

+ Fourth Sunday in Advent +

December 21, Year of our Lord 2025 | DS1

+ Confession and Absolution +



Hymn of Invocation: 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

See hymnal and note:

First stanza and refrain will be sung by a Cantor in Latin.
Congregation sings **Stanzas 2 – 6** with refrains.

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

Matthew 28:19b; 18:20

P In the name of the Father and of the  Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Exhortation

1 John 1:8–9

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Confession of Sins

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Absolution

[John 20:19–23]

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

+ Service of the Word +

Introit: 928 Song of Hannah

Refrain

My heart ex - ults in the LORD; I re - joice in Your sal - va - tion.

Chant Tone

I Oh that you would rend the heavens I and come down,*
that the mountains might quake at your I presence.

I wait for the LORD, my I soul waits,*
and in his I word I hope;

C Refrain

my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the I morning,*
more than watchmen for the I morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is I steadfast love,*
and with him is plentiful re- I demption.

C Refrain

And he will redeem I Israel*
from all his in- I iniquities.

Oh that you would rend the heavens I and come down,*
that the mountains might quake at your I presence.

Glory be to the Father and I to the Son*
and to the Holy I Spirit;
as it was in the be- I ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. I Amen.

Tune: (ref) Kurt E. von Kampen, 1960; Paul J. Grime, 1958, Chant tone Tune: © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110020024

Kyrie ~ Lord, Have Mercy, p. 152: 944 Kyrie — II

1 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.
2 Chris - te e - lei - son. Chris - te e - lei - son.
3 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.

Ky - ri - e e - le - - - - i - son.
Chris - te e - le - - - - i - son.
Ky - ri - e e - le - - - - i - son.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P (sung) The Lord be with you.



C And al - so with you.

P 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.



Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 7:10–17

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.

C Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation.
Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
From the house of the Lord we bless you.

Epistle

Romans 1:1–7

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead,

Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Matthew 1:23a

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

Alleluia and Verse

John 6:68



Holy Gospel

Matthew 1:18–25

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.



Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

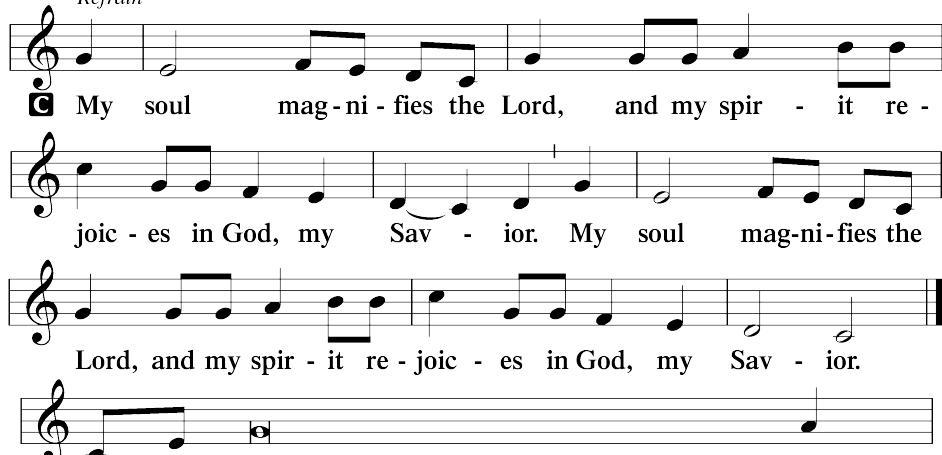
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life \ddagger everlasting. Amen.

Magnificat from *Evening Prayer* (for setting see hymnal p. 248-249)

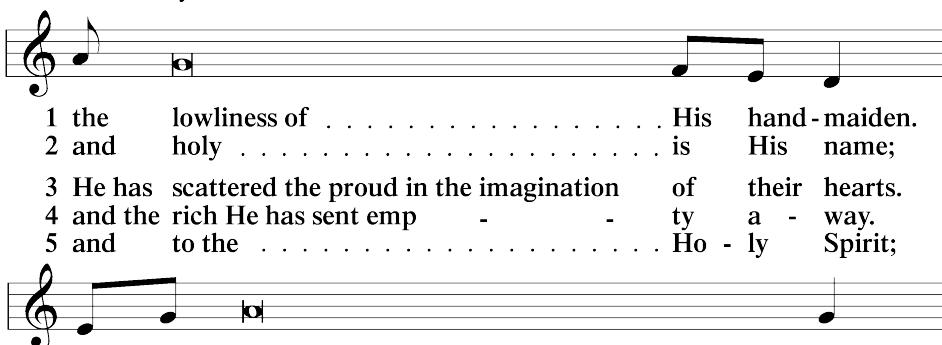
Luke 1:46-55

Refrain



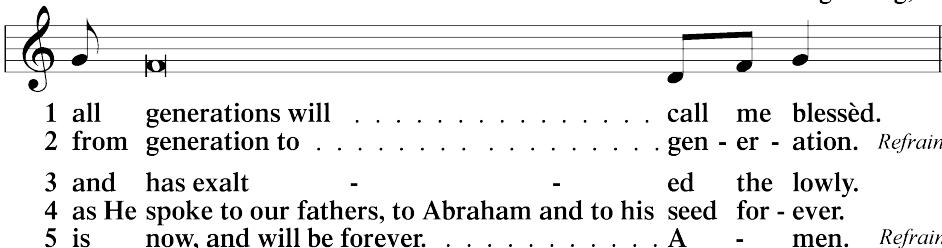
My soul mag - ni - fies the Lord, and my spir - it re -
joic - es in God, my Sav - ior. My soul mag-ni-fies the
Lord, and my spir - it re - joic - es in God, my Sav - ior.

1 For He has re - garded
2 For the Mighty One has done great things to me,
3 He has shown strength with His arm;
4 He has filled the hungry with good things,
5 Glo - ry be to the Father and to the Son



1 the lowliness of His hand - maiden.
2 and holy is His name;
3 He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
4 and the rich He has sent emp ty a - way.
5 and to the Ho - ly Spirit;

1 For be - hold, from this day
2 and His mercy is on those who fear Him
3 He has cast down the mighty from their thrones
4 He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy
5 as it was in the be ginning,



1 all generations will call me blessed.
2 from generation to gen - er - ation. *Refrain*
3 and has exalt ed the lowly.
4 as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for - ever.
5 is now, and will be forever. A - men. *Refrain*

Offertory

Psalm 116:12–13, 17–19

C What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all His ben-e-fits to
 me? I will of - fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv - ing and will
 call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-
 va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my
 vows to the Lord now in the pres-ence of all His peo-ple, in the
 courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

Announcement of Offering and Greetings of Peace

The people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, “Peace be with you,” as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22–24; Eph. 4:1–3).

Prayer of the Church - see colored insert

*Reminder for those watching at home to pray **The Lord's Prayer**.*

Benediction for those worshipping via the livestream.

+ Service of the Sacrament +

A Word to Our Guests and Visitors about Communion at Praise

The Lord's Supper is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that, as He says, our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but His very Body and Blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and with one another. Our Lord invites to His table those who trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us, that they may show forth His death and resurrection until He comes. Scripture warns that those who come forward to eat and drink our Lord's Body and Blood in an unworthy manner do so to their great spiritual harm. The Lord's Supper is also a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar. Therefore, any who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and yet to desire to receive the Sacrament (Communion), are encouraged to seek guidance from the pastor.

Preface

p. 160; 2 Timothy 4:22; [Colossians 3:1]; [Psalm 136]

P The Lord be with you.



C And al - so 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 Him thanks and praise.

Proper Preface ~ Altar Book (appropriate to the day or season)

P It is truly good, right, and salutary...evermore praising you and saying:

Sanctus

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:

Heav-en and earth are full of Your glo - ry. Ho - san-na. Ho - san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

p. 161 or 178

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, ...now and forever. **C** Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9–13

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C 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

Mt 26:26-30; Mk 14:22-26; Lk 22:14-23; 1 Cor 11:23-25.

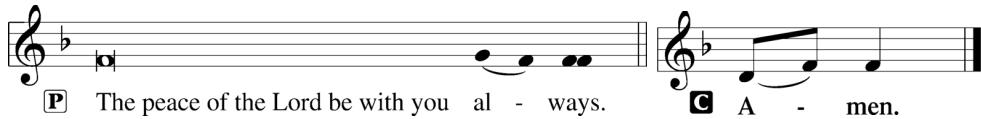
P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My $\text{\tfrac{X}{T}}$ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My $\text{\tfrac{X}{T}}$

blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

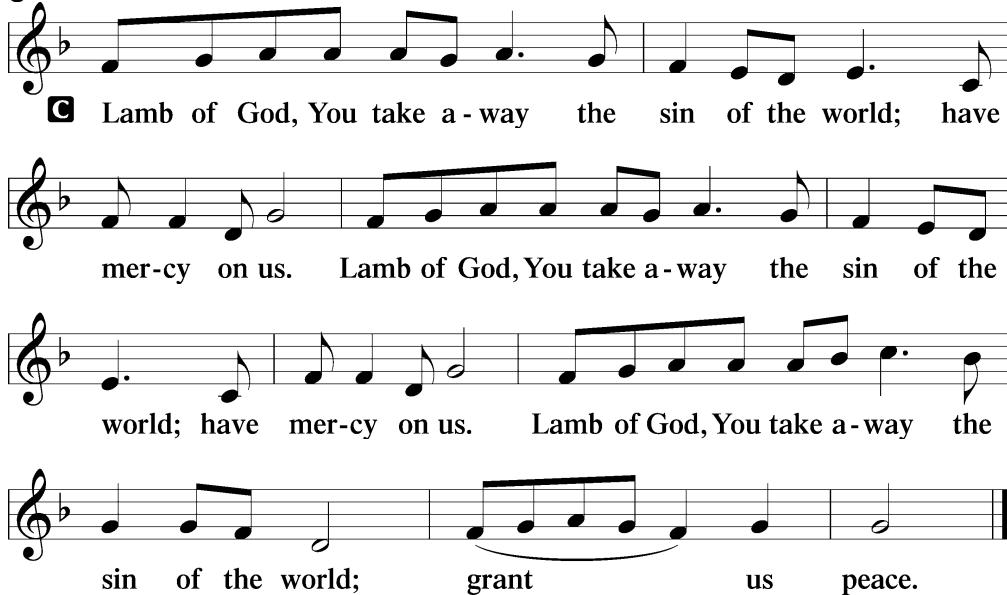
John 20:19



P The peace of the Lord be with you always. C Amen.

Agnus Dei

John 1:29



C Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

Distribution

Please see our pastor for details about baptism, instruction, and vow of confirmation of our church's teachings prior to taking the Lord's Supper (Communion) at Praise.

Distribution Hymn: 356 The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (see hymnal)

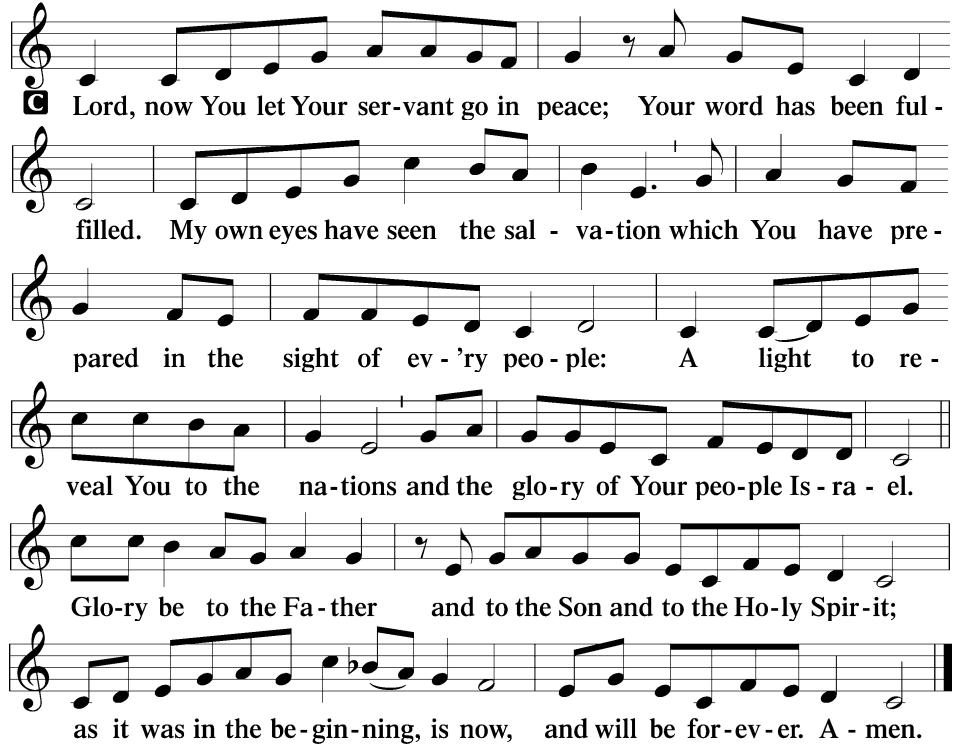
Distribution Hymn: 621 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Distribution Hymn: 341 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Distribution Hymn: 361 O Little Town of Bethlehem

Nunc Dimitis

Luke 2:29-32



Lord, now You let Your ser-vant go in peace; Your word has been ful -
filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va-tion which You have pre -
pared in the sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: A light to re -
veal You to the na-tions and the glo-ry of Your peo-ple Is - ra - el.
Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son and to the Ho-ly Spir-it;
as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A - men.

Post-Communion Collect

p. 166

A Let us pray. ... one God, now and forever.



A - men.

Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26

P 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 \ddagger give you peace.



A - men.

See hymn to depart on next page >

Hymn to Depart: 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanza 7)

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind; Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace.

Refrain

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-u-el!

Shall come to thee, O Is-ra-el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt. Tune: French, 15th cent. Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

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Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday Divine Services weekly at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday Bible Study and Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.

+ Prayers +

World: For the end of persecution and genocide of **Nigerian Christians** (of various races). For the end of the fighting between modern-day **Israel** and the **Hamas** and soon we pray between **Ukraine** and **Russia**. For **fire, flood, and hurricane** recovery.

Concern for the Lost: For family and friends who do not know or have fallen away from the truth, grace, and love of the Savior, Christ Jesus.

Vocation: Thanksgiving for healthy birth of **Silas** to Alex & Shelby Hicks! For **those traveling** this Christmas. For **veterans and our military** for **Mason Burkett** (Mary Schopmann's grandson-in-law) deployed to Poland. For military servants: **Carter Felt, Casey Lawson, Tyler Smith** and **William Smolter**. For our families expecting a baby: **Alex & Shelby Hicks, Luke & Blair Johnson**, and **Joshua & Adelaide Arguen**. For **those serving in hospitals and homeless shelters**. For **teachers** in our community schools. For our circuit's seminary students: **Aaron Wade, Sam Bohnet** (vicarage placement in Louisville, KY). For **children and families** dealing with difficult situations due to drugs, alcohol, violence, abuse, stress, and strife.

Recent Loss and Mourning: For family of **Carol Ehrens** who passed away 12/9 (memorial service will be 1/3). For family of **Mike** (June McDonnell's son who passed away in December. For family of (former member) **Don Wuethrick** who passed away. For the Family of **Debra** (Billye Raye's sister) who passed away 10/25. For family of **Bob McDermott** who passed away on 10/17.

Health: For surgery recovery for **Emily** (Tom & Nadine Wittkopp's daughter). For **Linda Davis** anemia and health. For **Carolyn Howard** (friend of Paul Ruble) pneumonia recovery and for her daughter **Jane** who suffered a stroke. For **Tom Williams** health and upcoming chemo treatments. For **Ann** (Rick Gift's stepmother) leukemia and health. For Maryville Police officer **Justin Brown**. For **Tonia Latham** (Phyllis Bembas's niece) health recovery. For **Chuck Pettyjohn** for lung and heart health (temporary dialysis treatments). For **Sandra Wendland** surgery recovery. For **Catherine Boute** recovering from knee replacement surgery. For **Lori Smith** shoulder surgery recovery. For **Gene Stern** (father of Cheryl Denton) fractured back treatment. For **Ed McGillick** (broken ankle recovery). For **Todd Stubelt** (nephew of Sharon Felker) stage 4 brain cancer and **Cheryl Dunnington** (cousin of Sharon Felker) Alzheimer's. For **Fred Hansen** carotid artery procedures. For **Renee Hickmon** home treating multiple blood clots [and for sister **Sherrie** who broke her foot in two places]. For **Joan Large** recent gall bladder removal (now home). For **Matt** (Becky Hamby's son) recovery from fall and leg surgery (long road ahead). For **Carol Ehrens** health and good days (hospice care at home). For **Brenda** (Laura Bisconte's aunt) cancer surgery recover and treatments. For **George Gorghis** (friend of Donna Wall) treatment for Lymphoma cancer, stage 4. For **Janeen Meier** healing for physical and mental health (Maureen Roberts' sister and Pastor Roberts's Aunt). For **Bob Heckman's** health. For **Don Hammond** heart a-fib (Joan Large's son). For **Cole Hammond** (Joan Large's grandson) comfort in dealing with epilepsy. For **Marvin Arcari** (Paul Ruble's cousin, Will Wade's brother-in-law) cancer. For **Sandy Bagley** health. For **Pat Sweet** (friend of Ole & Mavis) fragile health condition. For **June McDonnell** recovering from falls and lung health. For **Tim Smith** heart and blood pressure health. For **Ted Frazier** headaches and blood pressure drops. For **Lee Schuck** and **Gus** taking care of her. For **Pam** (Jim Roberts's sister) heart and respiratory issues.

For **Derek Bryant** (friend of Mary Schopmann) kidney reception. For **Ken Kropp** recovering from heart surgery. For **Gary Kubin** back and leg pain. For **Haley Jenkins** (Ed & Sandy Bagley's niece) esophageal issues. For **Margarete** (neighbor to Jim & Maureen Roberts) dealing with advancing cancer. For **Ron Williams** (at Foothills) and for his wife Pamela. For **Barbara Moyers** health. For **Marie Guinn** (Jennifer Kropp's mother) cancer treatment and health. For **Mary** (Ed & Sandy Bagley's daughter) health. For **June Latham** (Phyllis Bembas' sister) stroke and vision recovery. For **Fred Goddard** (nephew of Mary Ellen Brown) lung cancer treatment. For **Carol** (Alex Hick's aunt) frontal lobe dementia. **Debbie Johnston** kidney health. For **Alan Stremsterfer's mother** health. **Aurora Stevens** pain and health. For **Kathy Bigger** (friend of Donna Wall) pancreatic cancer. Andrew Hebar's Aunt **Kara** (health).

Birthdays: Steve L (12/22), Tina P (12/25), Jeff Bae (12/26), Janice K (12/26), Tim N (12/26), Judy T (12/27), Rose B (12/30), Ole Johnson (12/31), Nylah G (1/3)

Anniversaries: Bryan & Kaite Baer (12/23)

Church Operations & Christian Stewardship

Building Fund	2024 Receipts	2025 Receipts	Total Receipts
Actual	\$211,037	\$58,559	\$1,236,555
Pledged	\$179,106	\$42,744	\$1,065,270
Remaining	\$31,931 [over]	\$15,815 [over]	\$171,285 [over]

As of 12/18/2025

As of 12/4/25 the new loan balance is \$1,863,535. The Build Project total cost was \$2,973,613 (approximately 41% funded). We encourage special gifts to help paydown the principal.

Visit praiselutheran.com/build to see our build completion video! Gifts to the Build Fund are still encouraged (the extended Capital Campaign ends on December 31, 2025). Our total monthly mortgage payments to Lutheran Church Extension Fund: \$11,413 [breakdown: \$10,309 (new building) + \$1,104 (older building)].

Children and Youth Ministry

Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday for all children and students age 2 on up. *Confirmed youth are encouraged to join the Congregational Bible Study with Pastor Roberts in the Social Hall.*

Midweek Youth Group will start back up Wed, January 14th at 7:00 p.m. starting in the Narthex with Compline, then move to the Social Hall. Open to all middle and high school students.

Worship and Music Ministry



A **music folder fundraiser** is being held this Advent season. New folders will improve both the organization, performance, and care of our music. A goodwill offering will be received at the door. *Each folder is approximately \$30 each. Any donation for this would be a blessing to the choir.*

The **Baby Grand Piano** has been delivered to our Sanctuary for use in our new music conservatory (more details to come) and for services in God's House. Funds for this beautiful instrument were provided through the *Grow Grant* from the Mid-South District of LCMS.

Choir members are encouraged to sit in the choir section on Wed, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve Service) to support the hymns and congregational singing. NO REHEARSAL until Wed, Jan 7 at our normal time of 6:00 p.m. (watch for announcements via GroupMe). For updates and announcements, join PLC Choir on GroupMe (see Caleb for details). Instrumentalists are also invited to reach out to Caleb about opportunities, which will be tailored to your availability.

Piano and Organ lessons are available at Praise with our Director of Music, Caleb Hesse. Anyone age 6 and up (with a parent/guardian for children) is welcome to sign up. For additional information, please reach out to Caleb at caleb@praiselutheran.com.

Congregational Life & Fellowship

Donations for the Veterans Pantry may be placed in the Narthex. They are delivered on a regular basis to the Blount County Office of Veterans Affairs.

The **Lutheran Witness** subscription runs April 1–March 31. To receive or renew, please sign up in the Narthex or complete the form at <https://tinyurl.com/yca5nxn4> by December 31. A suggested \$15 donation covers the church's portion, as the Mid-South District sponsors the remainder. No action is needed if you do not wish to subscribe.

Something old and new is coming to Praise Lutheran Church as we introduce our own chapter of **Lutheran Women in Mission**; an 83-year-strong ministry focused on equipping women to live out their faith in service, fellowship, and mission. All women of Praise are invited to an information and planning gathering on **Jan 3, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.** in the church social hall. Join us to help shape what LWM at Praise will look like for women of every stage and season of life. Stop by the narthex to pick up a flyer with more details. **RSVP to Kris Smith at 865-221-3652** to help plan refreshments or with any questions.

Calling all cyclists. If you are interested in participating in some supported rides this coming year, check out the Race Day Events page at <https://racedayevents.net/>. All rides take place on active roads, but routes are selected to minimize traffic whenever possible, and each ride offers multiple mileage options. They are currently offering a special for those who sign up before Christmas Day. If you have any questions, please contact Rick Gift.

Thank you to the Children, Youth, Parents and Mr. Caleb Hesse for the Children's Christmas Service and Hymn Sing held this past Friday evening. The Word, praise, music, and singing of the eternal and newborn King is precious.

Thank you to those who sponsored and dedicated a Poinsettia(s) to decorate the chancel and church. The dedications will appear in the Christmas Eve and Day bulletins.

Today

Issues Class with Pr. Roberts will meet today in the Social Hall at 9:45 a.m. Today's topic: *More Differences between Lutherans and...*

This Week



Dec 24 (Wed) The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Candlelight Vigil at **7:00 p.m.**

Dec 25 (Thu) The Nativity of Our Lord Divine Service at **10:00 a.m.**

Upcoming

Dec 28 (Sun) First Sunday after Christmas and commemoration of the Holy Innocents with normal service times at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Jan 3 (Sat) Memorial Service for Carol Ehrens at 11:00 a.m. (Visitation at 10:00 a.m.) and lunch at 12 noon.

Jan 3 (Sat) Lutheran Women in Mission information and planning meeting at 1:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. RSVP to Kris Smith at 865-221-3652 to help plan refreshments or with any questions.

Jan 4 (Sun) The Epiphany of our Lord (observed)