



Faith Lutheran Church & School

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Vaunda Noerenberg, Traditional Worship

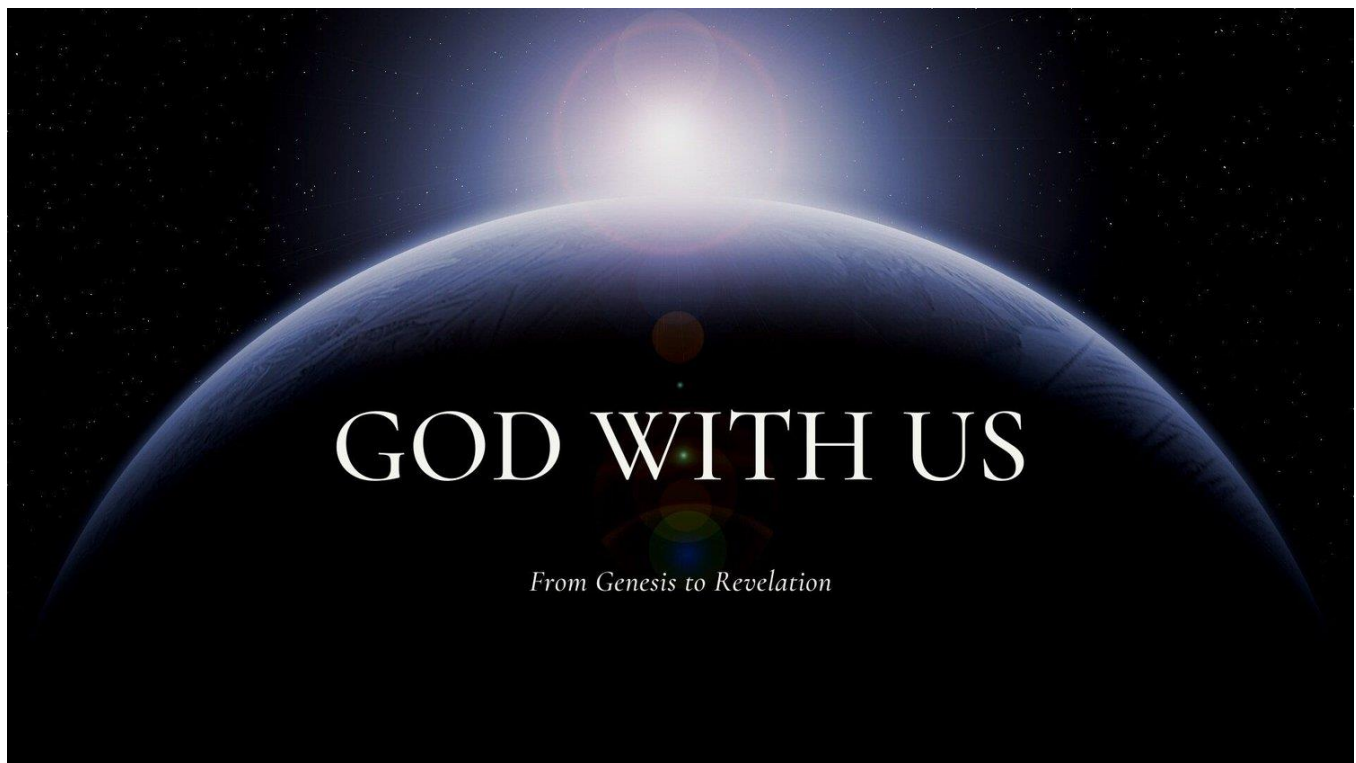
Reid Stevens, Contemporary Worship

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DECEMBER 22, 2024

8:15 AM

“Exalted... God with Us.”



**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.**

**⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called**

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Isaiah 9

ALTAR FLOWERS TODAY ARE GIVEN TODAY TO THE GLORY OF GOD

At the beginning of the service all are asked to sign the attendance card located in the pew racks and place them in the offering plate during the collection. So that we may better serve you and send you more information, guests, please print your address and telephone number on this card.

Acknowledgments

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THIS WEEK AT FAITH

On Dec. 25, 1535, Martin Luther wrote a tender but powerful letter to Prince Joachim of Anhalt that resounds with the pure Gospel for those who are downcast and disillusioned in this season. “Our dear Lord Christ comfort Your Grace with His incarnation. He became incarnate to comfort and show His good will to all men, as the dear angels sing today, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men’”

Christmas is not about evacuation from this world into some mythic sphere of imagination and fantasy. It is not about our ascent to God but God’s descending to us. From heaven above, as Luther’s hymn puts it, God comes to us. We need build no ladders to vainly try to climb into His heavenly presence.

He comes not as an awesome deity with a majestic presence that terrifies but with mercy nestled down in a manger. This God is not our enemy, but our Brother. He masks Himself with our humanity, dressing Himself in our flesh and blood. In this flesh and blood, He absorbs our sin and suffers and dies on the cross. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, in our sin and shame. He is Immanuel in order that He might be God for us at Calvary. This Lord has not left us exiled in holiday sadness. Luther puts the sermon of the first preachers of Christmas, the heavenly hosts who proclaimed the glad news of Jesus’ birth to Bethlehem’s shepherds, into our minds: God shows His favor to human beings in the sending of His Son. — John Pless

WE BELIEVE GOD’S WORD... ON THE LORD’S SUPPER

We believe that in the Sacrament of Holy Communion Christ gives His true body and blood under the form of bread and wine for the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. We believe Jesus is truly present in the Sacrament, and as we come in faith to receive it, we receive Him. The Bible teaches that those who eat without recognizing the Lord's body, eat and drink judgment on themselves (*1 Corinthians 11:27-29*). Those baptized and believing Christians who share our confession of faith are welcome guests at the Altar. The Pastor would be glad to answer any questions relating to our faith or practice. Anyone not confirmed or communing is welcome to come and receive a blessing.

Our Discipleship the Past Weeks:

Worship	11/24/24	12/1/24	12/8/24	12/15/24	12/22/24
8:15 Traditional	85(80)	67 (59)	79 (77)	92 (88)	
11:00 Contemporary	46 (40)	54 (50)	52 (50)	52 (48)	
Sunday School		30		Special	
Monthly Budget	\$44,200	\$44,200	\$44,200	\$44,200	
Giving MTD	\$57,747	\$6763	\$29,661	\$37,424	
Weekly Giving	\$31,129.84	\$6763	\$22,898	\$7763	

ORDER OF WORSHIP

As We Gather The Advent season of preparing for the promised Savior to be born as one of us soon reaches its climax. Though in our homes and lives we may be wondering if we have done all we have needed to get ready for our own celebrations, we give thanks that at the center of our coming Christmas observations the Lord has prepared all we need. In this last Sunday of Advent and in the days ahead of anticipated Christmas joy, may we find peace in the preparations done freely for us out of grace, mercy, and perfect love centered on the Savior we soon welcome, who was born for us and all the world.

OPENING HYMN

“FROM EAST TO WEST”

LSB 385

- ♪ 1. From east to west, from shore to shore Let ev'ry heart awake and sing
The holy child whom Mary bore, The Christ, the everlasting king.
2. Behold, the world's creator wears The form and fashion of a slave;
Our very flesh our maker shares, His fallen creatures all to save.
3. For this how wondrously He wrought! A maiden, in her lowly place,
Became, in ways beyond all thought, The chosen vessel of His grace.
4. And while the angels in the sky Sang praise above the silent field,
To shepherds poor the Lord Most High, the one great Shepherd, was revealed.
5. All glory for this blessed morn To God the Father ever be;
All praise to You, O Virgin-born, And Holy Ghost eternally.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

We light the fourth Advent candle as we prepare for the arrival of the Savior, who would come to His people in human flesh and who promises to come again. In a world of darkness, a light shines. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The fourth Advent candle has been known as the angel candle and the candle of love. As our Advent season soon ends, we await the angelic message of the good news of a Savior. We have come to know the love of the one true God this season and always as we have prepared to celebrate His birth. We know God's promises come to fruition in Jesus, who later made known His Father's love in His being born into this world; in His life, ministry, teaching, preaching, healing; and ultimately in His dying and rising. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Guided by the light of love, we respond with the psalmist: “Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O LORD.

How precious is Your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

They feast on the abundance of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your delights.

For with You is the fountain of life;
in Your light do we see light.

Four Advent candles are lit.

FROM HEAVEN ABOVE TO EARTH I COME (LSB 358 STS. 6– 8)

♩ 6. How glad we'll be to find it so! Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done In sending us His own dear Son.

7. Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes, And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair? It is the Christ Child lying there.

8. Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery That You might share Your joy with me.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!

We have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!

Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!

O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to be born in our flesh, to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!

As a called and ordained servant of the Word and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and the Holy Spirit. To those who believe on His name He gives the power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. Those that believe and are baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, to us all.

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING

MICAH 5:2–5a

² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth;

then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

⁵ And he shall be their peace.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 80

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might
and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;

let your face shine, that we may be saved!

O LORD God of hosts,

how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

You have fed them with the bread of tears

and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!

EPISTLE

HEBREWS 10:5–10

⁵When Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body have you prepared for me;

⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

⁸When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law),
⁹then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

VERSE

MATTHEW 1:23

Alleluia. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call His name Immanuel. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL

LUKE 1:39–56

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

³⁹In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

⁴⁶And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
⁵⁰And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
⁵²he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.
⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”
⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON HYMN

“A GREAT AND MIGHTY WONDER”

LSB 383

**♩ 1. A great and mighty wonder, A full and holy cure:
The virgin bears the infant With virgin honor pure!**

*Refrain: Proclaim the Savior's birth: "To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth!"*

**2. The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high,
And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky. [*Refrain*]**

**3. While thus they sing your Monarch, Those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice, O vales and mountains, And oceans, clap your hands. [*Refrain*]**

**4. Since all He comes to ransom, By all be He adored,
The infant born in Bethl'em, The Savior and the Lord. [*Refrain*]**

**5. All idols then shall perish And Satan's lying cease,
And Christ shall raise His scepter, Decreeing endless peace. [*Refrain*]**

SERMON

“EXALTED, GOD WITH US”

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4)

Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us to take part in his great campaign of sabotage. – C.S. Lewis

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the
Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son
together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray for the church, for the people of God, and for all people according to their needs.

We wait to celebrate our King, who has come, promised to be born among the small clan of Judah in Bethlehem, fulfiller of the old covenant promise, and bringer of life and grace in the new covenant in which we now live. We await our King, who promises to return, to restore and renew what was broken, and to bring life and light everlasting. Be with us as we soon close this Advent season of anticipation and preparation, rejoicing in the everlasting King who has come and will come again. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Almighty King, Your ways are not our ways nor are Your thoughts our thoughts. In days of doubts and despair that arise, in cases of confusion, and in times of trial and tribulation, remind us of Your kingdom in which we have been called and Your eternal kingdom to come. Be with those who struggle, [*including . . .*]. Help us to see Your mighty work even among our wayward world of sin and sorrow and the perfect plan of salvation imparted through the Savior we await. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Ever-present King, we lift up those who have been placed in authority over us in our community, state, nation, and world. Guide and direct their decisions that they be pleasing to You and for the benefit of all, including the marginalized, the voiceless, and the outcast. Where there is violence and warfare, grant peace. Where there is distress, bring stability. Where there is terror, bring comfort. Where there are opportunities for us to bring compassion and concern through our voices and actions, compel us to do so faithfully. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

King of grace, the one sacrifice needed on our behalf has been given in Jesus, who was born into this world to take upon Himself our sin, burdens, and shame. In the new covenant of grace You have established through Him, help us through Your Spirit to remain faithful to You in Your eternal kingdom. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

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For your convenience, we now accept gifts via Venmo or PayPal.

WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15)

Thank you for your partnership in worship, Christian education, fellowship, service, stewardship and more at our ministry these past months. We are grateful to God to welcome you to Faith Lutheran!

"Having confessed faith in God the Father Almighty, and His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit (The Apostles' Creed), and having vowed before our Triune God and this congregation to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper faithfully, to live according to the Word of God, and to support the work of the Lord given to our Church and School, YOU are received and welcomed as members at Faith Lutheran Church and School, Marietta, Georgia."

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 Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Please take a moment and share the Peace of the Lord with those around you.

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY LSB 376

- ♪ 1. Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.**
- 2. He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly Lived on earth our Savior holy.**
- 3. For He is our childhood's pattern, Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless, Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feels for all our sadness, And He shares in all our gladness.**
- 4. And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle Is the Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on To the place where He is gone.**
- 5. Not in that poor, lowly stable. With the oxen standing by
Shall we see Him, but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars His children, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!**

AWAY IN A MANGER *LSB 365*

♪ 1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CLOSING SENTENCES

JOHN 1:5, 9

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN

“O SING OF CHRIST”

LSB 362 (STS 1 AND 4)

♪ 1. O sing of Christ, whose birth made known The kindness of the Lord,
Eternal Word made flesh and bone So we could be restored.
Upon our frail humanity God’s finger chose to trace
The fullness of His deity, The icon of His grace.

4. Lord Jesus Christ, You deigned to dwell Among us here on earth
As God with us, Emmanuel, To bring this holy birth.
Though rich, You willingly became One with our poverty,
That we might share Your wealth and name For all eternity!

SENDING

Pastor: Go in peace to serve the Lord!

People: Thanks be to God.

Bible Studies at Faith, Sundays, 9:45 a.m.

- ▶ Exalted, God With Us: Praying to Our Savior God (Choir Room) *(last day!)*
- ▶ *The Wired Word: What does the Bible say about?* (Board Room)
- ▶ Sunday School: Ages 4 through 6th Grade (Gathers in Sanctuary)
- ▶ Youth Confirmation: 7th and 8th Graders (Confirmation Room)
 - ▶ High School/College Age Bible Study (Youth Room)

Resumes Sunday, December 29: Acts, led by Brenda Wagener (LWML Room)

Starts Sunday, December 29: Ezekiel, led by Ward Irvin (Cafeteria)

Starts Sunday, January 5: Stewardship Basics (Choir Room)

School Break 12/23 - 1/6/2025

(Staff In-Service, Mon 1/6/2025 // Students Return, Tue 1/7/2025)

Dec 24 (Tuesday, Christmas Eve)

5 p.m. Family Worship with Communion

7 p.m. Traditional Candlelight with Communion

Dec 25 (Wednesday, Christmas Day) 10 a.m.

Readings and Carols with Communion (Stephen Wareham, Liturgist)

December 29 (Sunday): Worship... No Communion

8:15 Matins and Christmas Hymns (Stephen Wareham, Preacher)

11 Readings and Christmas Praise (Stephen Wareham, Preacher)

Pastoral Call Update

As announced on Sunday, December 15, Pastor McLellan has declined our Divine Call. Since the Call was issued, there has been a change in his family situation that prevents him from considering a move at this time. He also feels led by the Holy Spirit to continue his ministry at Trinity Lutheran in Waconia and has reaffirmed his call to that congregation. He expressed gratitude that he was given the chance to consider this call and is praying for our mission and ministry.

After the new year the Call committee will get together and consult with our District President and Circuit Visitor as to our next steps and we'll keep you informed as we do so.

While it is hard to hear this answer again, let us not lose heart. We know that in each call, the Holy Spirit has been active and has guided these men, just as He is guiding the pastor that He plans to place with us. Please continue to pray and encourage one another. We trust God's divine leading and His ultimate decision. To God be the glory!

Karen Cerny, Call Committee Chair