Thought before worship: Now to the manger let us go to worship and adore the
tender babe upon the straw, our Savior evermore. Glory to our God, we
sing, glory to our Lord and King; peace, good will with all abide this holy
Christmas tide. (“Our Day of Joy Is Here Again” by A.L. Skoog)

Organ Prelude
Jaci Mrosko
Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus (arr. Pethel)

Call to Worship
Sonkist Choir
Good News

Welcome
Pastor Eric Sparrman
Jesus Came the Heav’ns Adoring

Opening Hymn #140
Steve and Melissa Erickson
Onalee, Ella, Lars, Noah
Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:3
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Children’s Message
Children kindergarten and younger will be dismissed for Children’s Worship following this message.

Choral Anthem
Chancel Choir
A Stable in Bethlehem

Sermon
Pastor Eric Sparrman
Why a Manger?
Luke 2:1-7

Hymn of Response #165
Away in a Manger

Prayers of the People and The Lord’s Prayer
Pastor Kris Causton

Witness and Mission
Tom Williams

Offering and Community Life
Jenny Gullickson

Doxology

Benediction

Organ Postlude
Good Christians All Rejoice! (arr. Burson)

Advent Readers
9:00 am - Amy Dedrick and Jim Mazurek, Mad, Natalie, Cory Carson

We have attended Excelsior Covenant about one year and enjoy & appreciate the intergenerational aspects celebrated here: everything from VBS to Advent Afternoon includes the youngest and the oldest members and attendees. We are thrilled to be welcomed so quickly. God is blessing us through Sunday school and Wednesday night activities, through friends and service projects. A treasured Christmas family tradition is opening our gifts on Christmas Eve!

Financial Update
Our general fund has been managed and stayed in a relatively healthy position throughout the year, but as we enter December, we need approximately $230,000 to meet our budgeted giving for 2013.

Please consider what you can do to close out the year strong and support the many ministries at ECC as we enter 2014. Contact Beth Cone, Financial Secretary, if you would like to make a stock gift 952-474-5675.

Why a Manger?

Why an Angel?
Prayer intercessors are available at the front of the sanctuary if you would like individual prayer.

**COMMUNITY LIFE**

Newcomers Gathering
**TODAY - 10:10am.** Are you new to Excelsior Covenant Church? We’d love to welcome you with an informal gathering of refreshments and fellowship with Pastors and staff. Come get to know us.

Advent Afternoon
Families! Join us **TODAY at 11:45am** in Fellowship Hall for a fun afternoon of games, crafts and gift-making. Lunch will be served. $5 suggested donation for gift makers.

Christmas Jazz Concert
Join us **TODAY at 7pm** as the Good News Big Band (featuring ECL member Tom Beukhof) performs favorite Christmas tunes done in a big band style. For more information about the Good News Big Band, please visit http://gnbb.org

Cornerstones Christmas Luncheon
The annual Cornerstones (70+) Christmas Luncheon will be held Wednesday, 12/11 @ 11:00 am. Please join us for this fun celebration. Contact Carleen Wernsma with questions 952-237-9974.

Youth Musicians
Young people - if you would like to share your musical talents at church during the Christmas season, we would love to have you be part of the prelude music for the Sonbeam and Sonkist Choirs on the evening December 15th (we will make arrangements if your child is in one of these choirs). Please contact Iao Hiroko at jmrrocks@msn.com or 952-474-3438 with questions or to participate.

**BREAKING FREED DONATIONS**

Travel size (like in hotels) toiletries are needed for Breaking Free’s street outreach. Also needed: items for transitional housing such as full size shampoo/conditioner, body wash, toothpaste, & deodorant. Look for collection bin at church. Gift cards (Gas Stations, Cub/Rainbow, Target, Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, Kohl’s, Macy’s, Foot Locker/ Payless Shoes) are also accepted to support their Adopt-A-Family program and Women’s Program. Gift cards can be dropped off in church office by Sunday, December 15th. Contact Sheila Jefferson 952-937-2707 jeffersons39@gmail.com or Becky Folwick at 952-470-0891 or bkfoolick@gmail.com if you have questions or to put on an email update list for Breaking Free.

**TIMBER BAY TREE**

Need a Christmas Tree? Buy one at the Timber Bay Tree Lot and support a local youth ministry outreach! They have a great selection! Eric Boal, a part of our ECC community, is the Minnetonka Area Director & the Christmas tree lot by the Minnetonka Cub Foods ( Hwy 7 & Cty Rd 101) is one of his big fundraisers. Lives of kids in the Mika area are being changed as Eric and the TB staff are. Check out www.timberbay.org for more information.

Emergency Cancellation Call List
Contact the office if you would like to receive a phone call when there are weather cancellations. Info can also be found on excelcov.org and WCCO (in the future).