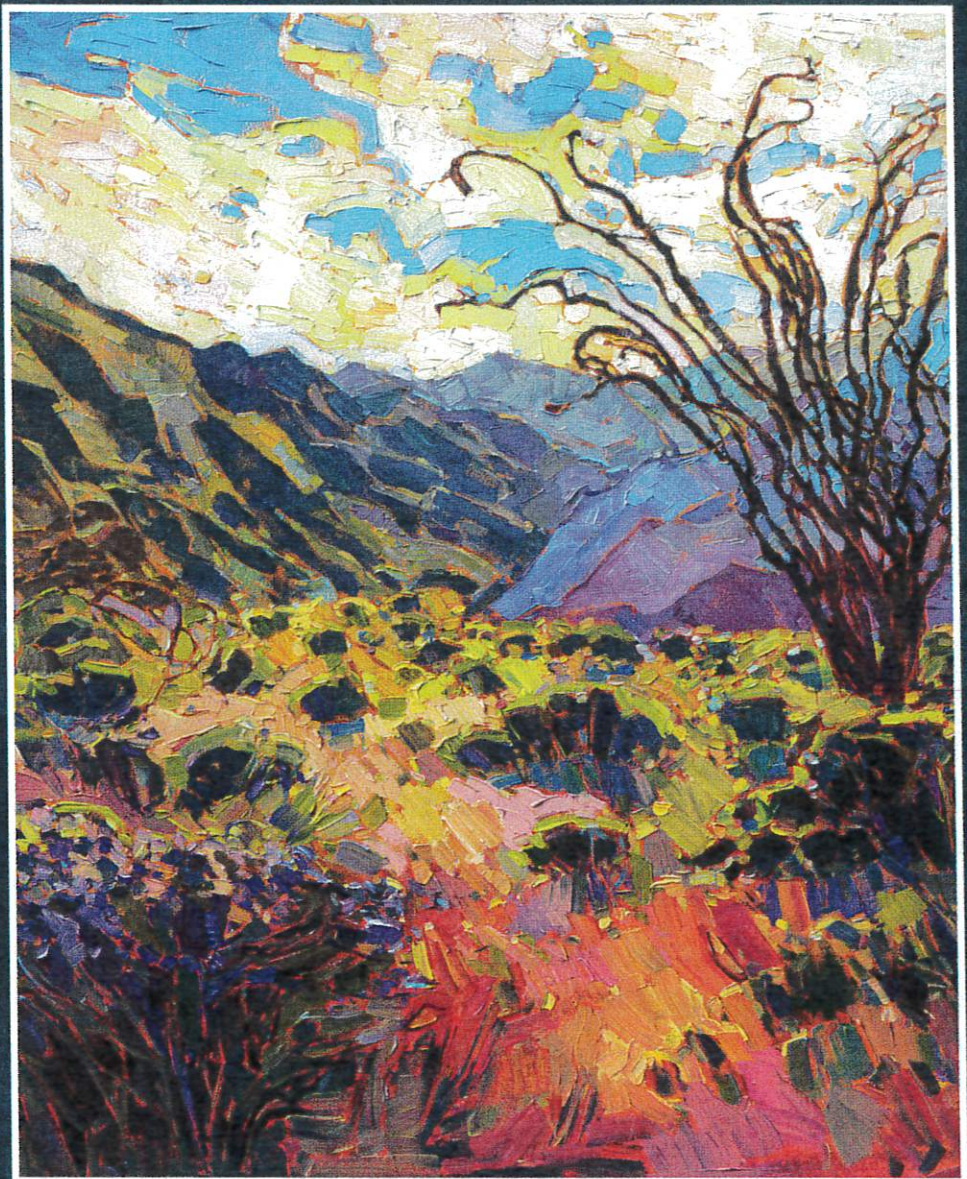


The desert shall
rejoice and
blossom

ISAIAH 35:1





The Third Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 13, 2025 ~ 5:00pm

Sunday, December 14, 2025 ~ 9:00am

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

PRELUDE

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Jubilation

GATHERING

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,
we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. **Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. † You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG

"My Lord, What a Morning"

ELW 438

GREETING

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

And also with you.

THIRD SUNDAY - *The Wonder of Christmas*

Candle Lighting

Today we light three candles. The **first candle** calls us to behold the wonder of the season in a fresh way. In a world where too often the familiar becomes commonplace, Advent is a time to ponder the mystery of God's amazing love. The **second candle** invites us to hear again the ancient prophecies that, like flames in the darkness, illuminate our world, inspire our faith, and guide our journey. As we light the **third candle**, we affirm that Advent is a time to hear again the still small voice calling us to behold God's promise, and embrace the gift of a Savior who is Christ our Lord.

Responsive Litany

During Advent we listen for the wonder of God's Word.

Speak to us, O Lord, for our hearts are open.

During Advent we reach beyond the noise and distractions of this world.

Speak to us, O Lord, for our hearts are open.

During Advent we ponder the good news that is our great joy.

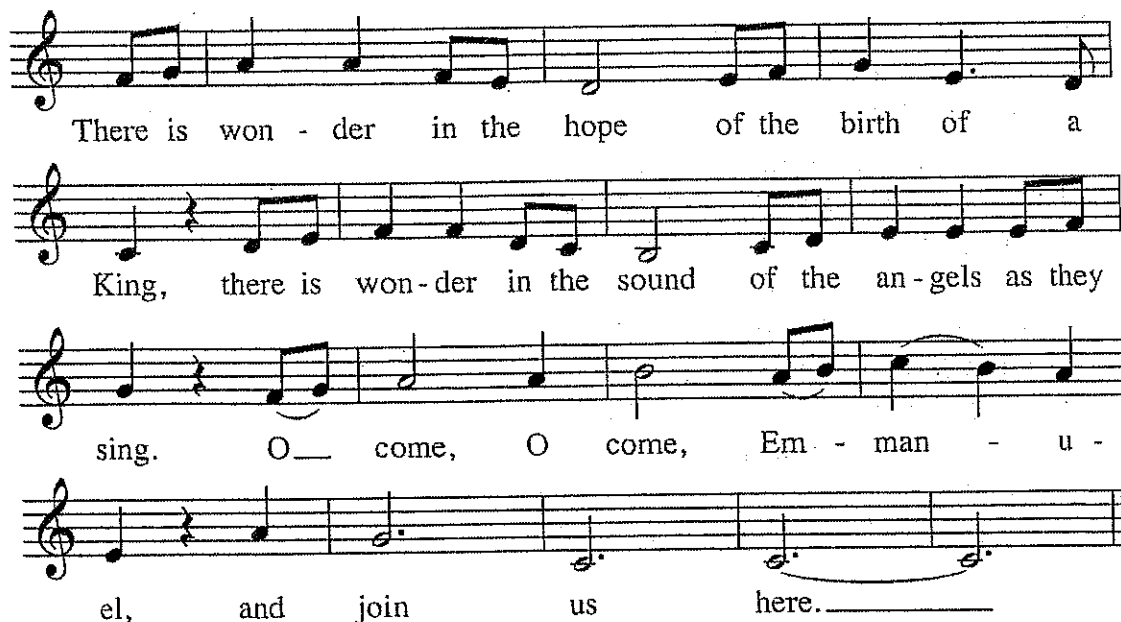
Speak to us, O Lord, for our hearts are open.

During Advent we speak words of hope to those engaged in life's struggles.

Speak to us, O Lord, for our hearts are open.

During Advent we offer words of peace to those overcome by life's fears.

Speak to us, O Lord, for our hearts are open.



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.]]

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;

the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;**
who keeps promises forever;
⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The LORD sets the captive free.
⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed**
down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
⁹ The LORD cares for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.
¹⁰ **The LORD shall reign forever,**
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

A reading from James.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

"Help Us O Lord"

♩ = 90

Help us O Lord to hear your word. O-pen our hearts to feel your word. Give us the strength to live your word each day.

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Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹ "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON (5:00 pm)

ANTHEM

"We Wait"

Jubilation

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (9:00 am)

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"	ELW 283, vv. 1 & 3
"O Little Town of Bethlehem"	ELW 279, v. 1
"Away in a Manger"	ELW 277, vv. 1-3
"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"	ELW 270, vv. 1 & 3
"We Three Kings of Orient Are"	<i>See Screen</i>
"Joy to the World"	ELW 267, vv.1-4

NICENE CREED

We confess our faith.

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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*Each prayer petition will conclude, "God of grace,"
The congregation responds, "hear our prayer."*

SHARING OF THE PEACE

THE OFFERING

OFFERING SONG

"Help Us Oh Lord"

vv. 1 & 3

$\text{♩} = 108$ Em C D Em

Help us, oh Lord, to do what is right and wise.
Teach us to live your king - dom come here on earth.
of - fer in joy what you first to us gave:

Am C D

Help us to see our bro - thers' needs that are in dis - guise.
O - pen our lives to treat each per - son with e - qual worth.
Our - selves, our time, the ver - y things that our hands have made.

Em B7

Re - mind us, oh Lord, to feel the
Re - ceive them all now, we're fam - i - ly; we're
this is our

C D Em B (last time end on Em)

pain bound in our sis - ters' eyes.
prayer by bap - tis - mal birth.
in in Je - sus' name. We

OFFERING PRAYER

Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. 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 to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name.

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 the 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.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

COMMUNION SONG "Lamb of God"

$\text{♩} = 100$ E^b (D) (guitar: capo 1) $\text{B}^b\text{m}/\text{G}$ (Am/F $\sharp$) A^b (G)

Lamb of God,
Bread of Life,
Prince of Peace,
Lamb of God,

E^b/G (D/F $\sharp$) $\text{A}^b\text{Maj}7$ (GMaj7) $\text{Gm}7$ (F $\sharp\text{m}7$)

you take a way the sin of the

1, 2, 3 $\text{C}7$ (B7) E^b (D) F (E) F7 (E7) B^b7 (A7)

world: have mer-cy on us.

The musical score is written for guitar and voice. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 100 and a key signature of two flats (B-flat major or D minor). The guitar part is indicated to use a capo at the first fret. The first system of music covers the lyrics 'Lamb of God, Bread of Life, Prince of Peace, Lamb of God,' with chords E^b (D), $\text{B}^b\text{m}/\text{G}$ (Am/F $\sharp$), and A^b (G). The second system covers 'you take a way the sin of the' with chords E^b/G (D/F $\sharp$), $\text{A}^b\text{Maj}7$ (GMaj7), and $\text{Gm}7$ (F $\sharp\text{m}7$). The third system covers 'world: have mer-cy on us.' with chords $\text{C}7$ (B7), E^b (D), F (E), F7 (E7), and B^b7 (A7). The score includes a triplet of eighth notes in the guitar part at the end of the third system.

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DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we invite all present to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. All who are baptized and believe that Jesus Christ is present in the gifts of bread and wine are welcome at the Lord's table. Please follow the directions of the pastors to receive communion. Both wine and grape juice are available for communion. The grape juice is the darker color in the middle of the tray. Those who do not wish to receive communion and children who are not yet receiving communion will receive a blessing. Those who are worshiping with us online are invited to have bread and wine or juice available for worship, and we will commune you at the end of communion.

COMMUNION ANTHEMS

**"Light Shines in the Darkness"
"Come, Emmanuel"**

Jubilation

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in his grace.
Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

BLESSING

May God who comes among us, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.
Amen.

SENDING SONG

"Messiah"

Someone's shouting from the des - ert. Someone's shouting from the sea.
 Someone's shouting from the cit - y. I am young, — I am cold.
 Someone's shouting I am brok - en. Someone's shouting make me whole.

Someone's shouting from the mountain. Someone's shouting from the val - ley. Mes -
 Someone's shouting from the country. I am lone - ly, I am old.
 Someone's shouting come and change me. Someone's shouting save my soul.

si ah, come and be our King.

Mes - si ah, come and be our

King.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.





THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SHARE IN OUR WORSHIP

SATURDAY	5:00 pm Worship Service
Ushers	Brad & Janet Merrick
Reader	Mary Moore
Communion Assistant	Janet Merrick
Counters	Dave & Betty Griffin

SUNDAY	9:00 am Worship Service
Ushers	Kenny & Sue Oetzmman
Reader	Carolyn Hulsen
Communion Assistant	Michelle Rasmussen
Counters	Kenny & Sue Oetzmman

Choir Director	Susan Becker
Organist	Susan Becker
Jubilation Leader	Neal Becker
Online Streaming Crew	Craig Bloomingdale, Lucas Golvinghorst, Scott LaPlante, & Kevin Zidarich

Keeping Watch

There's nothing quite like the first smell of springtime flowers emerging from the earth. The sensory explosion often catches us by surprise, reminding us that new life is surely coming soon, even though the world still seems to be slumbering and the buds we watch impatiently refuse to open. This third Sunday of Advent lifts the church and stirs our senses as we receive word, along with John the Baptizer, that Jesus is indeed the one we've been waiting for, the one who will turn buds into blooms. This is good news!

We might wonder, however, why we are hearing this news from John's perspective, out of all the voices in the growing community of Jesus-followers. Can we trust his word? After all, John is sitting behind bars at this time, caught in the gears of the world's injustice. John's unjust imprisonment reminds us that working for justice in the world can cause conflict with those in power. But while the world imprisons the innocent and strains to protect the corrupt and cruel, God sees such injustices and works to undo their power. This, too, is good news!

This third Sunday of Advent is sometimes called *Gaudete*, meaning "Rejoice." Cultivating joy amid the brokenness seen in the world is difficult, but God brings new beginnings where we have known only endings. New tendrils of life are emerging! Something new is coming! Let's share the good news as we wait and keep watch together.

FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Senior Pastor Carrie La Plante Pastor Heather Geest
Worship: Saturday 5 pm Sunday 9 am
Telephone: (563) 285-4501 Email: faitheldridge@netins.net



GRACE - GIFTED FAITH - LIFTED
CALLED TO SHARE, SEEK AND SERVE CHRIST.

Third Sunday of Advent
December 13 & 14, 2025

WELCOME TO WORSHIP Today we gather to celebrate God's love and grace as revealed to us through Jesus Christ. For those that might be interested in knowing more about the ministries and activities of the congregation there are some printed materials available for you to take. The materials are located on the counter just inside the east entrance of this building. You can also find more information through the church website at faithlutheraneldridge.com.

CHILDREN are always welcome in worship. Special children's bulletins are available for their use.

VISITOR? CHANGE OF ADDRESS? INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES? HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST? Please feel free to complete the information card located in front of you next to the hymnals and pass the card to the outer aisle during announcements and an usher will pick them up during the call to worship.



If you are interested in providing altar flowers, please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex, or by using the link on our web site, www.faithlutheraneldridge.com



Trusting that God hears our prayers, we keep these people and all who are in need in our prayers.

Steve Mixdorf	Meyer Mixdorf	Linda Demuth	Dave
Henry Storjohann	Cheryl Torey	Marilyn	Linda
Gary Oerman	Anderson Sears	Kelly	
Patty Denner	June Mephram	James	
Sue Braack	Anna Mundy	Cindy	
Barb Conklen	Rebecca Casson	Thad	

Welcome TO CHURCH

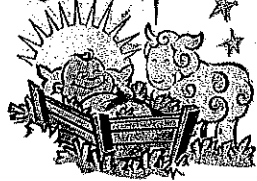
Usher Training



Ushers and those
interested in becoming
Ushers...

December's Usher training
has been rescheduled for
Sunday, December 21, at 10:15 am in
the Sanctuary. Please plan to attend!
Contact Tom Bauer at (563) 505-5776
for more information.

Sunday School Program



The Sunday School Christmas program will be on **Sunday, December 14, at 9:00 am.**

Sunday School will be on Christmas break December 21 and 28. We will resume on Sunday, January 4, with our Winter Rally Day and Congregational Breakfast!



Cinnamon Roll Sunday

Youth who will be attending the mission trip to Denver next summer will be making and selling cinnamon rolls the **weekend of December 13 & 14** to help raise funds for their trip. You can purchase these delicious rolls in person around worship **December 13 & 14**. Pre-orders will be taken beginning in the middle of

November. The cost of cinnamon rolls will be 2 rolls for \$3, 6 rolls for \$8 and a dozen rolls for \$15. They will be available baked and unbaked.

Thank you for supporting our youth!



Sunday, December 14, is the deadline for signing up to contribute to the Christmas poinsettias. Please list your name and the name(s) of those you wish to honor on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex area. We suggest a contribution of **\$10.00** to help offset the cost of the plants. **Please indicate 'flowers' on your envelope so we know how to allocate the funds.** Names will be published in the Christmas Eve worship bulletin.



Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study

Join us this **Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 pm**, as we read and discuss the scriptures for the week ahead.



Christmas Worship Opportunities

Please join us for all of our worship celebrations in the Christmas season!

On Saturday, December 20, at 5:00 pm, and Sunday, December 21, at 9:00 am, we will gather for Advent 4 worship.

On Christmas Eve, worship services will be held at 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm and 9:00 pm. The 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm candlelight services will be particularly appropriate for children. The 9:00 pm service will be a traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

The 4:00 pm and 9:00 pm services on Christmas Eve will be streamed online. We invite you to have a candle available to light at the end of the service as we sing

Silent Night. For all of the online services, we invite you to have bread and wine or grape juice available to celebrate Holy Communion.

On December 27 at 5:00 pm and December 28 at 9:00 am, we will hold the service of Christmas Lessons and Carols. Join us as we hear the story of Jesus from the prophets to the Word made flesh and sing many of our favorite Christmas carols.

We look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, with you this Christmas season.



CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING

Our Christmas special offering will go to Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI). LSI empowers families and communities by recognizing and honoring the strengths and gifts of every individual. It is affiliated with the ELCA and a member of Lutheran Services in America. More information can be found on their website, <https://lsiowa.org/>.



Do you love to bake? Bread bakers for the communion loaves are needed for the balance of this year. Please sign up on the bulletin board at church.



December 6 & 7: 5:00 pm: 437, 9:00 am: 67, Online: 66 Total: 180

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

WEEKLY

Sneak Peek

Saturday, December 13

Cinnamon Roll Sale

- 9:00 am Sunday School Christmas
Program Rehearsal
- 5:00 pm Jubilation Worship in
Sanctuary & Online

Sunday, December 14

Cinnamon Roll Sale

- 9:00 am Jubilation Worship in
Sanctuary with Children's
Christmas Program
- 10:15 am Congregational Breakfast
- 10:15 am Sunday School

Monday, December 15 *Office Closed*

Tuesday, December 16

- 1:00 pm Bible Study
- 5:30 pm Food Pantry

Wednesday, December 17

- 10:15 am Resounding Joy
- 5:15 pm Confirmation Meal
- 5:45 pm Confirmation Christmas
Caroling at Grand Haven
- 6:00 pm People of Praise
- 7:00 pm High School Youth

Thursday, December 18

- 9:00 am Ambassador & Bulletin
Folding
- 6:30 pm Council Meeting

Friday, December 19

- 9:00 am Food Pantry Basket
Distribution
- 1:00 pm Friday Fun Club

Saturday, December 20

- 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary &
Online

Sunday, December 21

- 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary
- 10:15 am Fellowship
- 10:15 am Sunday School



Pastor Carrie and Pastor Heather are available for Pastoral Care, but we need your help to know when and where that is needed. Please contact us at the church office at (563) 285-4501. For after-hour emergencies, please contact Pastor Carrie at (641) 275-1326 or Pastor Heather at (563) 639-9606.

ADVENT