

The St. John Lutheran Church

Volume 82 — Number 12

December 2025 Jottings

Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men.” --- Luke 2: 10 – 14



Pastor Michael's Musings

December 2025

The Christian New Year is upon us, the beginning of the Season of Advent, with Advent 1 being on November 30th. During the season of Advent we are invited to look ahead to the glorious day of Christmas, that day in which we celebrate the arrival of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into the world.

Along with Easter, Christmas commemorates and celebrates one of the greatest days in human history, that day in which God arrived into the world in human form to begin the process of redemption for all of humanity. What began all the way back in the Garden of Eden, the falling away from perfection through the act of disobeying on the part of Adam and Eve, God has sought to remedy, correct, and heal through the wonderful grace that only God can offer. Christmas celebrates a key event in the ongoing act of salvation that God has for all of God's people. It is a crucial and fundamental day of celebration that leads us to the unfolding ministry of Jesus Christ, all the way to the cross.

The Christmas trees, the lights, the colors, the music, the gifts; yes, even the tastes and smells of Christmas, all work together to guide us, through our senses, to the heavenly kingdom. In our current human form, we find it difficult to catch a glimpse of the incredible world to come. The ugliness of this world can and always has done its best to distract us from that which is ultimately real and true. It is hard to remember that this life of 70 years or so is but a pittance in comparison to the eternal life to come. We might find ourselves putting undo emphasis on things that are here today and gone tomorrow, or we might find ourselves becoming emotionally distraught over things that will eventually work themselves out. Such is the “curse” that is written about in

Joy to the World – “No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make his blessings flow Far as the curse is found.” Christmas, and the entire Christmas Season, is all about the master plan of God coming into action in a very real and historical way. God’s redemption for us is through the birth and meaning of the Christ Child. The Season of Advent goes to great lengths to prepare us for the arrival of the salvation of the world, and the Christmas Season allows us to bathe in the glow of the gracious love that God has for all of us.

This year, think once again upon the wonderful message of salvation which comes to us through the sights, sounds, flavors, and smells of the Christmas Season. Bask in the glory of the Kingdom to Come, as imperfect as our spiritual vision might be in our current physical form. See the reality of God in your life and share that love with others all around you!



Merry Christmas

JOYFUL NOISE

A monthly column with all the noise
that is news about Music & Worship
at St. John Lutheran Church

Volume 26, Issue 6

December 2025

December—Ready or not...Here Comes Christmas

I'm hearing lots of people say "I can't believe its Christmas already!", and yet, it's the same time every year: December 25th. But, our lives seem to be getting more and more complicated with events and things that distract us from the reason for the Christmas season...which is to celebrate the BIRTH OF CHRIST! BUT FIRST...December is actually the season of ADVENT.

The church has dealt with this for centuries, and has invented the solution to keep our mind on the coming festival...ADVENT! Those of us in mainline Christmas churches (Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ, Episcopalians, and Catholics) use the FOUR WEEKS before Christmas as a season of preparation. Advent was "invented" by the church over 1500 years ago, as a time of preparation for those who would be Baptized on Epiphany (January 6th) which Catholic tradition says was the day Jesus was baptized. SO—for four Sundays before Christmas, we concentrate on the Old Testament prophecies that tell of Jesus's coming. It's a time of PREPARATION; a time of WAITING. The Advent Wreath to help us count the weeks. Many churches don't even put up their Christmas trees until after the 4th Sunday of Advent service. This is often referred to as the "hanging of the greens". Some years, we have chosen to only light ONE of our four Christmas trees on the 1st week of Advent, TWO on the 2nd week, THREE on the third week, and finally, on week four, we light all four trees. I know some people don't like that, but once again, it's a visible way to keep us focused on the reason for the (Advent) season...to count the days and PREPARE. While those in non-mainline denominations (Baptists, "non-denominational" churches, etc) are singing Christmas Carols in church starting after Thanksgiving, Mainline churches normally reserve those carols to start December 24th, which is Christmas Eve. Compare that to the Lenten and Easter seasons. We wouldn't sing "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" on Good Friday...NO! We wait until EASTER SUNDAY to pull out those great Easter Resurrection sings. The same applies to Christmas. It's NOT CHRISTMAS until December 24th, in spite of all the *Black Friday* sales

at every store in town. Our hymnal has a wealth of delightful Advent songs...ENJOY THEM! SING THEM! Since so many people "can't stand the strain" of NOT singing carols before Christmas, we will replace "This is the Feast" on the Sundays in Advent with a familiar Christmas Praise Carol, and the Doxology with an Advent carol about giving our gifts....so you'll get the best of both worlds.

The liturgical colors of Advent used to be Purple and Pink. PURPLE for the REPENTENCE (similar to Lent) and PINK for JOY on the 3rd week. The white CHRIST CANDLE in the center isn't lit until Christmas Eve. In recent years, PURPLE was changed to BLUE in most Pretestant Mainline churches, representing the more positive feeling of HOPE and as the royal color of the coming King of Kings. We use BLUE rather than purple!

Tiny Tim Gifts

THANKS to everyone who "adopted" one of more of our pantry children through our annual Tiny Tim campaign. Remember, PLEASE have your gifts wrapped or bagged and delivered to church NO LATER than Sunday, December 14th. The gifts will be distributed on Tuesday December 16th!

Christmas Eve Services

Christmas Eve is Wednesday, December 24th. We will once again have TWO festival communion services that evening, at 4 pm and 6:30 pm. Both are services of "Lessons and Carols" where you'll hear the "Good News" scriptures and have opportunity to sing selected verses from some of the most popular Christmas Carols. We will have special music at both services, with the choir singing only at the 4 pm service. We DO NOT have a service on Christmas Day!

The timing of the Christmas Eve services gives everyone a chance to worship the newborn king and still get home in time for family celebrations or celebrate with friends at an undisclosed location. INVITE YOUR FAMLIY and friends to join you in church as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Until Next Month...

If you wonder what Advent is all about...remember these words:

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness... proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." and "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Matt.3:1-3 (NRSV)

Soli Deo Gloria (To God alone be the Glory)

Donald L. Bauer Director of Music

Readers:

Dec. 7	Deb Sammis
Dec. 14	Sally McGrew
Dec. 21	Sue Rosenak
Dec. 28	LaVonne Sammis

Ushers:

Dec. 7	8:00 a.m.	Dan and Deb Sammis
	10:30 a.m.	Shirley Schmitt
Dec. 14	8:00 a.m.	Ken and Sheryl Bruninga
	10:30 a.m.	Pat and Sally McGrew
Dec. 21	8:00 a.m.	Bill (Skeeter) & Jodi Miller
	10:30 a.m.	Alex and Brenda Heuermann
Dec. 24	4:00 p.m.	Roger and Elaine Shafer
	6:30 p.m.	John and Danette Grafelman
Dec. 28	8:00 a.m.	Roger and Elaine Shafer
	10:30 a.m.	Denny & Elvessa Severt

Greeters:

Dec. 7	8:00 a.m.	Wilma Bruninga & Jerry Seybold
	10:30 a.m.	Patti Thorton
Dec. 14	8:00 a.m.	Sheryl Bruninga
	10:30 a.m.	Nick & Mary Bruketta
Dec. 21	8:00 a.m.	Levi Miller
	10:30 a.m.	Brenda Heuermann
Dec. 24	4:00 p.m.	Elaine Shafer
	6:30 p.m.	Addison and Allison Grafelman
Dec. 28	8:00 a.m.	Elaine Shafer
	10:30 a.m.	Cara Severt

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Bishop Greg Busboom Visits St. John on December 7th: All through 2025 Bishop Greg Busboom and his assistants have been visiting ELCA churches in our Synod. This last summer I called the Bishop to see when he might be able to come to share some ideas and thoughts about ministry in the church and in the Synod. He will visit on December 7th, preach both services, and meet & greet people during the coffee time! Should we host a lunch? Call and let Pastor know if such a thing can be done.

Christmas Poinsettias: The Altar Guild will once again be selling memorial poinsettias to decorate for the Christmas season. You may purchase a poinsettia in the church library on Nov 30th or Dec 7th before and after the 8:00 service, and before the 10:30 service. The cost will be \$17.00. If you will not be at church those days, you can call Carol Super (309) 712-3914 or Jodi Miller (309) 678-0852 to order.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services: Christmas Eve candlelight services will be at 4:00 and 6:30. Please plan to attend and bring your families along! Lets fill our church at both services!

Christmas Program: Plan to attend the 10:30 service on Dec. 14th. Our Sunday School kids will be doing their annual Christmas program. This is a true Christmas Blessing you don't want to miss!

Confirmation Class: Confirmation class for the fall of 2025-Spring 2026 will be held on Sundays 6-8:00 p.m. There are 6 students this year: Thomas Lennie, Alex Harken, Alex Smith, Allison Grafelman, Brady Edwards and Morgan Daniels. Pastor Michael is looking forward to holding confirmation classes on the following Sundays: Dec.14th, Dec.28th, Jan. 11th, Jan. 25th, Feb. 8th, Feb. 22nd, Mar. 8th & March 22nd. We will be covering bible stories from the Old Testament, the life of Jesus from the New Testament, and portions of the Small Catechism.

Pack a Sack Returns: Many years ago, Pastor Paul Tolo suggested having the first Sunday each month for people to bring bag(s) of food to donate to our church pantry. He named it "***Pack-a-Sack Sunday***". Given recent developments, the weekly demands on our pantry have increased significantly. The loss of SNAP (food stamps) and loss of an average \$200 monthly donation from the American Legion are hitting us hard. We're now serving 40+ families a week, and the National Guard has asked if we could help feed an additional 20 Guard families. We welcome any donations you can provide. Ideas include: Canned meat, soups, stews, chili, peanut butter, cereal, pasta, canned fruits or vegetables, and boxed dinner mixes. Cash donations are also helpful. If writing a check make it payable to St. John Lutheran Church Pantry. THANK YOU for helping to keep this vital outreach alive.

Thank you from the Pantry: Thank you to everyone who has so generously helped our pantry. Times are hard for so many that your gifts of generosity are appreciated.

Leisure Group: Leisure group will meet on December 3rd at 11:30. The meeting will be held at Jack's in Tremont.

Adult Sunday School: Grab a donut and coffee/tea and join us in the conference room from 9:30 - 10:15. Jane Rosenbohm is our leader continuing the study of David.

Offering: If you are interested in making your weekly, monthly or while on vacation contributions electronically please see Patti Thorton.

Adult Bible Study: I invite you to my home for our Wednesday night Bible Study on Ezekiel, 14628 W. Farmington Rd. Hanna City. We will continue our studies with Patti Riley as our leader. All are welcome, December 3rd from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Jane Rosenbohm (309) 645-9009.

Evangelism: A new program has been developed for those in need of receiving a card. If you know anyone homebound, sick, surgery or just in need of a Spiritual card Please notify Elaine Shafer at (309) 635-4844.

Sewing: The ladies need help. Can you tie a knot, iron, and any other help you can give us, like putting squares together for a top? We meet at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday mornings. We would enjoy your company.

Council 2026: Last Sunday we voted on the 2026 Council Members they are:

President -Josh Harken, **Vice President** -John Grafelman, **Treasurer** - Juanita Vires, **Assistant Treasurer** -Kathy Rindfleisch, **Recording Secretary** - Marla Kumpf, **Correspondence Secretary** - Shirley Schmitt, **Elders** - Jane Rosenbohm, Lisa Suydam, Pepper Bauer, Sheryl Bruninga, **Deacons** - John Rosenbohm, Lonnie Catterall, Nick Bruketta and **1 VACANT SPOT. Trustee's** - Alex Heuermann, Dan Sammis, Jodi Miller, Roger Shafer, Tim Sammis, Tom Anderson, **Child Care Board** - Barb Reaktenwalt, Carol Super, Jody Bontz, Kelly Harken, LaVonne Sammis, Nan Bontz, **Evangelism** - Betty Lyons, Lisa Suydam, Pepper Bauer, Sandy Behrends, **Parish Ed** - Danette Grafelman, Patti Riley, Sheryl Bruninga, **Auditing** - Bonnie Phelps, LaVonne Sammis, Pat McGrew, **Nominating** - Bill (Skeeter) Miller, Deb Sammis, Mike Wabel, **Synod Assembly** - Dave Bontz, Jody Bontz, Shirley Schmitt, **Synod Assembly Alt. Del** - Christina Hartleib - Jones.

St. John Lutheran Church Picture Page 2 **Late October-November 2025**

Assorted Pictures of Ministry Going on at St. John Lutheran



Wedding of Laura (Lori) Jean Bontz & William Dean Bontz,



Past Christmas Eve Services



St. John Lutheran Church Picture Page 1 **Late October-November 2025**

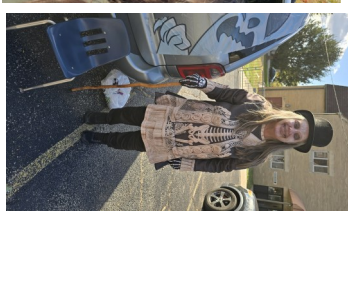
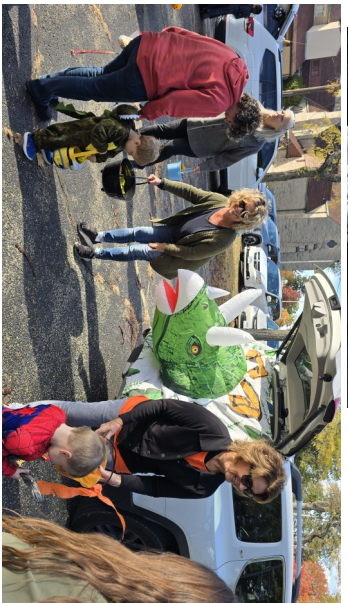
A Pizza Party to Celebrate Our New

Office Secretary,

Marla Kumpf & Helpers,



St. John Lutheran Trunk or Treat at



Thanks for the Pictures! Christina, Don Bauer, and Pastor Michael.

Look what is happening in Sunday School.

3 years old-Kindergarten	Kathy Ellis/ Becca Smith
1st-3rd grade	Becky & Shannon Sanders
4th-6th grade	Patti Riley
7th-High School	Fred Rosenbohm
Adult	Jane Rosenbohm

Starting Sunday, November 30th and throughout the winter months, our lessons will follow the Year C Lectionary to connect with Pastor's sermon.

November 30th	God Will Bring Peace
December 7th	God's Peaceful World
December 14th	John the Baptist
December 21st	Angel's Visit
December 28th	Escape to Egypt
January 4th	Jesus the Word
January 11th	Jesus' Baptism
January 18th	The Lamb of God
January 25th	The Disciples
February 1st	The Beatitudes
February 8th	Salt & Light
February 15th	The Transfiguration

As always, all Sunday School age children are welcome to join. If interested, please contact me if you have any questions and or to register your child for Sunday School.

John Wetterauer

christian.reichert@att.net

If you have not filled this out please take the time to help update our computer!

Household Name: _____

Home address: _____

Email addresses for entire household. Would you like the Jottings sent by mail or email?

People in this family (living in this household)

Name	Sex	Birthdate	Baptism	Relationship	Cell	Work

Interested in electronic donation?

Yes

No

December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			11:30 Leisure Group meet at Jacks in Tremont. 6-7:00 pm Bible study At Jane Rosenbohm's	9:00 Sewing 7:00 Choir	Preschool cookies with Santa reserved downstairs & sanctuary 5-7:00 pm	Patti Thorton reserved downstairs.
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Bishop Greg Busboom Visits 8:00 & 10:30 Service 9:15 Sunday School 9:30 Adult Sun School PACK A SACK Order Poinsettias	12 - 2:00 Pantry		2:00 Pantry Load Out	9:00 Sewing 7:00 Choir		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8:00 Worship 9:15 Sundry School 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service w/Christmas Program.	12-2:00 Pantry	9-1:00 Tiny Tim Christmas Toy Distribution Downstairs		9:00 Sewing 6:00 Worship Committee meeting Choir Christmas Party before Choir 7:00 Choir		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
8:00 Worship 9:15 Sundry School 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service	NO PANTRY		Christmas Eve 4:00 Worship 6:30 Worship Pick Up your Poinsettia after 6:30 Worship	Christmas Day Office Closed		
28	29	30	31			
8:00 Worship 9:15 Sundry School 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service	NO PANTRY		Hew Years Eve			

Homebound

12/01/2025

Nadine Bartell
2705 S. Hilton Ln.
Bartonville, Il 61607

Art Campen
C/O Carrie Campen
4169 King St.
Denver, Co. 80211

Jeffrey Campen
Lennox Guest House
2875 W. 33rd Ave.
Denver, Co. 80211

Millie Carlson
Villas of Holly Brook
5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy
Apt. 48
Peoria, Il 61607

Sally Catterall
Villas of Holly Brook
5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy.
Apt. MC3
Peoria, Il 61607

Barb Dickerson
2422 S. Daycor Divide
Bartonville, Il 61607

Pat Janssen
12615 Lancaster Rd.
Hanna City, Il 61536

Joyce Jones
Villas of Holly Brook
5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy.
Apt. 24
Peoria, Il 61607

Debra Look
Timber Ridge
2125 Veterans Rd.
Morton, Il 61550

Jo Ann Lambie
C/O Pepper Bauer
Lutheran Hillside Village
5220 S. Cameron Ln.
Mapleton, Il 61547

Jane Look
Heartis Village Peoria
8201 N. Il. Route 91
Peoria, Il 61615

Jerry Pitzer
Independence Village
1201 N. Northmoor Rd.
Apt. 334
Peoria, Il 61614

Sharon Resler & Eilynn Resler
Arcadia Care
109 E. Queenwood Road
Morton, Il 61550

Shirley Cramer
7815 W. Plank Rd.
Peoria, IL 61604

Ernie & Karen Williams
5907 S. Madison
Bartonville, IL 61607

Cindy Pederson
2608 S. Daycor Divide
Bartonville, IL 61607