



# FAMILIES & KIDS NEWSLETTER

Offering practical, spiritual, and fun resources for families following Jesus together.  
[www.reservoirchurch.org](http://www.reservoirchurch.org) • [families@reservoirchurch.org](mailto:families@reservoirchurch.org) December 2017

## LOOKING TOWARDS CHRISTMAS

Judging by decorations and store displays, Christmas is upon us! We'll be enjoying the Christmas feeling this month at Reservoir Church, while also paying attention to the season of Advent and the way it calls us towards waiting and anticipation. Read on for more, plus kids and youth updates and our families calendar.

### PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

We've concluded our journey through the core Old Testament stories. In December, in the language of Godly Play, we enter the time of the color purple, the time for getting ready to come close to the Mystery of Christmas. During Advent, the season we at Reservoir call Light in the Darkness, we share the story of Jesus' birth that builds progressively from week to week. We begin with the prophets who point the way to Bethlehem. Then come Mary and Joseph with their donkey. Then come the shepherds who hear the angel's message and hurry to see the Child who will change everything. Then the Magi arrive with their strange gifts. The final surprise is for the cow who finds a baby in its feed box. Grown-ups and children together will get to experience a version of this Godly Play story together in Big Church on December 3 at both the 9:30 and 11:30 services. During Kids Church on December 17, we'll host a simple pageant or re-telling of the story. There are no rehearsals. Every child who comes to Kids Church that Sunday gets a costume and gets to participate.

### YOUTH GROUP

The middle school youth group is finishing their fall project: the Old Testament stop motion animation films. The young people created the storyboards, scenes, and animations, and planned the movie premier scheduled for December 3 at 11 AM in the MPR. The middle schoolers generated everything from the films to the invitations to the playlist to the snacks. It will be quite a festive event, so we hope to see you there!

The high school youth group has their own set of festivities. We have been meeting in intimate groups to share about our stories and how God plays a role. The high schoolers have experienced God through a variety of means, including hiking, Brazilian food, and intimate conversations over tea. As we transition into the Advent season, we will focus on the themes of light and darkness and the redemptive role Jesus plays, both in the Christmas story, as well as in our day-to-day lives.

### ELEMENTARY

In November the Elementary group heard stories from the books of Samuel and Kings as we talked about the often-strained relationship between worldly kingship and God's plans for God's people. The unit's four stories were longer and more complicated than we usually attempt, but they had plenty of drama and intrigue—not to mention violence—to hold the kids' interest. We ended the month by talking about the idea of a new kind of messiah: one who would carry out God's plan through means other than force of arms and worldly power.

That leads right into our Advent lessons! During Advent lots of our attention will be on preparing for our Christmas performance, which we'll present between services on December 17. We started work at the end of November, and many of the kids are already very excited about it! With jobs available from lead actor to prop designer, there's space for everyone to get involved in a way that feels comfortable to them. While all that's going on, though, we'll still be hearing the stories leading up to Jesus' birth and talking about what the different parts of those stories might mean to different people who hear them.



*Some of last year's Elementary cast and crew.*

### CONTACT US

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# WHAT DO WE DO WITH ADVENT?

Some of us grew up observing Advent, but for many of us—and for most Americans—it's unfamiliar. We're used to Christmas starting the day after Thanksgiving and ending on December 26th!

At Reservoir Church this year we're interested in seeing how we can experience Advent together as a community. From a potluck for families this Friday to our Sunday service at 10:30 on Christmas Eve, we'll be exploring what we can get out of this time of waiting and anticipation. We hope you'll join us on the journey!

## FAMILIES CALENDAR

Friday,  
December 1

### **Families Advent Potluck. 5:30-7:30 PM in the Chapel.**

Bring a potluck dish to share. Come for storytelling, a kid-friendly craft, and the chance to connect with other parents. For info contact [kim@reservoirchurch.org](mailto:kim@reservoirchurch.org).

Friday,  
December 1

### **High School Christmas Party, 6:30-8:30 PM.** For information, email [tory@reservoirchurch.org](mailto:tory@reservoirchurch.org).

Sunday,  
December 3

### **Light in the Darkness — Advent begins at Reservoir, at 9:30 & 11:30 AM services.**

There will be a special participatory liturgy at both services. You'll be invited to hear the story of Christmas afresh, using the Godly Play approach your children experience in Kids Church.

Sunday,  
December 3

### **Middle School Youth Group film screening. 11:00-11:30 in the MPR.**

The Middle School Youth Group proudly invites you to the world premier of their Old Testament stop-motion animation films.

Sunday,  
December 17

### **Elementary Kids Church Christmas Show.** All are welcome to attend! 11:00 in the MPR.

Sunday,  
December 24

### **Christmas Eve Services.**

Morning service, 10:30-11:30 AM  
Evening service, 7:30-8:30 PM—Come at 7:00 for cider, cookies and a kid-friendly craft.  
There will be no Kids Church or Youth Group on Christmas Eve.

Sunday,  
December 31

### **New Years Eve — One service at 10:30.**

## POLICING THE CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE?

by Dan Archibald

I grew up going to an Episcopal church, and I remember the yearly December sermon where we heard how we need to set aside time, amidst the holiday busyness, to be still and appreciate the mystery of Advent. And I agree! But it's tough to manage when it's December 17th and you still haven't started your Christmas shopping.

Truth be told, Christmas is beset with expectations about how to Do It Right. Depending on your cultural orientation, you may worry about keeping Christ in Christmas or doing a buy-nothing Christmas. Then there's the question of where you stand on Santa Claus. And all that is as nothing next to the need to satisfy your family's expectations for the season—expectations that can seem to grow in scope every year.

It's enough to make you hate the holiday! And I'd call that a shame—except I won't because I think the answer is to make sure we can all experience Christmas in a way that feels good to us personally. For some people that might mean diving headlong into decorating and shopping. Others might like to take some time every day in December to meditate on the Incarnation of Jesus—or skip the whole thing altogether.

As someone who feels a lot of joy and meaning around Christmas-time while struggling to find balance in buying things and gift-giving, I'd love to hear your thoughts on the subject. What can the people around you, including friends at church and Kids Church pastors, do to make your holiday the best it can be? What wisdom do you have to offer to other people—especially to other parents? If you're willing to share, catch up with me at church or email me at [dan@reservoirchurch.org](mailto:dan@reservoirchurch.org) sometime between now and next December.

And in whatever way makes sense to you, have a wonderful Christmas season!

