

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023

Greetings and Welcome

Prelude by Sandi Watts, organist

GATHERING

**Call to Worship and Confession*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Silence for Reflection and Confession

P: Gracious God,

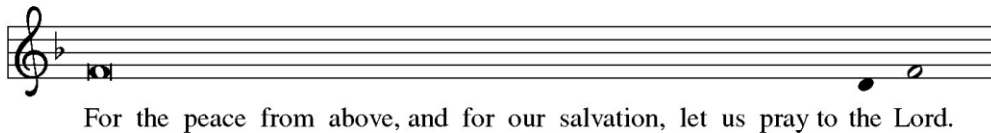
C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

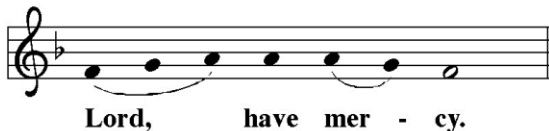
C: Amen.



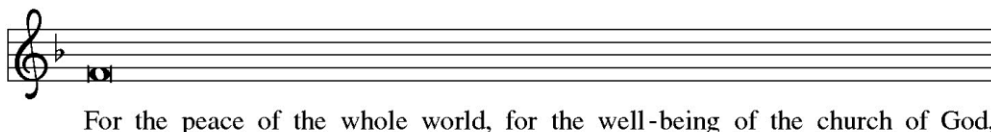
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



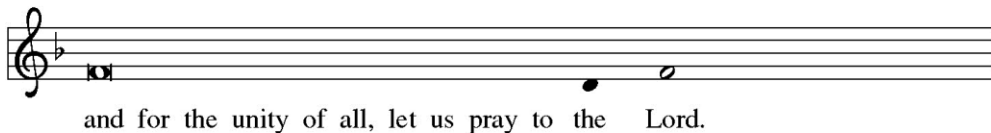
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



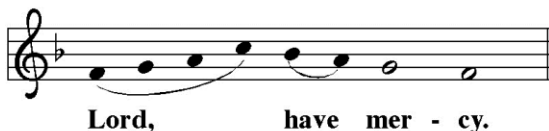
Lord, have mer - cy.



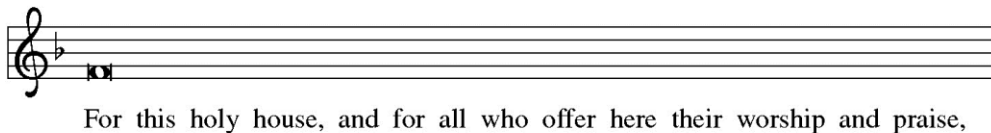
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



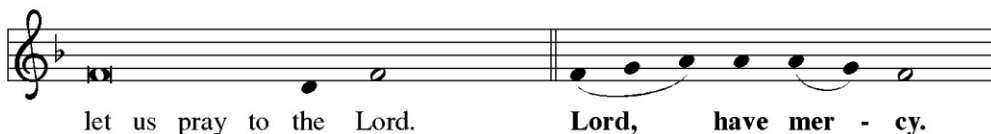
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



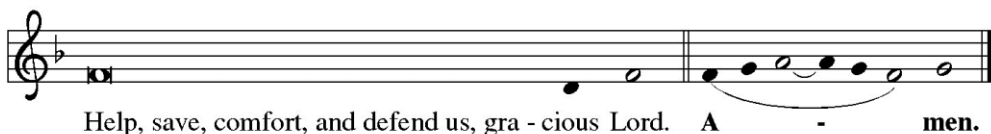
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



**Sharing Christ's Peace*

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

All are invited to share the peace of Christ with one another.

Children's Sermon

Lighting of the Advent Wreath with the children

Hymn of Praise – "He Came Down" ELW 253, v. 1

(piano)

**He came down that we may have Love;
he came down that we may have Love;
he came down that we may have Love;
Hallelujah forevermore.**

WORD

Reading: Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-2, 10-11

Reader: Liddy Stark

¹In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom, and also in a written edict declared:

²Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah.

³Any of those among you who are of his people—may their God be with them!—are now permitted to go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem; ⁴and let all survivors, in whatever place they reside, be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods and with animals, besides freewill-offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem.'

3When the seventh month came, and the Israelites were in the towns, the people gathered together in Jerusalem. ²Then Jeshua son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel with his kin set out to build the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings on it, as prescribed in the law of Moses the man of God.

¹⁰When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments were stationed to praise the LORD with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, according to the directions of King David of Israel; ¹¹and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD,

‘For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever towards Israel.’

And all the people responded with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

Reader: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Reading:* Luke 2:25-32

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.’

P: The gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon: "Love"

**1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:**

Refrain: All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

**2. Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
Where all God’s children dare to seek to dream God’s reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God’s grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus: *Refrain***

**3. Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine, and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us: *Refrain***

SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

“Words for the Beginning of Your Christian Life”

(adapted from a poem by Rev. Sarah Speed)

Jacob Dale, if we could give you words for the very beginning—
for the stretches and the yawns, and the opening of eyes,
for the first hiccups and the first smiles, and the first purse of your lips, we would say,
“Oh, dear child, how you are loved.

But the thing about love is you can’t stop there,
so we would go on to say, “You are strong, stronger than you think.
And you are not alone—look at these parents who adore you
and this congregation so happy for you, and you are enough, already enough.

You haven’t done anything yet.
You’ve just been here, breathing, sleeping, and already, you are enough.
And then we might say, “This world is a mess, but it is your home,
and you can make it better, so always try to make it better.

And maybe most important of all:
there is a love that is bigger than our understanding,
that moves through this world, and we call that love God.
And that love is here, here in this room, and that love knows your name by heart.”

Those are the words we would say to you
as you stretch and yawn and open your eyes on the very first morning
of your very first day of your life in Christ.
Let that be your foundation,
like Zechariah did for John.
Let love be your beginning.

P: God is our foundation. Love is our beginning. And in God's great love, we are given a new birth into a living hope through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. By water and the Word, God frees us from sin and death and raises us to new life in Jesus Christ. We are united with all the baptized in the one body of Christ, anointed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and joined in God's mission for the life of the world. In the waters of baptism, God proclaims to us who we are. We are beloved children of God.

Presentation

Parents: We bring Jacob Dale to this Christian community and to the waters of Holy Baptism.

P: Jacob, you are a beloved child of God and today you are given the name Christian. To help you grow into your name, your parents are called to make promises.

Emily and Joshua, as you bring Jacob to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

to live with him among God's faithful people,
bring him to the word of God and the holy supper,
teach him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,
place in his hands the holy scriptures,
and nurture him in faith and prayer,
so that he may learn to trust God,
proclaim Christ through word and deed,
care for others and the world God made,
and work for justice and peace.

Do you promise to help him grow in the Christian faith and life?

Parents: We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

P: Buddy and Sarah, as godparents, you have a responsibility to pray for Jacob and help him always remember that he is a beloved child of God. Do you promise to nurture him

in the Christian faith as you are empowered by God's Spirit, and to help him live in the covenant of baptism and in communion with the church?

Godparents: We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

The congregation stands.

P: People of God, you have a responsibility to support and surround Jacob with Christian love, praying for him, discipling him, and serving with him. Do you promise to support Jacob and pray for him in his new life in Christ?

C: We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Profession of Faith

P: There is evil in this world that we name devil and brokenness we call sin. We are powerless to overcome them, but the grace of God gives us strength to stand against them and forgiveness when we fall. Together, we profess our desire to live in this grace and in opposition to this brokenness.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God,
the powers of this world that rebel against God,
and the ways of sin that draw you from God?

C: I renounce them.

P: As we live together in Christ, we are made one in baptism and profess one faith. It is this faith that centers us on the grace of our Triune God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Thanksgiving at the Font

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Water is poured into the font.

P: We give you thanks, O God. In the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. In the waters of the flood you called Noah and brought forth new life. By Moses, you called the people of Israel to follow you through the waters and led them from slavery into freedom. You nourished them with water from the rock and brought them to the promised land. At the river your Son was baptized by John and you proclaimed to all that he is your “beloved child.” In the waters of baptism, you create, you bring forth new life in us, you set us free from the power of sin, and you proclaim that we too are your beloved Children.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, the power of your living Word, that those who are washed in the waters of baptism may be given new life. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Holy Baptism

The congregation sits

P: Jacob Dale, in this water, God calls you by name. Beloved child of God, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Laying on of Hands

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life. Sustain Jacob with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and

understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

C: Amen

Anointing with Oil

P: In the Old Testament, oil is used to anoint and set people apart. In baptism, we are set apart as God's beloved children to live lives of love, justice, and mercy. Jacob, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

C: Amen.

Giving of a Candle

Congregational Representative: In John 8:12, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." In Matthew 5:14, Jesus said, "You are the light of the world... Let your light shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to God in heaven." Emily and Joshua, we give you this candle to light again and again as Jacob grows up. Remember this day and always know that he is and will always be a beloved child of God.

Welcome

Welcome Song – "Jesus Loves You"

*As Jacob is brought into the midst of the congregation, we welcome him
as God's beloved child as we sing...*

**Jesus loves you, this we know, for the Bible tells us so.
Little ones to God belong, you are weak but God is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves you! Yes, Jesus loves you!
Yes, Jesus loves you! The Bible tells us so!**

P: Together we say:

C: Jacob Dale Nixon, you are beloved and blessed. By the grace of God that flows in the waters of baptism, we are drenched in our love for you, washed in our delight for you, and born anew by the grace that flows from the heart of our God who bore you to us. We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share. Join us in giving thanks and praise to God and in bearing God's creative and redeeming love to all the world.

Every day we are to remember our baptism and remember that God's promises are for us as well. We have just heard the proclamation that Jacob is God's beloved child. Now it is time for you to hear it for yourself. Turn to your neighbor and exchange the sweet assurance that you are also God's beloved child as you say, "Jesus loves you!"

**Prayers*

Stewardship Time: "Love Medley," arr. Marilyn Ham
 Susan Roegge, pianist

Stewardship is about our grateful response to God's grace for us. How do you respond? If you would like to financially support our ministry together, you can place a donation in an offering box or through our website. If you would like to support our ministry together through service, you can find a list of ministry teams online or on our ministry team menu. Consider joining a ministry team, or starting a new one, today!

–Please take a moment to sign into the Welcome Folder in your pew–

**Great Thanksgiving*

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Words of Institution*

P: 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.

**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.

Communion Songs

“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn” ELW 242 (*organ*)

- 1 **Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born, behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door and lives now inside us forever.**
- 2 **To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel comes a-singing,
his humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing;
music to heal the broken soul and hymns of lovingkindness,
the thunder of his anthems roll to shatter all hatred and blindness.**
- 3 **In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder.**
- 4 **Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night, though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light, be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share and bring us at last into glory.**

“Canticle of the Turning” ELW 723 (*piano*)

1. **My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?**
2. **Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.**

**Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.**

*Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.*

3. **From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.**
4. **Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
Till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.**
Refrain

**Post-Communion Blessing*

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: **Amen.**

**Closing Prayer*

SENDING

**Benediction*

P: May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face to shine on you
and be gracious to you, may the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

**Sending Song – “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” ELW 631 (organ)*

- 1 **Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.**

- 2 **Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit; let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.**
- 3 **Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.**
- 4 **Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise!**

**Dismissal*

P: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Song Credits

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Worship Assistants

Communion Assistant: Hallie Mayner
Greeter: Liddy Stark
Reader: Liddy Stark
Ushers: Tacy Degroot & Hallie Mayner
Pastor: Adam Dichsen
Music Director: Jean Welch
Organist: Sandi Watts
Pianist: Susan Roegge
Drummer: John Demien
Financial Assistants: Ken Devlin & Kelly Hartz
Chancel Committee: Kris Roth
Coffee Host: Kay Schnitker



Singers:

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Benen Dichsen | Rigby Dichsen | Adam Krohe | Carol VanderKloot |
| Louis Dichsen | Kelly Hartz | Kris Roth | |
| Marilyn Dichsen | Terri Kimler | Melissa Street | |

Church Council Members:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Malinda Carlson | Kelly Hartz | Patty Nelson | Monica Proefrock |
| Ken Devlin | Greg Kimler | Mike Oldenettel | Kelly Street |
| Marilyn Dichsen | | | |

The altar plants are donated today
by Pat Glyshaw in memory of Bob's birthday on December 19

What's Coming Up at Faith?

Sunday, December 17, 9:30am: Worship

10:45am: Sunday School

2:00pm: Christmas Caroling

Wednesday, December 20, 7-8am: Men's Prayer Group

10:00am: Discipleship Group

11:30am: Advent Allegro Lunch

12:15pm: Advent Allegro Concert

Thursday, December 21, 6:30pm: Faith Singer Rehearsal for Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 23, 1:00pm: Children's Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 24, 9:30am: Worship

6:30pm: Concert

7:00pm: Christmas Eve Communion Service

Monday, December 25, 9:30am: Christmas Day Service of Lessons & Carols

11:00am: Doorbell Dinners

News Updates

Sunday School

Calling all kids! After worship, fellowship, and snacks, we will gather for music and then head to our classes. We have two classes this year, one for pre-K through Kindergarten and the other for early elementary. If you have questions or are interested in helping, contact Patty Nelson at 217-653-3105.

Christmas Caroling

Join us as we head into the community to visit friends of Faith for caroling and Christmas joy. Meet at Faith at 2:00pm **Today** to fill up your mugs of hot chocolate. We will carpool around town and return to Faith by 3:30.

Discipleship Group

Our next gathering will be **Wednesday, December 20 at 10:00am**. If you have any questions about our group or are curious about how we spend our time together, please call Kelly Hartz at 217-502-1979 or email khartz@sompo-intl.com.

Doorbell Dinners

Our next times to deliver are Christmas Day (December 25) and January 8-12. A sign-up sheet is available in the gathering area on the counter by the Coffee Sales.

Advent Allegro Lunchtime Concerts

We have a great lineup for this year's Advent Allegro concert series.

December 20: Matthew Nall on piano

Matthew is a private piano instructor in the Arlington Heights area and the music director at the First United Methodist Church of Des Plaines.

The brief concerts will last approximately 30 minutes and begin at 12:15pm. Lunch of soup, chips, fruit, and dessert will be served beginning at 11:30am and after the concert for \$5. **We could use some help with serving the meal and providing cookies and soup.** If you would like to pitch in, contact the church office (245-8919 or faithlutheran62650@frontier.com) or **sign up on the sheet by the coffee sales.**

Children's Choir

Our Children's Choir was a hit at our 75th Anniversary! We look forward to having them lead us in worship as they sing "Away in a Manger" on Sunday morning, December 24. Maria Snodgrass will be leading them and rehearsing with them on **Saturday, December 23 at 1:00pm**. If your child would like to participate or you would like to help lead, please contact her.

Christmas Concert

Once again, we will have a short Christmas concert before our 7:00pm candlelight service on December 24th. Please let me know if you might be interested in being a part of that concert. Contact Jean Welch for more information.

jrwelch53@msn.com or 217-652-7009 (phone/text)

Poinsettias

To purchase a poinsettia to help decorate the church for Christmas, please sign up at the counter by the Coffee Sales and drop your check (or cash) into the decorated box; the cost is \$10.00. Please make your check out to Faith Lutheran Church, with a notation for *Poinsettia*, or call or email the church (245-8919 or faithlutheran62650@frontier.com) **by December 21** and send your check to the church (1385 W. Walnut St., Jacksonville, IL 62650). Please indicate if the poinsettia is in honor or memory of someone special.

Music Rehearsals

Exaltation Ringers rehearse on some Sundays after the service at 10:45am in the Choir Room. We ring one Sunday each month. If you are interested in ringing, please let me know. Jean Welch, *Music Director*

Reaching Out to the Community and Beyond

Please check out these displays in the gathering area for a way to make a difference in the lives of those in need: *The Pillars Giving Tree (H.U.G.S)*, *The Salvation Army Giving Tree*, and the *Reverse Advent Project*. More information is available in the December Newsletter.

Book Group - “Jotham’s Journey”

Our book this month is a bit different from those of the past. This month, you are invited to read “Jotham’s Journey,” by Arnold Ytreeide. It tells of the adventure of 10-year-old Jotham, separated from his family, on a mission to find them again. His journey brings him face to face with thieves, robbers, and kidnappers, but also wise men, shepherds, and innkeepers until at last he finds his way to the savior born in Bethlehem. Pastor Adam’s family has read this numerous times. Read a chapter each day of Advent, along with the thought-provoking reflection, and prepare your hearts for Christmas.

Contribution Envelopes for 2024

are available in the gathering area. We hope we did not overlook anyone. If you would like a box of envelopes and you don’t see a box with your name on it, please mention this to Barb Davenport or Kris Roth, and we will happily provide you with a box.

Faith Directory

Thank you for your updated photos and information for our new digital directory! You can access it online by using this QR code. It is password protected, and the password is "faith". If you notice any changes or would like to add your photo, please contact the church office.



Sign-Up Sheets

are available at the podium in the gathering area. Please take a moment to sign up to be an Usher, Reader, Greeter, Communion Assistant, Coffee Host, Chancel Committee volunteer, and to Donate Altar Plants. **Thank You!** *We are Gifted to Serve!*

Sabbatical Update

If you weren't in worship on November 26, you may have missed the official announcement of Pastor Adam's upcoming sabbatical. At our 2023 Annual Meeting, our congregation extended our support to apply for a Lilly Clergy Renewal grant to fund a sabbatical in 2024. While we did not receive the grant, we feel the time is right for Pastor Adam, his family, and our congregation to take time for renewal. He will be taking the months of February-April to unplug from the demands of pastoral ministry and plug into his identity as a husband, father, and Child of God. More details on goals for him and our congregation will be available in January. In the meantime, a "Sabbatical FAQ" sheet has been prepared. You can pick up a copy at Faith and talk to Pastor Adam or any of our Council members for more information (Mindy Carlson, Ken Devlin, Kelly Hartz, Kelly Street, Greg Kimler, Patty Nelson, Mike Oldenettel, and Monica Proefrock). Together, with Pastor Adam, we are grateful to God for the ministry we share and this opportunity for growth and renewal.