

RESURRECTION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Advent
AROUND THE TABLE

**Recipes from our Resurrection Lutheran Church family
that make our holiday season merry and bright!**



RESURRECTION LUTHERAN CHURCH



Advent



AROUND THE TABLE

Beloved Resurrection Family,

There is something sacred about sharing a meal with the people we love. Communion, of course, is a shared meal with people that we love. But even meals that do not include wafers and wine can be sacred, because whether we are gathering around the Communion Table or the dinner table, Christ is present. After all, Matthew tells us that Christ has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the age.

In the pages that follow, you will find recipes from every corner of the country and every part of the world. Some are meant for ruckus Christmas mornings and the portion sizes could feed an army. Others are as well suited for one as they are for 21 and are meant to be eaten by candlelight during the long nights of December. Some of the recipes are measured out to the teaspoon and the gram, while others encourage the chef to cook purely by vibes and encourage healthy "smidgens." A few of the recipes look like something put together by a culinary school graduate. And some of the best were taken from the back of a Pillsbury can. This beautiful diversity of recipes reflects the wonderful differences that gather around our shared table here at Resurrection. But as different as the recipes are, the one thing that shines through each of the stories which accompany the recipes is God's love, expressed in the passing of plates and the welcoming of others.

This Advent Season, as we wait and watch for the Holy Family, I invite you to read the stories and pray prayers from your Resurrection Family, maybe even cook a few of the recipes, and remember that you are a part of a family that is bigger than the dinner table you gather around. You are a part of God's Family, and you are a part of this Resurrection Family. Whether the holiday season is a time of celebration or trepidation for you, may these recipes, these stories, and most of all these prayers gather you around God's table with all of saints as we wait together in anticipation for the arrival of our Savior and King.

In Advent Hope,
Pastor Wyatt





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Aunt Pearl's Rice Pudding

PASTOR CAROL GEORGE

Associate Pastor of Saddlebrooke and Senior Ministries

Ingredients:

- 4 cups whole milk
- ½ cup white rice , such as jasmine, sushi rice, or arborio
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 whole vanilla beans , split and seeds removed (vanilla paste or extract)
- ¼ cup raisins (optional)
- cinnamon and/or nutmeg for serving

Directions:

1. In a large heavy-bottom dutch oven or deep saucepan, bring milk, rice, sugar, salt, and vanilla bean to a boil over medium-high, stirring often. Watch the milk carefully as it will boil over in the blink of an eye if you turn your back.
2. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover with a lid, and cook for 30 minutes.
3. Stir in the raisins and cook for 20-30 minutes more, or until the pudding has thickened.
4. Sprinkle with cinnamon and/or nutmeg if desired and serve warm or chilled.



For a thicker rice pudding: Add an egg. The egg adds more protein to thicken the sauce so if you like it loose, it still tastes delish without it. If you add egg, you'll want to temper it before adding it to the rice mixture. To avoid scrambling the egg in the hot rice, add two spoons of the rice mixture to a whisked egg and mix well. Then cook for about 5 or 10 minutes more, until the rice pudding is thick.

If adding raisins: You can optionally soak them in a little bit of bourbon, whiskey, brandy, or dark rum for a couple of hours or few days beforehand. This will help soften and plump the raisins up nicely, while also lending awesome flavor. (If soaking the raising first, wait to add them to the pudding until the last 5 minutes of cooking.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH

Aunt Pearl's Rice Pudding

PASTOR CAROL GEORGE

Associate Pastor of Saddlebrooke and Senior Ministries

So many of my family's holiday meals revolved around ethnic specialties with complicated, time-consuming recipes, hence making them only once or twice a year. One special dish however was simple, warm and comforting. On New Year's Eve we would gather at my great aunt and uncle's small, simple home and share rice pudding. It was a lovely respite from the holiday rush, especially knowing the love with which it was made and with which it was served.



Blessing

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of family that is demonstrated in food prepared and shared in love. May our Advent season be filled with delightful aromas, tasty treats, and joy-filled celebrations.

Amen

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH

Shepherd's Pie

MARTIN FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 9:15

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds 93 percent lean ground beef or lamb
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons water
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 1/2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 large egg yolk
- 8 scallions, green parts only, sliced thin
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 4 ounces white mushrooms, trimmed and chopped
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons Madeira or ruby port
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cups beef broth
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 onion, chopped

Directions:

1. Toss beef with 2 tablespoons water, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, and baking soda in bowl until thoroughly combined. Set aside for 20 minutes.
2. Place potatoes in medium saucepan; add water to just cover and 1 tablespoon salt. Bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until potatoes are soft and tip of knife inserted into potato meets no resistance, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain potatoes and return to saucepan. Return saucepan to low heat and cook, shaking pot occasionally, until any surface moisture on potatoes has evaporated, about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat and mash potatoes well. Stir in melted butter. Whisk together milk and egg yolk in small bowl, then stir into potatoes. Stir in scallion greens and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and set aside.
3. Heat oil in broiler-safe 10-inch skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion, mushrooms, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are just starting to soften and dark bits form on bottom of skillet, 4 to 6 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and garlic; cook until bottom of skillet is dark brown, about 2 minutes. Add Madeira and cook, scraping up any browned bits, until evaporated, about 1 minute. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute. Add broth, Worcestershire, thyme, bay leaf, and carrots; bring to boil, scraping up any browned bits. Reduce heat to medium-low, add beef in 2-inch chunks to broth, and bring to gentle simmer. Cover and cook until beef is cooked through, 10 to 12 minutes, stirring and breaking up meat chunks with 2 forks halfway through. Stir cornstarch and remaining 2 teaspoons water together in bowl. Stir cornstarch mixture into filling and continue to simmer for 30 seconds. Remove thyme and bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Adjust oven rack 5 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Place mashed potatoes in large zipper-lock bag and snip off 1 corner to create 1-inch opening. Pipe potatoes in even layer over filling, making sure to cover entire surface. Smooth potatoes with back of spoon, then use tines of fork to make ridges over surface. Place skillet on rimmed baking sheet and broil until potatoes are golden brown and crusty and filling is bubbly, 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

Shepherd's Pie

MARTIN FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 9:15

As a child, I grew up with immediate family, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents that always gathered around the holidays. I loved the togetherness, the food, and the toys I only got to play with when at Grandma's house. As an adult, I've lived in places far away from my hometown and blood relatives, thus holiday celebrations have changed. We look for other families that are also far from "home" to share these special times.

Our holiday food tradition started when the daughters were too young to significantly help in the kitchen and everyone complained when I made turkey. Instead of trying to host a big spread with separate dishes, I decided we would just take what every knows is the best part of the meal, PIE, and make that the center piece. Pie is easy to put together and will feed many for the meal or a few for the weekend. It left me with more time to spend with the people I love. Guests are invited to bring their favorite pie (savory or sweet) to share. What can you learn about a person through the pie they bring?



Blessing

And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

-Mark 2:15 NRSVUE

Come to the table

Our God is a generous God with more than enough

Come to the table

He invites the sinner to the saint, the poor to the rich, the paralyzed to the athletic.

Come to the table

Be curious. You will be dining with many people that are not like you.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

Christmas Morning Breakfast Casserole

WOODBURY FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 9:15

Sausage Mixture:

- 1 ½ lb ground breakfast sausage
- 12 eggs
- 1 chopped red bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped green onion
- 4 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 large chopped Vadala onion
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 8oz sliced mushrooms

Gravy:

- 2 cups milk
- ¼ cup all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons butter



Sausage Mixture Instructions:

1. In a large skillet brown sausage (breaking up with wooden spoon)
2. In a separate skillet cook onions, mushrooms, and bell pepper till softened.
3. Add vegetables to skillet with sausage
4. Stir in green onion and remove all from skillet. Let cool.
5. Prepare 9x12 baking dish
6. Crack eggs evenly across the bottom of the dish (keep yolks intact).
7. Poke each yolk with toothpick.
8. Pour cream over the top of the eggs.
9. Top with 12 of cheese
10. Spoon sausage mixture over the eggs and cream and top with remaining cheese.
11. Cover dish with foil and chill overnight.

Christmas Morning:

1. Add butter to skillet, whisk in flour and allow to cook for 2 minutes. Gradually whisk milk in and cook until gravy thickens. Simmer 2-3 minutes and season.
2. Set oven at 350 degrees. Bake casserole covered for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake 30 minutes
3. Serve with heated country gravy.



One of the Woodbury traditions started 15 years ago. Christmas morning is a joyful time but having to cook would interrupt the festivities. Thus, the egg casserole solved that problem. On Christmas Eve I would assemble the ingredients and place the covered casserole in the refrigerator. Upon getting up the oven would be started and casserole placed inside. Christmas morning was egg bake with cinnamon rolls!

Blessing

God, thank you for this new day. Grant me the strength to handle whatever comes my way. Keep my heart calm and my faith strong in You.
Amen

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

Lefse

STASH FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 5:00

Ingredients:

- 8 Cups Riced Potatoes
- 1/2 Cup Cream
- 8 Tabs Butter
- 4 Cups flour
- 1 Tsp Salt

Directions:

1. Boil potatoes and run through the ricer.
2. Mix potatoes, cream, and butter. Chill.
3. Add flour and salt. Shape dough into a long roll. Cut into approximately 18 pieces, 1 inch thick.
4. Roll each piece into a thin circle on a floured surface using a lefse rolling pin covered with a stockinette.
5. Bake on a griddle at 375 degrees.



I was raised in Northern Minnesota (Bagley), and Lefse was a staple for Thanksgiving and Christmas. I helped my mom when I was young, and when Tom and I got married, our first Christmas gift from my parents was all the equipment necessary to make Lefse. Imagine Tom opening the Lefse Rolling Pin as his first gift from my Dad. He wasn't quite sure what to think. Glad to say, it was just a gift...My parents loved him. Lefse is a lot of work. I wasn't very consistent making it until Pastor Jim Vadis was called to RLC. I was fortunate to be part of his call committee. One Sunday, his mom, Ida, shared with me that Pastor Jim is a master lefse maker. Timing was perfect - it was early November. I got the call committee together and we invited Pastor Jim to join us in our first ever Lefse making party. He showed up with all his equipment, his chef's hat, and of course Scandinavian music. It was so fun that we continued that tradition to this day. Over the last 20 years, we have taught many friends and members of RLC the art of lefse making. Even our granddaughter Ruby cannot wait to roll out the dough.

Blessing

Dear Heavenly Father,
We are gathered today to say Thank you. Your generosity to us is overflowing. We Thank you for the blessings of the food we eat and the friends and family who are gathered with us today. We pray for our health and the strength to carry on and live as you would have taught us. Open our hearts to your love. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3RD

Mini Frittatas

COLLEEN MCCARTHY, ORO VALLEY 9:15

Ingredients:

- 2 TBSP good olive oil
- 1 shallot, minced
- 6 ounces meat: pancetta, ham, Canadian bacon, bacon or sausage
- 1 bag baby spinach, rinsed
- 2 TBSP fresh parsley, minced
- 1 TBSP fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 8 extra-large eggs
- 1 ½ cups half-and-half
- 1 cup grated gruyere cheese
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375.
2. Brush a muffin cup with olive oil - inside and on top.
3. In a large sauté pan, heat olive oil. Add the shallots and sauté until tender. Add the spinach and toss, then cover for about 3 minutes until tender.
4. Take off heat, stir in parsley and lemon juice and set aside to cool.
5. In the same pan, sauté meat until lightly browned.
6. Once browned, take off heat and dice.
7. Divide the shallot/spinach mixture between the greased muffin cups. Do not include any liquid from the mixture.
8. Add the meat and all the gruyere and ½ the parmesan cheese to the muffin cups.
9. In a measuring cup, combine half-and-half, eggs, salt and pepper. Beat until blended, then pour into the muffin cups.
10. Sprinkle each cup with the remaining parmesan cheese.
11. Bake for 20 - 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the cup comes out clean.
12. Cool for 5 minutes, then serve hot or warm.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

Mini Frittatas

COLLEEN MCCARTHY, ORO VALLEY 9:15

This frittata recipe is one of my brunch favorites. The flavors are wonderful and I've never had any leftovers. In fact they are the first brunch item to go.. but even more important is how flexible they sre: prep is easy and they are great hot, warm or room temperature.



Blessing

Dear Christ:

As we gather together this Christmas morning, we celebrate the day you were born. You came into the world to live a life filled with tolerance for all of creation, regardless of their color or position in their community. We strive to live as you asked, but our sin keeps us on a path that often falls far short.

In spite of that, your life of love surrounds us with your grace and we know that forgiveness is the best gift we unwrap today and always.

Be with us as we share this meal prepared in love for all who share this table. In the name of the father, holy spirit, and Christ Jesus. Amen

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

Grandma Alma's Homemade Raspberry Pie

BRENDA O'CONNOR

Director of Children and Family Ministries

Ingredients:

- Double crust - one for bottom of pie plate and one on top
- 5 cups fresh raspberries
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 TBS lemon juice
- 2 ½ TBS quick cooking tapioca
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1TBS butter cut into small pieces
- 1/8tsp salt (optional , to enhance flavor)



Directions:

1. Make your pie crust, line the bottom of the pie plate for the bottom crust set aside
2. Mix sugar, lemon juice, cinnamon, salt and tapioca
3. Gently toss mixed on raspberries until well coated (be careful not to crush the berries)
4. Spread raspberry mixture into the pie plate
5. Put pads of butter on top of raspberries
6. Place second crust on top, flute edges to seal them, make several small slits (this allows steam to escape during baking)
7. For a golden shiny crust, brush top crust with an egg wash and sprinkle with coarse sugar
8. Bake pie for 15 minutes at 425°.
9. Reduce heat to 375° continue baking for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown and the filling is bubbly.
10. Let the pie cool completely on a wire rack before slicing and serving, this is important to allow the tapioca to fully thicken the filling.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

Grandma Alma's Homemade Raspberry Pie

BRENDA O'CONNOR

Director of Children and Family Ministries

One of my family's favorite holiday recipes is my Grandma Alma's Raspberry pie. My dad's mom Alma always made homemade raspberry pies for the holidays. Everyone in the family is a huge raspberry lover, and those pies were always gone before any other flavor available, sometimes there were some "discussions" on who gets the last slice! Since my Grandma is no longer with us, I have learned how to make her pies, and do my best to make them like she did. I am not sure how this tradition began, but we all always looked forward to eating them during the holidays. It is a reminder of family, love, traditions and comfort.



Blessing

For our table grace, we do not have a specific prayer, we gather in a circle and hold hands, sometimes one person volunteers to lead a prayer, or we will do a popcorn prayer where each person says something that they are thankful for, you squeeze the hand of the person next to you and then they say their thing and pass it along until everyone has had the opportunity to contribute. If someone is not comfortable saying anything, they can just squeeze the hand of the person next to them and pass it on.

Heavenly Father,
thank you for the memories created with our families.
Thank you for the ways we carry on the legacies of the saints who have gone before us. Help us shine your light as we gather together.

Amen

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

Ham Bread

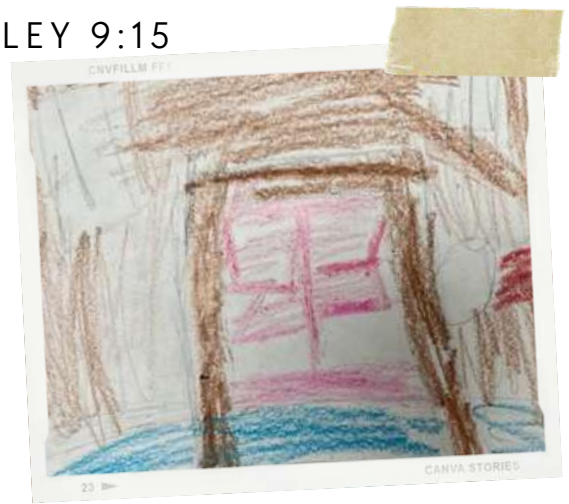
DIANE AND KURT PRICKETT, ORO VALLEY 9:15
Congregational Care Ministers

Ingredients:

- 8 cups of chopped ham
- 2 packages of yeast
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup butter flavored shortening
- 2 cups scalded milk
- 12 cups flour
- 1 ½ cup cold water

Directions:

1. Prepare ham by cutting into small pieces and cooking slowly with lid on- add just a bit of water to get the "juicing" started. Cook at a medium heat for a few minutes. When finished drain off juice and save for use in bread. Cool ham before adding to bread.
2. Prepare bread by softening 2 packs of dry yeast in ½ c. of warm liquid (use ham juices if possible.) SET ASIDE
3. In large mixing bowl combine sugar, shortening, salt, milk and stir until shortening is melted.
4. Add cold water, ham juice/ yeast mixture and stir.
5. Gradually add 10-12 cups flour (about 3 pounds). Knead on a floured surface until smooth and satiny. Cover and let rise. It has risen enough when a two-finger press stays indented. (About 2 hours, and volume approx. doubled).
6. Plunge fist into center. Divide dough by cutting into 4 or 5 sections. Roll out in rectangle with short end roughly equaling the length of bread pan. Use 1-1/2c. ham per small loaf. Spread ham evenly on surface.
7. Roll up like a jelly roll sealing ends and seam. Place seam side down in greased bread pans. Set to rise.
8. When risen, place in 325 degree oven for approximately 40-50 minutes. Be careful of timing. Bread will appear done on top before it is really done. Watch the bottoms. When bottom is lightly browned and tapping on the top produces a hollow sound, the bread is done. Lightly coat with butter after removing them from the oven. Cool loaves lying on their sides, wrap and refrigerate.



Christmas isn't Christmas without Ham Bread
This recipe came to me from my mother-in-law who made it only for Christmas morning. When I had children I found it to be the perfect Christmas breakfast, requiring little effort that morning and allowing all the attention to fall on the main event, opening the presents. It became a family tradition to give a loaf to close family friends and eventually, I was making about twenty-five loaves each Christmas. My children and grandchildren still continue this tradition.

Blessing

Prayer taught to us by
our paternal
grandparents:
Come, Lord Jesus. Be
our guest and let these
gifts to us be blest.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH

Green Bean Casserole

PASTOR ERIN MORRIS
Executive Pastor

Ingredients:

- Durkee Fried Onions
- French Style Green Beans
- Cream of Mushroom Soup-
Campbells
- Salt/Pepper
- Milk
- Worcestershire Sauce

Directions:

1. Mix it all together- even the Fried Onions (keep some for the top at the end) and then cook it.
2. Enjoy!



You will notice that there are no proportions listed, no real instructions. This isn't the Technical Challenge of the British Bake Off, this is how I learned how to cook. My Grandmother, whom we lived with, would cook this way. A little bit of that, a lot of this, mix it together until it looks right. From Christmas Cookies to Zucchini Casserole, homemade Fried Chicken to Sour Cherry Pie she made everything like a Michelin star chef. And always the main ingredient was love.

It feels the holidays are like this. None of them are the same, and even if we try to follow the recipe for a perfect experience, something goes wrong or off the rails. Yet, Christ's presence, the presence of Love, is what makes it perfect. And the only recipe you have to follow for that is opening the gift that Christ has given us.

Merry Christmas.

Blessing

Oh God,
Search out our hearts
this season, welcome us
into a time of
fellowship with one
another in community
centered in Your love.
Help us to see one
another as beloved
people made in Your
image. Thank you for
the gift of Love freely
given to us each day.

Amen

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH

Rouladen

Hoel Family Oro Valley 10:45

Lindsay Linde River musician

Ingredients:

- 8 slices top round beef, about 4x6 inches in size and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick (We typically go to Dickman's and ask for this cut ahead of time.) gently pound the slices with a meat mallet until they're a little thinner than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup German yellow mustard
- 8 slices bacon
- 8 medium german pickles, sliced lengthwise
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper

For Gravy

- 1 tbs butter
- 1 tbs cooking oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 clover garlic, minces
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 large celery stalk
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 tbs tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp pepper
- 4tbs chilled butter
- Cornstarch or flour dissolved in a little water for thickening



Directions:

1. Lay the beef slices out on a work surface. Spread each beef slice with about 2 tsp of mustard and sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Place a strip of bacon on each beef slice so it's running the same length as the beef. Place the sliced German pickles and chopped onions on each beef slice. Roll up the beef slices, tucking in the sides as best you can and securing the beef rolls with toothpicks or cooking twine.
2. Heat the butter and oil in a large pan on the stove. Generously brown the rouladen on all sides. Then remove to a plate.
3. Do not remove the browned bits in the bottom of the pan. Add the onions to the pot and a little more butter or oil if needed. Cook the onions until softened and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for another minute. Add carrots and celery and cook for another 5 minutes. Pour in the red wine, bring to a rapid boil for one minute, reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 2-3 more minutes. Add beef broth, tomato paste, bay leaf, sugar, salt and pepper.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

Rouladen

Hoel Family Oro Valley 10:45

Lindsay Linde River musician

4. Nestle the beef rouladen in the pot.

5. You can cook the rouladen, covered, on the stovetop on low for about 90 minutes or until fork tender. Or, cook in preheated (325) oven for 90 minutes or until fork tender.

To make the gravy: When the beef is fork tender, remove the rouladen from the pot and set aside. Pour the liquid and vegetables through a strainer and reserve the liquid. (You can eat the veggies on the side or puree them in the blender and return them to the gravy. Return the strained liquid back to the pot and bring to a simmer. Thicken the gravy with cornstarch or flour. Simmer, whisking constantly, until the gravy is thickened.

Add the chilled butter, whisking constantly, until the butter is melted and incorporated. Add salt, pepper and mustard to taste.

Carefully remove the toothpicks or cooking twine from the rouladen and return them to gravy and heat through.

Rouladen is a Hoel family favorite. Each Christmas, the family goes to Oma's house for a German Christmas Eve. It begins with a delicious meal where Rouladen is the centerpiece. As Oma's health has begun to decline, the grandkids all chipped in and learned to make dinner last year. The tradition will live on through this next generation and stories of putting on our pajamas after dinner, old fashioned bubble lights on Oma's tree and tales of German Christmases will surely become family lore.



Blessing

A Hoel family blessing that began when the children were very small continues to be a family favorite. Sometimes the simplest things are the best.

Thank you God for the food we eat.
Thank you God for the friends so sweet.
Thank you God for the birds that sing.
Thank you God for everything.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

Blue-Ribbon Chocolate Chip Cookies

HOPE GUEVARA, ORO VALLEY 10:45
Congregational Care Minister

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ cup all-purpose flour
½ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp salt
1 cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed
½ cup white sugar
1 cup salted butter, softened
2 large eggs
2 tsp pure vanilla extract
2 cups (12 oz) semisweet chocolate chips
- Yields: 3 ½ dozen



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300° F.
2. In medium bowl combine flour, soda and salt.
3. Mix well with wire whisk.
4. Set aside.
5. In a large bowl with an electric mixer blend sugars at medium speed.
6. Add butter and mix to form a grainy paste, scraping down the sides of the bowl.
7. Add eggs and vanilla extract, and mix at medium speed until light and fluffy.
8. Add the flour mixture and chocolate chips and blend at low speed until just mixed. Do not overmix.
9. Drop rounded tablespoons onto an ungreased cookie sheet, 2 inches apart.
10. Bake 22-24 minutes or until golden brown.
11. Transfer cookies immediately to a cool surface with a spatula.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

Blue-Ribbon Chocolate Chip Cookies

HOPE GUEVARA, ORO VALLEY 10:45
Congregational Care Minister

When I married and started my own family I wanted to start our own traditions. One of them is having an Advent Wreath. We would gather on Sunday evenings, read a devotional and light a candle. Our Nativity was part of the Advent decorations but Baby Jesus was never in the manger.

On Christmas Eve, after midnight, Baby Jesus would be placed in the manger and we all would sing Happy Birthday and other Christmas songs, then we open presents.

During Advent I make my Chocolate Chip Cookies (several batches) and package them up as gifts and for cookie exchanges. When my kids went off to college, the cookies were always a part of the Holiday care package and they would share with their roommates. The kids knew once I started making my cookies, Christmas was coming very soon. It has been a wonderful way to celebrate Advent and the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.

I started making these cookies in 1989 after I bought the Mrs. Fields Cookie book. This is her recipe...I don't change a thing.



Blessing

God is Great, God is
Good, let us thank Him
for this food. Provide
bread to those that are
hungry and hunger of
you for those that have
bread. Amen! Then
everyone goes around
the table giving thanks
for their day.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

Stuffed Celery

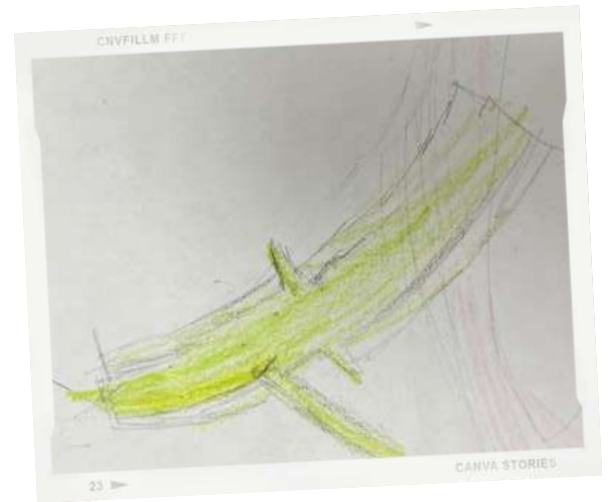
TAYLOR FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 9:15
PrimeTime Chef Extraordinaires

Ingredients:

- 2 Stalks of Celery
- 1 TBSP of lemon juice
- 2 TBSP of melted butter
- 8 ounces of Blue or Gorgonzola cheese
- 1-2 TBSP olive oil
- 1 TBSP fresh parsley finely chopped
- 2 large cloves of garlic finely minced

Directions:

1. Cut stalks of celery into 3-4 inch pieces
2. Combine all other ingredients in a bowl
3. Fill celery pieces



For the past 50 years or so, any holiday meal hosted by a Taylor family member has included Stuffed Celery. My brother-in-law introduced the family to this appetizer. He did warn us that it would result in "Zoo breath"! If you're a fan of Blue cheese or Gorgonzola cheese, you'll find this to be addictive.

As for our table blessing, my Dad always said the common table prayer. A tradition we observe to this day, both for holiday meals and daily at home.

Blessing

Lord, help me to cook and prepare food to the glory of your name. Lord, I give you the glory and honor in everything I do, everything I think about and everything I say! With these hands I pause to prepare food. With these hands I will chop, cut, sauté, bake, fry and more. Bless my hands that they might shape and create meals that are healthy, attractive and tasty. With this mind grant me clarity of focus on every aspect of this meal: from the ingredients to the pots and pans; the stove, the oven, the cooling rack, the temperature in the kitchen. Lord, bless me that I might prepare food that is not only nourishing, but delectable in taste. Lord, may all who sit at this table receive a blessing through the food I have and will prepare. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior we pray.

Amen.

Written by Rev. Dr. Nicholas Hood III

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

Mary Lou's Christmas Clusters

EVETT FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 9:15
Sandy Evett Council Member

Ingredients:

- 24 oz. good white chocolate
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 4 cups rice krispies
- 2 cups lightly salted dry roasted peanuts
- 2 cups mini marshmallows

Directions:

1. Mix rice krispies, peanuts and marshmallows together in a large mixing bowl.
2. Slowly melt the white chocolate at a medium - low temperature, preferably in a heavy pan on the stove top.
3. When the white chocolate is melted, stir in the peanut butter. While stirring, turn off the heat.
4. Pour the chocolate / peanut butter blend into the bowl with the other ingredients and stir, mixing thoroughly.
5. Spoon "Clusters" of the mix (roughly 1 Tblsp.) onto wax paper or parchment. Wait for the clusters to cool and set.
6. Store in tupperware or other sealed container in a cool, dry place. Can be refrigerated.



This recipe has meaning for our family because we celebrated Christmas with the Evetts when our kids were young. Tom is one of 7 and typically, most of the siblings and their children would be with us for the celebration - typically observed between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Mary Lou ALWAYS made these salty, peanut butter - chocolate treats. These remain one of our favorites!!

Blessing

Lord God,
Thank you for all the
sounds of the season.
We give thanks for the
laughter of children,
the chatter of friends,
and the love we hear
gathered as Your
children.
Amen.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11TH

Oreo White Chocolate Pudding Peppermint Cookies

RUMMER FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 10:45

Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsalted butter at room temperature
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 (3.4 oz package) white chocolate instant pudding mix (can use vanilla)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped Oreos, I used holiday Oreos
- 1 cup white chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup crushed candy canes



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a Silpat baking mat and set aside.
2. Using a mixer, beat together butter and sugars until creamy. Add in white chocolate pudding mix, eggs, and vanilla extract. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix until just combined. Stir in the Oreos, white chocolate chips, and crushed candy canes.
3. Drop cookie dough by rounded tablespoons onto prepared baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes, or until slightly golden around the edges and set. Remove cookies from oven and let cool on baking sheet for two minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack and cool completely.
4. Note-these cookies will stay soft for 3-4 days. Store in an air-tight container on the counter.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

Oreo White Chocolate Pudding Peppermint Cookies

RUMMER FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 10:45

Our family can often be found gathered in the kitchen, cooking and baking from scratch. We love experimenting with new recipes and recreating our favorite foods with our own twist. Though life with four children and their many activities can be hectic, the kitchen is where we slow down, reconnect, and truly enjoy one another's company.

During the Christmas season, our kitchen transforms into a festive hub of joy and creativity. Each of our children picks a special recipe to make, and before long, the counters are covered in flour, every mixing bowl is in use, and the ovens are constantly adjusting to accommodate the next batch of cookies. Christmas music plays in the background, the tree lights twinkle, and laughter fills the air as we chat about our cookie creations—both beloved traditions and new experiments—while sharing stories of Jesus's birth, His promises, and whether Santa will stop by our house.

Choosing just one favorite recipe is never easy. From cinnamon rolls and Christmas casserole on Christmas morning to the cookies we bake for sharing trays, our Christmas Eve dinner, and the finger foods we enjoy on Christmas Day, so many kitchen traditions fill our holiday season. But after much friendly debate, we decided on our family favorite: Oreo White Chocolate Pudding Peppermint Cookies. This recipe was born a few years ago when Jack and Ellie were challenged to come up with a unique Christmas cookie while Jase and Emmie each chose a traditional cookie that had to make our cookie trays. Now, every year, we make multiple batches of the Oreo White Chocolate Pudding Peppermint Cookies to freeze and enjoy throughout the winter. These cookies are more than just a sweet treat—they carry the scent of home on baking day, the sound of our children's laughter as flour dust fills the air, and the conversations that remind us of what Christmas truly means and how blessed we are to share it together.



Blessing

Our table blessing is a prayer that our family has said for over nine years. It began as a preschool snack prayer and just became part of our family dinner prayer each night.

Thank you for the food we eat.
Thank you for the friends we meet.
Thank you for our work and play.
Thank you for this happy day.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

Irene's Peanut Brittle

PAGE FAMILY, SADDLEBROOKE 9:00

Ingredients:

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Light Corn Syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Water
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Raw Peanuts
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tsp Baking Soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Tsp Salt
- Butter for baking sheet



Directions:

1. Cover baking sheet in tin foil and butter it
2. In a heavy saucepan, combine sugar, Light Corn Syrup, and water.
3. Cook on Medium Heat until it boils
4. Add Raw Peanuts
5. Boil at medium heat (Do not stir) to 295 degrees on candy thermometer
6. Turn off heat, stir in Baking Soda
7. Stir in salt (It will foam)
8. Pour into baking sheet covered with buttered foil.
9. Let cool about 30-60 minutes
10. Then break into pieces.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13TH

Irene's Peanut Brittle

PAGE FAMILY, SADDLEBROOKE 9:00

My mother used to make this every year for the family, and in her later years she would make batches for her church to sell at a Christmas bake sale. She never used a thermometer, and it was captivating to watch her put a wooden spoon in the mixture and lift it up so that it would form strings. There was some property of the strings that would tell her when it was just right.

I gave up on the "string theory" years ago because I never could get it the exact consistency to set up right like Mom could. I now make a double batch in a big saucepan, cooking it on medium to 295 degrees. (You need two baking sheets for this.) Comes out great every time.



Blessing

Our Father, who art in
heaven, Hallowed be thy
Name. Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done in
earth, As it is in
heaven. Give us this day
our daily bread. And
forgive us our
trespasses, As we
forgive them that
trespass against us. And
lead us not into
temptation, But deliver
us from evil. For thine
is the kingdom, The
power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.

Amen

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13TH

Butternut Squash Soup

PASTOR WYATT LINDE

Associate Pastor of Congregational Care and Outreach

Ingredients:

- 4 lbs Butternut Squash
- ½ Cup sliced blanched almonds
- 8 oz. Carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 large onion, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 4 ribs celery, coarsely chopped
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Water
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cut the squash in half lengthwise and place them on a cookie sheet lined with aluminum foil.
3. Roast squash for 30 minutes or until flesh is tender at the neck.
4. Place almonds on another unlined cookie sheet and toast in oven to a golden brown color, about 3-5 minutes
5. In a large pot, sweat carrots, celery and onion with butter and olive oil until tender.
6. Scoop the seeds out of the squash, then scoop the squash meat into the pot with the cooked vegetables.
7. Add cold water to cover everything by one inch, add the spices and sugar and simmer 30 minutes.
8. Transfer soup to blender in small batches. Do not fill the blender more than halfway! Blend until the soup is thick and very smooth and pour back into the pot.

Be careful and keep the top on the blender, as the hot soup can be explosive. Taste the soup and, if necessary adjust the seasonings and salt.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH

Butternut Squash Soup

PASTOR WYATT LINDE

Associate Pastor of Congregational Care and Outreach

The Christmas season was always a hectic time for my family. My dad worked in the ski industry, which sees its busiest days of the season between Christmas and New Year. This meant that my dad worked every Christmas Eve and Christmas Day while I was growing up. Christmas Eve was often especially rushed. My grandparents would arrive from Colorado Springs in the mid-afternoon in a flurry of laughter, hugs, and a bundle of brightly wrapped packages. But just as they were settling in, my dad would arrive home early from the ski area in time to change out of the clothes he had worn at work, and set off with us for Christmas Eve church service. Once we arrived early enough to find parking and get two young boys a good seat in the sanctuary balcony, my mom would make a bag of coloring books, hot wheels, and magnetic checkers boards appear as if from a magician's hat, to keep my brother and I occupied until the service began. Then we would lift our voices with the rest of the congregation in song and celebration for the arrival of The New Born King.

Finally, once the service came to a close, my family would make our way out of the church, into the silent night and return home, where the world would finally slow down. After taking off our coats and hats, we would set the table and sit down to a quiet dinner. We would read the Christmas Story by the light of the Advent Wreath that sat, finally fully illuminated, at the center of our dinner table. Then, we would bow our heads in prayer and share bowls of warm, sweet butternut squash soup as we laughed and yawned and enjoyed each other's company. I treasure these memories of Christmas Eve, because even during the busiest time of year, when we were running in every direction, my family set everything aside to spend time together. This recipe always bring a smile to my face because it reminds me of what really matters to me; the warmth of my beloved family and the sweetness of shared laughter as we gathered around the finally-lit Christ Candle.

May you enjoy it as well this Advent season, and may it remind you of what is truly important to you in this ever-changing and often-rushing world.



Blessing

Dear God, thank you for this food and our family. Thank you for time to slow down and to enjoy the blessing of one another's company. Bless this food may it nourish us and strengthen us to do your work. And bless our neighbors who do not have enough. May their cupboards be filled and, by your grace, may we do what we can to help fill them. Amen.

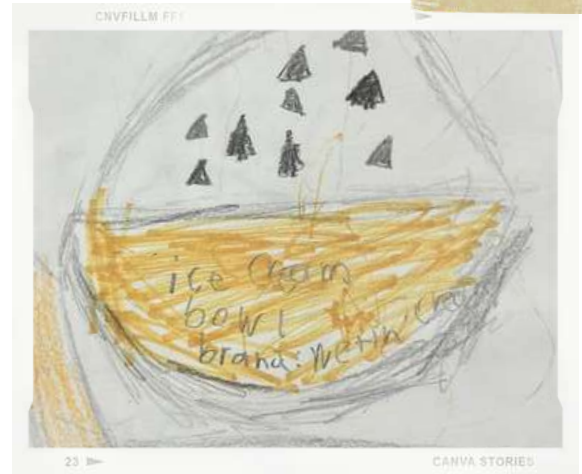
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH

Homemade Ice Cream

APPLEWICK FAMILY, SADDLEBROOKE 9:00

Ingredients:

- 5 Eggs - separated (let egg whites come to room temperature in a medium sized mixing bowl)
- 1 1/2 quarts milk
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 Quart cream
- 3 Tbsp. vanilla (or less)



Directions:

1. Slowly heat together milk, sugar & egg yolks - stirring constantly so that the eggs don't cook separately.
2. Let this mixture cool.
3. After the mixture has cooled, add 1 quart of cream and 3 Tbsp. of vanilla (or less - your preference).
4. Beat the 5 egg whites until stiff and fold into the cooled milk & cream mixture.
5. Pour into ice cream freezer canister, insert the dash and seal with the lid. Continuously add water, ice and rock salt to the space between the canister and the "pail". When the power shuts off on the freezer, the ice cream is done. You may need to "help it along" a bit at the end to keep it turning!!
6. Pour the finished ice cream into containers of your choice to keep in the freezer. Ensure that the containers are thoroughly sealed to prevent frost from forming. The ice cream is never better than immediately after the ice cream freezer motor stops!!



This recipe is important because making homemade ice cream at Christmas was one of our Appewick traditions from when I was a child that carried into my adult life. We typically made it on Christmas Eve day. I occasionally try to carry this wonderful tradition into our Christmas celebrations.

Blessing

Gracious God,
We give you thanks for
traditions that last
generations. Thank you for
all the changes of the
season, for the chill in the
air and the warmth of our
hearts.
Amen

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15TH

Cranberry Bread

ENGELSMEIERS FAMILY ORO VALLEY 9:15

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 2 T hot water
- 2 T melted shortening
- 1 beaten egg
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1 cup sliced cranberries
- (Optional) 1/2 cup nuts crushed



Directions:

1. Mix dry ingredients
2. Add wet ingredients in order listed- hot water, shortening, egg, orange juice
3. Add cranberries and combine
4. Bake 1 hour in oven at 325 degrees
5. Cool, slice, serve with butter, enjoy!
6. Also can be frozen.



Jill's family has been making this cranberry bread for generations in Wisconsin, North Dakota, Texas, and Arizona. Her grandmother, Sybil Triggs, passed down the recipe from her family (Blodgett). Jill brought the cranberry bread to her first Christmas with Dan's family (Engelsmeiers & Petersons). It soon became a staple each year!

Blessing

Come Lord Jesus, be our
guest.
Let these gifts to us
be blessed.
Amen.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16TH

Pignolata

LEPORE FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 10:45
AJ Lepore Contemporary Band Leader

Ingredients:

- 1 dozen eggs lightly beaten
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Tsp. baking powder
- 1 large bottle of pure honey
- 4 lbs of flour

Directions:

1. Mix flour, salt, and baking powder to lightly beaten eggs using your hands to mix. Sprinkle flour on hands so dough isn't sticky
2. Dough should be a consistency that is easy to roll out - add more flour as needed.
3. A chunk at a time, roll out into $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick ropes. Cut into small $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces and place on a large flour sprinkled surface.
4. In a large, deep frying pan, fill half of pan with vegetable oil and heat for frying (about 350°).
5. Pick up a couple handfuls of dough balls and shake off excess flour. Drop them into the hot oil and fry, turning them constantly with a spoon, until golden brown.
6. Using a skimmer or strainer spoon, remove fried balls from the pan and drain as much oil as possible. Place the fried balls onto paper towels.
7. After all the dough is fried, in a large pot, heat the honey until close to boiling.
8. Add all fried pieces of dough to the pot and turn until all are coated evenly with honey.
9. Spoon the honey-covered fried dough balls onto a large plate and shape into a ring/wreath.
10. Sprinkle the wreath with confetti candy/sprinkles.
11. Keep in a cool area (not refrigerated)



Pignolata

LEPORE FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 10:45

AJ Lepore Contemporary Band Leader

Pignolata (or "pinulatta" as my grandmother spelled it - her parents really wanted her reading and writing in English) is a traditional Italian treat commonly made at Christmastime. For our family, making pignolata has always been a 'right of passage' of sorts. Making the ropes of dough and cutting them into balls is something even our littlest ones can help with, so it is often the first thing we learn to make when it comes to getting ready for Christmas. For my family that lives close together, it is often a whole day affair where everyone gathers and the adults help the kids make pignolata. It is definitely one of the things I miss most about living close extended family and I cherish the memories of being little and making it with my grandma.



Blessing

Angelo di Dio (translated to English)
Angel of God,
my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and
guide.
Amen.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH

Grandma Ries' Cheesecake

LABRE FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 10:45

Jennifer Labre Publications Specialist

Jenna Labre Audio-Visual Tech

Ingredients:

- 2 pkg 8 oz Cream Cheese (softened)
- 1 Cup Sugar (divided)
- 1 ½ tsp Vanilla
- 1 16 oz Sour Cream
- 2 C Graham Cracker Crumbs
- 3 Eggs (slightly beaten)
- ¼ C Sugar
- ½ tsp Almond Extract
- 1 Stick Butter (melted)

Directions:

1. Crust: Combine graham cracker crumbs, ¼ C sugar and melted butter. Spread onto 9 x 13 pan.
2. Filling: Combine cream cheese, eggs, and 2/3 cup sugar. Beat until smooth. Add 1 tsp vanilla and almond extract. Pour into crust.
3. Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes, let cool.
4. Combine sour cream, 1/3 C sugar and ½ tsp vanilla. Spread on top of cool cheesecake. Bake at 350 for 10 minutes. Let cool and refrigerate preferably overnight.



This is my grandma's famous cheesecake recipe. Many people have asked for this recipe over the years and many in my family probably wouldn't be too happy with me giving it out right now! But it's too good not to be shared!

My grandma was famous for calling it her "No Good Cheesecake" because every time she made it, she swore it wouldn't be any good. We all knew better. She made it for each and every holiday and birthday. We all couldn't wait to get a small piece. It was always served as is, there were no fruit toppings as many other cheesecakes have. It's delicious as it is! My sister, Marcia, and I have carried on the tradition of making it for holiday gatherings since my grandma has passed on, keeping her memory, and our love of cheesecake alive.

Blessing

As we gather around this table, our hearts are full - yet we feel the space of those we love who cannot join us today. Through miles or time may keep us apart, love bridges every distance. May their presence be felt in our laughter, their memory shine in our stories, and their spirit fill this room with warmth, We give thanks for each life that touches ours, both near and far, seen and unseen. Amen.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18TH

Chicken Tahitian

VETTE FAMILY, ORO VALLEY 9:15 SERVICE
Wally Vette Church Council Secretary

Ingredients:

- 6-8 Chicken Breasts
- 6 oz can of frozen orange juice, thawed
- 2 tbs oil
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp dry mustard
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ⅓ cup sliced almonds
- Pineapple Chunks
- 1 Avocado sliced



Directions:

1. Marinate chicken breasts overnight in mixture of orange juice, oil, ginger, curry powder, dry mustard, and soy sauce.
2. Bake in the marinade uncovered at 350 for 1 hour
3. Sprinkle almonds over chicken during last 10 minutes of cooking.
4. Serve chicken over rice garnished with pineapple chunks and avocado slices.



This dish looks special when plated on a platter, and you can slice the chicken or not. In addition to oven baking the chicken, we also grill it.
Leftovers are wonderful on a green salad.

Blessing

Lord God,
Bless this food to our bodies and our hands to your service. Thank You for the sunshine of the desert and the light You bring into our lives. Help us this Advent season as we prepare our hearts for Your coming.
Amen

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

Candied Sweet Potatoes

MCDONALD FAMILY

Pat McDonald, Operations Administrator

Ingredients:

- 3 cups cooked smashed sweet potatoes
- ½ cup sugar
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup melted butter
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 cup chopped pecan nuts
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1/3 cup melted butter

Directions:

1. Cook sweet potatoes
2. Smash sweet potatoes
3. Mix together sweet potatoes, sugar, milk, eggs, vanilla, and butter
4. Place mixture in a casserole dish
5. Mix brown sugar, pecans, flour, and melted butter for topping
6. Crumble topping over sweet potatoes
7. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-45 minutes



Darla has made this recipe almost every year for Thanksgiving / Christmas since we have been married, it is one of our kids' favorite recipes and now they make it for their family holiday events.

The funny thing is it's not anything special or gourmet, Darla found it on a can when we first married and tried it.....the rest is history.

Silly but special to the McDonalds.

Blessing

Dear Heavenly Father, love brought Jesus to the earth, and love brings us to this Christmas table. Today as we share this holiday feast, may we also share with one another a joyful heart and a warm smile. May our Christmas dinner be filled with kindness. And may the memories of today warm our hearts for years to come. Amen

—Beth McLendon

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20TH

Cranberry Salsa

DEACON EMMA JANZEN
Director of Youth Ministries

Ingredients:

- 12 ounces fresh cranberries
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 jalapeno, diced
- ½ cup cilantro
- ½ cup green onion
- 2 limes juiced
- Tortilla Chips

Directions:

1. Put the cranberries and sugar in a food processor or blender and pulse until cranberries are chunky.
2. Stir in the jalapenos, cilantro, green onion, and lime juice, blend again until it is all combined and about the same size pieces.
3. Transfer to a serving dish.
4. Allow to chill for at least 30 minutes before serving.
5. Serve with your favorite tortilla chips



In the Janzen family, Christmas dinner was a time for lots of hors d'oeuvres. We would get home from Christmas Eve worship, change into our pajamas, and spread out between the kitchen and the living room. We would take out all the snacky things we had made before heading off to worship and pretend like we all weren't going to fill up on snacks before dinner! This reminds me of gathering in the kitchen with my family and continuing to enjoy the company of one another after we got home from service. To me, this is such a powerful metaphor for Advent, making sure we don't fill ourselves up (distractions of the season) by the time dinner (Christmas) comes. Jesus is coming and as a community we ready our hearts in excited anticipation.

Blessing

The Johnny Appleseed
Prayer (sung)
"Oh, the Lord is good
to me,
And so I thank the
Lord,
For giving me the
things I need;
The sun and the rain
and the apple seed.
The Lord is good to
me.
Amen,
Amen,
Amen, Amen, Amen,
Aaaa-men"

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21ST

Mom's Famous Fudge

ELLIOT FAMILY, SADDLEBROOKE 9:00

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups white sugar
- 1 large can evaporated milk
- 1 cup butter
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla
- 18 ounces chocolate or butterscotch chips.
- 10 oz or 40 large marshmallows (mini marshmallows can be used)
- 2 cups chopped nuts

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan blend the sugar, evaporated milk and butter. Bring to rolling boil and continue to boil for 6 minutes. Stir often to keep mixture from burning.
2. Remove from heat. Add vanilla, chocolate or butterscotch chips, marshmallows and chips.
3. Stir until the marshmallows and chips are melted.
4. Pour into an 8 ½ x11" buttered baking dish (larger or smaller depending on how thick you want your fudge pieces to be). Let stand for 24 hours before cutting into individual pieces.



Blessing

Lord, help me to savor
the sweet moments, just
as I do with this
fudge. When life gets
difficult, help me to
remember that there are
always sweet times to
be grateful for.

Amen.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22ND

Mama and Alli's Real Christmas Sugar Cookies

CHRIS JUSTESEN

Resurrection Lutheran Child Development Center Executive Director

A Recipe for Togetherness

The holidays can feel like a flurry of lists, lights, and last-minute shopping—but Advent invites us to pause. It's a season not just of preparation, but of presence. Let me share one of my favorite memories that was supposed to be about making Christmas Cookies! Each year, my daughter, Alli, asked me to make REAL cookies... the ones with shapes and that we could decorate. She was used to me buying store bought cookies or the ones that you scoop and bake!! In a moment of mama guilt, I committed to making REAL Christmas Sugar Cookies... from scratch - how hard could it be??? The recipe was simple—flour, butter, sugar, vanilla, —but what happened was much sweeter than any cookie could ever be!

As we rolled out the dough and pressed out stars, angels, and trees, we could not figure out how to get the cookie cutout on to the baking tray. Every time we tried to use the spatula to transfer the unbaked dough, it ripped and morphed into some unrecognizable blob! After many unsuccessful tries, we put our heads together and decided to roll the dough out on the cookie sheets themselves and then pull away the extra dough so we could at least bake them!! There was flour on our faces and Christmas music in the background and a supreme feeling of success as we put them in the oven. When they came out, they didn't look that great... completely uneven and a bit shape challenged but somewhere between the mixing and the baking, the problem solving and the laughter, something holy happened! We were reminded that our time together and our shared experience was where the magic was - not in the beautiful cookies but in the beautiful memories. 18 years later and we still tell that story and laugh until our sides hurt! So here is our favorite Holiday Recipe...



Ingredients:

- 1 cup of laughter
- 2 heaping scoops of grace
- A sprinkle of determination
- A dash of humility

Directions:

1. Mix well with love and serve warm around the table

*I pray that all your Holiday Recipes
brings as much joy and
connection as this one did for us!*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23RD

Norwegian Cookies

NYBROTEN FAMILY

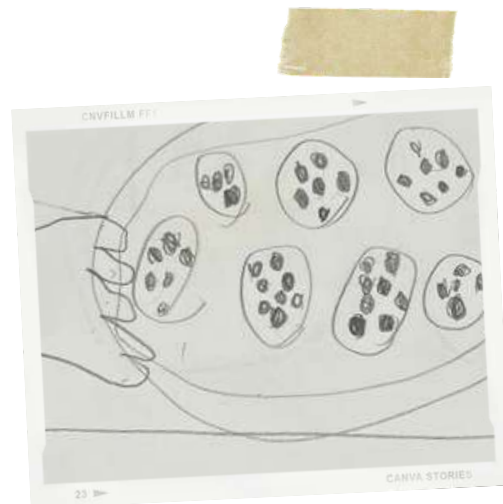
Pastor Tim Nybroten, Senior Pastor

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter ($\frac{1}{2}$ lb.)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour
- 1 cup walnuts, sliced thin

Directions:

1. Cream the butter and powdered sugar until smooth.
2. Add the flour and vanilla, mixing well.
3. Stir in the walnuts by hand. Drop by spoonful onto a cookie sheet.
4. Using a flour-dipped cloth wrapped around the bottom of a glass, gently press each cookie flat.
5. Bake at 350° for 12 minutes, one sheet at a time.
6. While still warm, lightly dip each cookie in powdered sugar.



A Note from Pastor Tim and Chandra
These cookies carry so many memories for us. They connect us to our Norwegian ancestry and to Christmases filled with warmth and family. You truly cannot eat just one. Both of our grandparents made these cookies every December, and each batch brings back their joy, their hospitality, and their love.

All of our grandparents are now with Jesus in heaven, and three of our four parents are as well. Making these cookies keeps their stories and traditions close to our hearts. We plan to keep baking them—to enjoy, to remember, and to give thanks for the generations who shaped our lives.

I hope they bring a bit of that same joy and remembrance to your Christmas, too.

Blessing

Be present at our
table, Lord.
Be here and
everywhere
adored.

These mercies
bless, and grant
that we
May strengthened
for thy service
be.
Amen

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

A Christmas Blessing

Psalm 96:11-12 NRSVue

11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar and all that fills it;
12 let the field exult and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

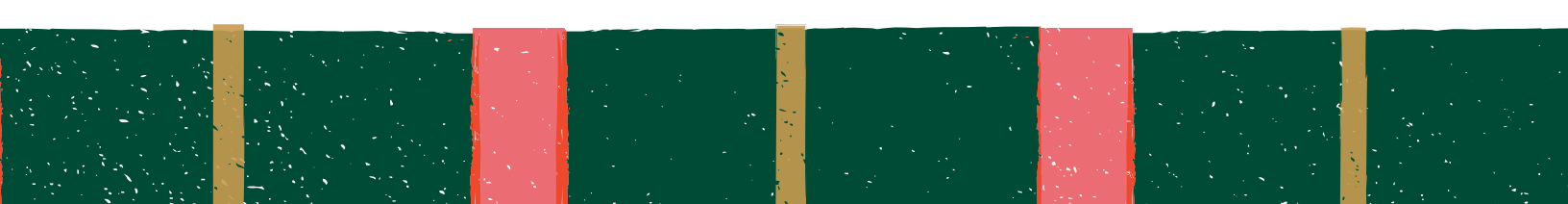
Throughout this Advent season, we continue to come together in hopeful anticipation. We know the horizon is joyous, the birth of Jesus Christ is quickly approaching! How amazing it is that we find ourselves in a season where we are called to slow down and wait for preparations to be made. Throughout this devotional, there are many recipes that call us to wait for bread to rise, things to bake in the oven, or to cool before serving. The hope of Advent also leads us to this liminal space -not yet rejoicing in joy but knowing that we will soon celebrate the coming of Jesus. All of creation waits, pausing for the moment in which we proclaim the coming of Christ. This Christmas, let us join in the song of all creation.

Good and gracious God,
We join in the song of creation, rejoicing and hopeful of all that is to come. As we journey through this advent season, be with us in each roar of the sea and each silent moment. Like these recipes calling us to wait before eating gathered from our community, we prepare ourselves for the coming of your Son. Help us to be thoughtful recipients of the greatest gift of all and that we may share Your gift of love with all of creation.

In Your Holy name we pray,
Amen.

How have you intentionally joined in "slowing down and waiting" this Advent season, and what might you have discovered in this space of hope and anticipation?

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Tim, Pastor Erin, Pastor Carol,
Pastor Wyatt, and Deacon Emma





*Merry
Christmas!*