answer to all our prayers: your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is a ceramic flower pot located near the back door of the church.

P: You call us to return to you with all our hearts, and to give our lives to your service. Accept these offerings of love and use us as your servants to bring your light of mercy to all the world.

C: Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*** DIALOGUE**

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

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* **THE PREFACE**

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

* **THE SANCTUS**

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

* **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P: Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C: Amen

* **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: United into one by this heavenly food, we pray as Jesus taught...

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

* = Please stand if able

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*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: You have poured out your spirit upon all flesh, and gathered your children from the ends of the earth to proclaim your salvation. Let us come now to celebrate our deliverance in this bread and cup of mercy.

• COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

During the distribution the minister says these words to each communicant:

P: At this time you may open the communion bread and partake of the body of Christ, given for you.

Now please open the wine and you may now partake of the Blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen.

*** POST COMMUNION CANTICLE**



☒ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re - calls his prom - is - es and leads his peo - ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

*** POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

P: Let us pray... Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- * = Please stand if able
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*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever.

C: Amen.

*** SENDING HYMN**

“Hark, the Glad Sound”

LBW 35

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
 prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
 pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.

*** DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ’s Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

Postlude

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector	Eldon Erdmann
Acolyte	
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Flowers	
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

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Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Eat at least one high-fiber food every day

MIND: Color with a child

SPIRIT: Say Merry Christmas



Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.



Scripture readings for next Sunday, December 13th
Isaiah 61:1-11

This Week @ Trinity – December 6 thru December 13, 2020

Sun, December 6

10:30 am Worship Service

Fri, December 11

3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville

Sun, December 13

10:30 am Worship Service

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Due to the Covid Pandemic we will not be doing a live Children's Program this Christmas. Instead we are asking everyone who has pictures and or videos from years past to share them. We will edit them together and create a video collage of past Children's Christmas Programs. If you have hard copies of pictures, please drop them off at the Church. Make sure your name is on them and if they are more than a couple of years old, please let us know who is in the picture.

If you have digital pictures and or videos you can bring them to Church on a USB drive or click on the link below and when the window opens simply "Drag and Drop" them to the Trinity Lutheran Church Google Drive.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zTKD3I7R2UHy4F1v9HSkaS6oNb3Rywdf?usp=sharing>

We hope to get a large number of pictures and videos that will allow all of us to take a nostalgic walk down Memory Lane. We plan to premier the video on Sunday, December 20, 2020 during the Worship Service, **so please get your pictures and videos turned in as soon as possible, but not later than December 15, 2020.**

If you have any questions or need assistance getting your pictures and videos turned in, please call Pastor Mel at 937 626-7100. I look forward to seeing all the "Ghosts of Christmases Past" pictures and videos. Let's make this a fun project and make lemonade out of the lemons of this pandemic!

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