



Friends in Christ,

## Pastor's Corner

December always feels like a month held between two breaths. The days narrow, the sun slips away earlier each evening, and the world takes on a kind of hush. Even with the busyness of programs, shopping lists, extra rehearsals, family gatherings, and the steady hum of church life, something in this season asks us to slow down. It invites us to notice the quiet places where God is at work.

This is the heart of Advent: not rushing toward Christmas, but watching for the light that is already on its way.

I've been thinking a lot about that watching lately—how it asks something slightly different from each of us. Some of us wait with excitement and joy. Some wait with a tender ache, or with worry, or with questions we carry silently in our hearts. Some wait from a place of gratitude; others from a place where hope feels fragile.

And yet, the promise is the same for all of us:

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

Not then. Not now. Not ever.

As I prepare for December—with its children's program, blue candles, Christmas Eve worship, and even our Pajama Day—my prayers keep circling around this truth: that Christ comes to us *as we are*. Not when we have everything together, but in the middle of the real story we're living.

Christ comes to tired parents and busy grandparents.

Christ comes to children who wiggle in their seats and teens who wonder where they belong.

Christ comes to the grieving and the joyful, the hopeful and the overwhelmed.

Christ comes to the church that is trying to love well in a complicated world.

Christ comes to you. And Christ comes to me.

If December is for watching, perhaps January is for wondering—about the kind of community God is shaping us to be, about the peace we long to see, about the ways we might embody Christ's compassion in the cold months ahead.

So here is my prayer for us as we move from one year to the next:

May Christ find us waiting with open hands.

May Christ meet us in our questions and our quiet places.

May Christ be born in us again—

in our words, in our worship,

in our learning,

and in the love we share with one another.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you, friends.

And may the new year bring peace that truly holds.

Pastor Bunny

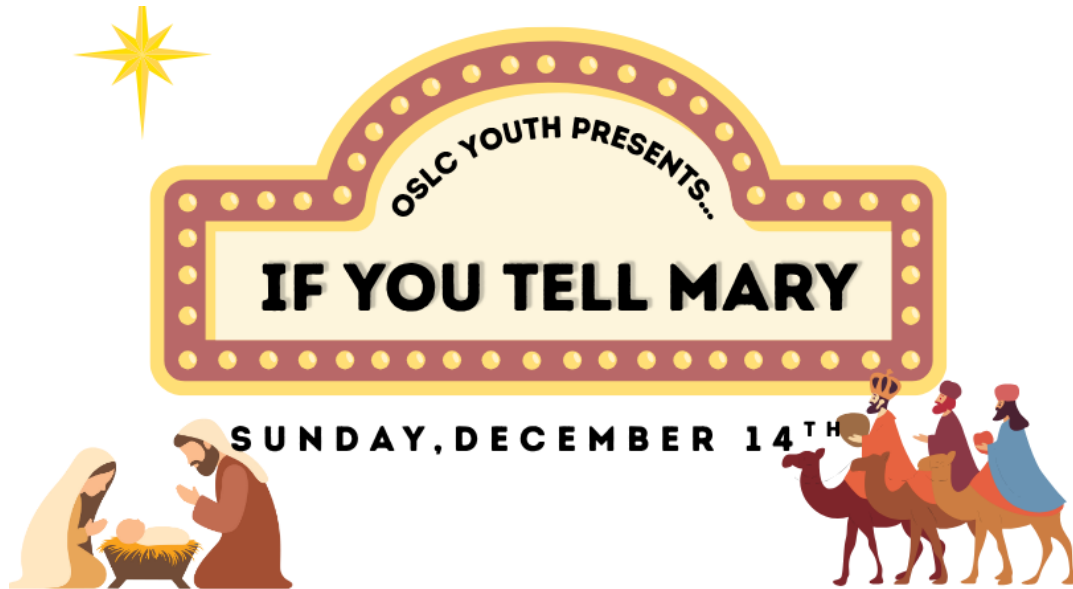


## Youth News:

Reminder! Sunday School is back!! We meet at 9 AM every Sunday in the large classroom downstairs! All ages welcome!!!

\*\*\*Reminder - No Sunday School on Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup> – Merry Christmas!

### Youth Christmas Program – December 14th



All are welcome, visitors too!! So.... *If You Tell Mary*, if you tell Joseph, if you tell your neighbors, if you tell your friends... we can pack the pews!

### It is a PJ Kind of Sunday!!

Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> – come to Sunday School in your PJ's!! To celebrate Christmas and wrapping up the year with a successful youth program, we are going to have a Sunday School Pajama party! Join us for hot chocolate, snacks, and fun Christmas crafts! Rachel, Natalie, Hannah, and Pastor Bunny will be joining in on the fun as well!

### Remember Ralph?

Ralph is the long-time sidekick of beloved Saint, Jan Zuber whom we celebrated on All Saints Sunday. Jan did children's sermons at Our Savior's for many years with Ralph by her side. Ralph visited on All Saints Sunday with Jan's granddaughter, Megan. Good to see you, Ralph!! We know you are well-loved at your new home with Megan and her brother, Noah!



## OSLC Christmas Party

This year's Christmas Party will be held on the evening of Sunday, December 7. Enjoy the food, fellowship, and entertainment! Doors open and appetizers at 5:30 pm with dinner served at 6.

## Phil and Andy's Pantry



For December – Phil & Andy's Pantry would like to collect nutritious snacks that kids could enjoy while they are on their two-week holiday break from school. Things like: granola bars, fruit cups, fruit snacks, crackers, peanut butter, cereal, soup, raisins, animal crackers etc. Please help us fill up Phil & Andy's cart and we will distribute to the local pantries so our community kids can have some healthy snacks while they are away from school. As always, we appreciate your generosity in helping our community. Thank you!!!

## The Mitten Tree!

The Mitten Tree Is Still Up - you only have until December 4<sup>th</sup> to complete your challenge given to you by our youth!!!

Our mitten tree is full of mittens, hats and scarves – a HUGE thank you to all groups who have gotten their committee, group or ministry team checked off the list on the elevator door – just a few days left!!

Each November, Our Savior's joyfully hosts a Mitten Tree to support the Linn County Child Development Center, and this year we are pleased to continue that beloved tradition.

The Linn County Child Development Center provides early childhood programs for children ages 2 to 5, including services for low-income families and children with special needs.

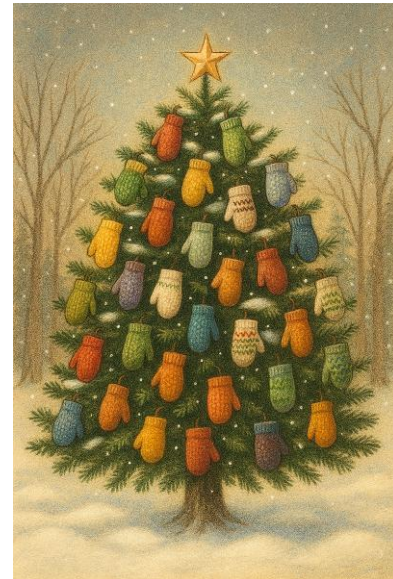
Here's how you can help:

We invite each of you to create or purchase preschool-sized hats and mittens.

Please avoid gloves — mittens are much easier for little fingers learning to get dressed.

To our crafty members: you have a head start! Whether knitting, crocheting, or sewing, we encourage you to begin now so your creations can be ready when the tree is displayed.

Thank you for your generous spirit and care for the children in our community. Stay tuned for updates—and happy crafting!



## **Advent: Hope That Comes Out of the Blue**

Every year as the calendar turns toward December, the church enters a season that doesn't quite match the pace of the world around us. While stores blast Christmas music and neighborhoods glow with lights, the church steps quietly into **Advent**—a season of waiting, watching, and preparing for Christ to come among us.

Advent matters because it tells the truth about the world and about us. We live in a time where joy and sorrow sit side by side, where hope can feel thin, and where we long for God to show up in real, tangible ways. Advent reminds us that God *does* show up—sometimes slowly, sometimes unexpectedly, sometimes “out of the blue.”

This year's theme, **Out of the Blue**, speaks to that holy surprise. Throughout Scripture, God's presence breaks in when people least expect it: a word to a prophet, a promise to a young woman in Nazareth, a star over Bethlehem, light in the shadows. Advent invites us to look for God not only in the obvious places, but also in the quiet, sudden, grace-filled moments that catch us off guard.

### **Why Blue?**

You'll probably noticed that our sanctuary shifts to blue during Advent. While some Christian traditions use purple (often associated with repentance), many Lutheran and Anglican churches use blue to emphasize hope, night sky imagery, and the dawning light of Christ.

Blue reminds us of the horizon just before sunrise—when the sky deepens, holding both the weight of night and the promise of morning. It's a color that gathers our longing and lifts our eyes toward God.

### **What About the Pink Candle?**

Some churches use a pink candle on the third Sunday of Advent, tied to the ancient tradition of *Gaudete* (“Rejoice”) Sunday. While beautiful, that practice is more common in Roman Catholic and some Episcopal contexts.

At Our Savior's, we remain consistent with the broader Lutheran tradition, using blue candles throughout the season to keep our focus on hope, watching, and the slow dawning of Christ's light. Every candle carries a piece of the story—promise, preparation, peace, and hope—without shifting the color palette or theme.

### **Why Advent Still Matters**

In a world that wants instant answers, Advent invites patience.

In a world that rushes, Advent slows us down.

In a world that tries to skip straight to celebration, Advent teaches us to watch for the small, fragile beginnings of God's work.

We don't enter Advent pretending the world is already made whole. We enter Advent because Christ comes into the world as it truly is—and meets us as we truly are.



## **Adult Bible Study Updates**

As we move into the busy and joyful month of **December**, our **Adult Bible** will take a **brief pause**. With holiday travel, children's programs, and our special Christmas Pajama Day on December 21, it's a full season for many of us—including your pastor!

We'll begin again in January with a brand-new opportunity for learning and conversation. Starting **Sunday, January 5, at 9:00 a.m.**, we'll launch a **Sunday-only study series** exploring what our neighbors believe and how our own Lutheran identity helps us engage them with curiosity and respect.

Our guide for this journey will be *Honoring Our Neighbor's Faith* (Augsburg Fortress), a clear and accessible resource introducing a wide range of religious traditions—Islam, Baptist traditions, Judaism, Pentecostalism, Eastern faiths, and many more. The book is not required, but if you enjoy reading along or want to go deeper, I gladly recommend it for your own exploration.

I'm looking forward to starting the new year with you in meaningful conversation.

– Pastor Bunny

## **Volunteers needed for this special event!**

[Central Furniture Rescue](#) is excited to share wonderful news for our community—and for the hundreds of families we will serve in the months ahead. The DoubleTree Hotel in Cedar Rapids is undergoing a full-facility update and has chosen to donate a remarkable number of gently-used mattresses, bed frames, nightstands, and lounge chairs. These items will help turn empty rooms into real homes for families transitioning out of crisis.

### **We Need Volunteers to Help Unload!**

As trucks arrive at our warehouse, we'll need strong helping hands to unload mattresses, frames, and other furniture. Each unload takes only a couple of hours, and volunteers work as a team—no experience needed.

- **Volunteer Dates:**
  - December:** 12/1, 12/15, 12/16, 12/22,  
12/23, 12/29, 12/30
  - January:** 1/12/2026, 1/13/2026
- **Time:** A couple of hours each day
- **Volunteers Needed:** 4–6 people per date
- **Location:** Central Furniture Rescue Warehouse



If you, your family, church group, or workplace team is available to help provide a good night's sleep for local families, we would love your support.

**To volunteer, email:** [volunteers@centralfurniturerescue.org](mailto:volunteers@centralfurniturerescue.org)

*Together, we are giving comfort, dignity, and a fresh start—one bed at a time.*

## **As 2025 comes to an end - What is your New Year's Resolution?**

With a new year come New Year's resolutions. New year, new me? Most times these goals are fitness related – gym memberships, fitness equipment, diets, etc, etc.

What if instead of resolving to do things like workout and eat clean (both of which are still okay), what if we allow God to transform us into who he wants us to be? Consider this verse from Micah 6:8...

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

A prayer for the new year...

*Dear Lord, it's a new year, a new beginning, a chance to start fresh. I can't do that if I'm holding onto my failures of the past. But I know that Your Word repeatedly tells me that You are making [all things new](#), that You [aren't finished](#) with me yet, and that You will [work in me](#) for Your good pleasure.*

*And so, Lord, do Your will in me. Even as I desire to make changes in my life, continually remind me that I am Your [workmanship](#), created in Christ Jesus for good works. As I resolve to walk with You day by day, moment by moment, You will make the changes in me that You desire.*

*I know You don't want me to sit idly by, just expecting things to change in my life, but I can rest in the knowledge that You are supplying my strength. As I abide in You, I will desire more and more to do what You want me to do. Thank You for Your faithfulness to me. Keep redirecting my eyes to You.*

## **All Saint's Sunday – November 2, 2025**

On Sunday November 2, we remembered the saints that have passed before us this past year:

Shirley Hamre

Georgianna Koontz

Jerry Tharp

Jacob Kohl

Allenor Selck

Janet Zuber

John Tapken

We give you thanks, O God, for every soul who ever lifted praise to you whether beneath brush arbors or within grand cathedrals, in weathered wooden chapels or crumbling concrete sanctuaries — places where your name was adored, your Word was opened, and your people served with joy.

## **Save the date – Annual Meeting**

Annual Meeting – The meeting will be held following worship service on January 18, 2026 with January 25, 2025 being the snow day.

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## Serving Our Congregation

Bunny Dillard – Head Pastor

Sue Clapp – Congregation President

David Sampson – Treasurer

Therese Plummer – Office Manager

Hannah Plummer – Children & Youth  
Ministries Director

Forrest Green – Music Director

Terri Hodge – Bell Choir Director

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## Readers

December 7 – Rachel Sindelar

December 14 – Lori Hayes

December 21 – Eric Robinson

December 28 – Ann Larson

Hannah Plummer

Therese Plummer

Dale Hovden

Beth Anderson

Suzanne Schmitt

Karen Janney

January 4 – Catherine Burroughs

January 11 – Sue Clapp

January 18 – Laurene Case

January 25 – Nancy Greer

**\*\*Readers can pick up their reading in the “Reader” mailbox located between the offices in the back hallway.**

## Acolytes

December 7 – Evy Fiester

December 14 – Korver Sindelar

December 21 – Parker Zeien

Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) – Evy Fiester

December 28 – Eric Strottman

January 4 – Korver Sindelar

January 11 – Mason Schmitt

January 18 – Parker Zeien

January 25 – Eric Strottman

## Assisting Ministers

December 7 – Sue Clapp

December 14 – Nancy Greer

December 21 – Rachel Sindelar

December 28 – Hannah Plummer

January 4 – Natalie Fiester

January 11 – Sue Clapp

January 18 – Nancy Greer

January 25 – Hannah Plummer

## Ushers

Dec. 7 – Schmitt's, A Larson, & B Andersen  
Dec. 14 – Fiester's  
Dec. 21 – Sue Clapp, Al Johnson,  
Bob Sindelar, Rachel Sindelar  
Dec. 24 - Schmitt's, A Larson, & B Andersen  
Dec. 28 – Strottman's

Jan. 4 – D. Sampson, M. Houg, T. Zuber  
Jan. 11 – Schmitt's, A, Larson, &  
B. Andersen  
Jan. 18 – Fiester's  
Jan. 25 - Sue Clapp, Al Johnson,  
Bob Sindelar, Rachel Sindelar

## Prayer for Pastor

December 7 – Derek Sindelar  
December 14 – Youth Program  
December 21 – Lori Hayes  
December 28 – Lessons & Carols

January 4 – Joann Kohl  
January 11 – Arnold Strottman  
January 18 – Karen Janney  
January 25 – Natalie Fiester

## Greeters

December 7 – Marv Gerjets  
December 14 – Al Johnson  
December 21 – Bob Sindelar  
December 28 – Ann Larson

January 4 – Marv Gerjets  
January 11 – Suzanne Schmitt  
January 18 – Beth Anderson  
January 25 – Rachel Sindelar

## Children's Sermon

December 7 – Pastor Bunny  
December 14 – Hannah Plummer  
December 21 – Beth Anderson  
December 28 – Lessons & Carol's

January 4 – Pastor Bunny  
January 11 – Hannah Plummer  
January 18 – Beth Anderson  
January 25 – Hannah Plummer

## Sunday School Teachers

December 7 – Natalie Fiester  
December 14 – Hannah Plummer  
December 21 – Rachel Sindelar  
December 28 – No Sunday School

January 4 – Rachel Sindelar  
January 11 – Natalie Fiester  
January 18 – Hannah Plummer  
January 25 – Rachel Sindelar

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## **2025 Financial Update**

### Contribution results for the week ending 11/23/2025:

General Giving:	<b>\$2,675.80</b>
Total Giving:	<b>\$2,802.19</b>

### Weekly averages through 11/23/2025 (47 weeks):

Average Actual General Giving:	<b>\$3,980.27 (\$187,072.71 YTD)</b>
Average Actual General Expenses:	<b>\$3,929.15 (\$184,670.26 YTD)</b>

The averages reported above are the averages of “actual” general giving and general expenses, not the forecasts.

# **WARM HEARTS, WARM HANDS**

*Our Savior's Mitten Tree*

### **WHAT WE'RE ACCEPTING:**

#### **Mittens**

-mittens are preferred over gloves since they are easier to get on little hands!

#### **Scarves**

#### **Hats**

**SIZE: KIDS AGED 2 - 5**



The Linn County Child and Youth Development Center provides early childhood programs among many other services to families with low incomes and children with special needs so parents can hold employment or participate in college or job training.

## Festival of Christ the King

November 23<sup>rd</sup> was the last Sunday of the **church year** – so let's pause to look back at the whole journey we've walked together.

At the *Christ the King Sunday* service, stoles were arranged in order of the church year on the communion rail (see photo below)— a tapestry of colors that tell the story of God's love through the seasons of the year.

**Blue for Advent**, the color of waiting and hope as we prepare for Christ's coming.

**White for Christmas**, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, light shining in the darkness.

**Green for Epiphany** follows — the color of growth and learning, as Christ's light spreads to the world.

**Purple for Lent** brings us into reflection, repentance, and renewal as we turn our hearts again to God.

**Black for Good Friday**, the stark color of grief at the cross.

**White for Easter** bursts forth with resurrection joy, the victory of life over death.

**Red for Pentecost and the Holy Spirit**, the fire of courage and the gift of new life in the church.

**Green after Pentecost** — the season of discipleship, daily growth, and faithful living.

(end of church year)

Every season has its color. Every color tells a part of Christ's story. Together they weave the calendar of our worship, a year that begins and ends in Christ— remembering that all times and seasons belong to Christ, who reigns in love, yesterday, today, and forever.



## Photos from Harvest Sunday – November 16th



Quilts were blessed and delivered to Willis Dady and Catherine McAuley Center.

Thank you to the hard work of the Do Day group, especially Betty and Nancy.

