

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

John 1:1

First Lutheran Church

January 4, 2026

Christmas II

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

IN DULCI JUBILO

Matthew H. Corl

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

GATHERING

(Please stand)

CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace.

C: Amen.

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Reconciling God,
we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair.
We confess
that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love;
we have not always recognized your presence among us;
we have not always embraced your message of peace.

P: Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.
C: Amen.

P: God's grace upon grace flows over you.
† Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.
Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!
C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

ELW # 288



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866
Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
C: And also with you.

GLORY TO GOD



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

The cantor will sing the verses.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Almighty God,
you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word.
By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

++ Children may attend Sunday School

WORD

FIRST READING

JEREMIAH 31:7-14

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

R: *A reading from Jeremiah, the thirty-first chapter.*

⁷ Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel." ⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back; I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path where they shall not stumble, for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock." ¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over

the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. ¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow. ¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thank be to God.

SECOND READING

EPHESIANS 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

R: A reading from Ephesians, the first chapter.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Cantor: Alleluia. All the ends¹ of the earth have seen the victory¹ of our God. Alleluia. (Ps. 98:3)*

GOSPEL

JOHN 1:1-9,10-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

P: The holy gospel according to John, the first chapter.



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

P: The gospel of the Lord.



Musical notation for a hymn tune in G clef, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: Praise to you O Christ!

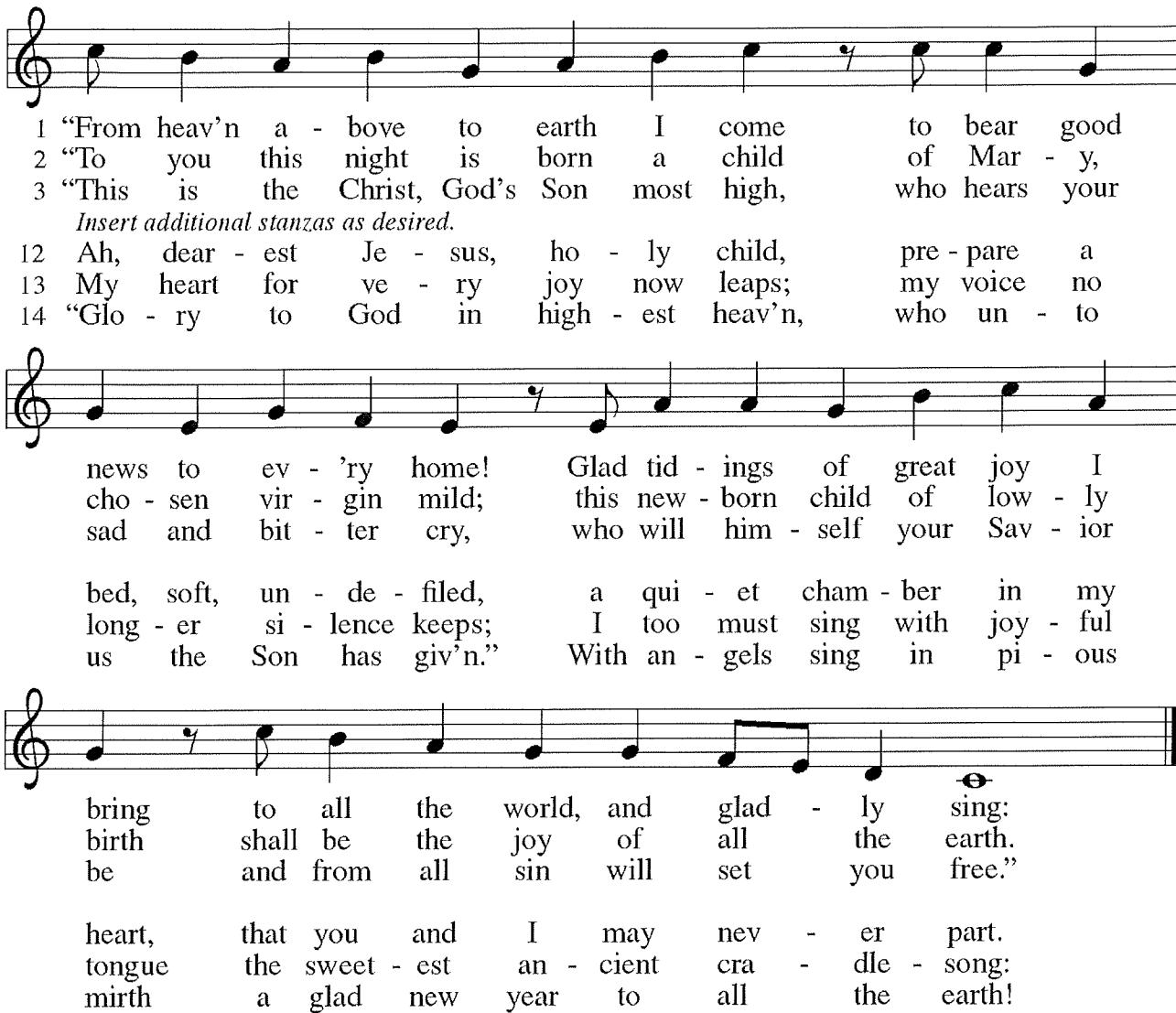
(Please be seated)

REFLECTION

BRENT GARDNER, SAM**

**An ELCA SAM is a Synod Authorized Minister, a layperson trained and authorized by our synod bishop to lead worship and administer sacraments in a specific congregation for a limited time, often when it's not feasible to have a rostered minister. SAM serve in partnership with ordained pastors, providing vital leadership and sacramental care to smaller congregations.

(Please stand)



1 "From heav'n a - bove to earth I come to bear good
 2 "To you this night is born a child of Mar - y,
 3 "This is the Christ, God's Son most high, who hears your
Insert additional stanzas as desired.
 12 Ah, dear - est Je - sus, ho - ly child, pre - pare a
 13 My heart for ve - ry joy now leaps; my voice no
 14 "Glo - ry to God in high - est heav'n, who un - to

news to ev - 'ry home! Glad tid - ings of great joy I
 cho - sen vir - gin mild; this new - born child of low - ly
 sad and bit - ter cry, who will him - self your Sav - ior

bed, soft, un - de - filed, a qui - et cham - ber in my
 long - er si - lence keeps; I too must sing with joy - ful
 us the Son has giv'n." With an - gels sing in pi - ous

bring to all the world, and glad - ly sing:
 birth shall be the joy of all the earth.
 be and from all sin will set you free."

heart, that you and I may never part.
 tongue the sweet - est an - cient cra - dle - song:
 mirth a glad new year to all the earth!

NICENE CREED

L: In Christ, we have heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation.

C: **We believe in Him
 and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.**

L: Living together in trust and hope, we profess our faith:

**We believe in one God,
 the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is, seen and unseen.
 We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,**

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(Please kneel)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Celebrating the news of Christ's birth,
let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

L: O God,
you reveal yourself wherever two or three are gathered in your name.
Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ,
but in the beloved people of this assembly.

Each petition concludes:

P: Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

P: With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you,
O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love;
through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

(Please stand)

SHARING OF THE PEACE

L: Sisters and brothers, rejoice! Mend your ways,
encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace!

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

C: And also with you.

*You are welcome to share the Peace of Christ
with those around you as you feel comfortable.*

(Please be seated)

MEAL

OFFERING AND MEDITATION

UN FLAMBEAU

Wayne L. Wold

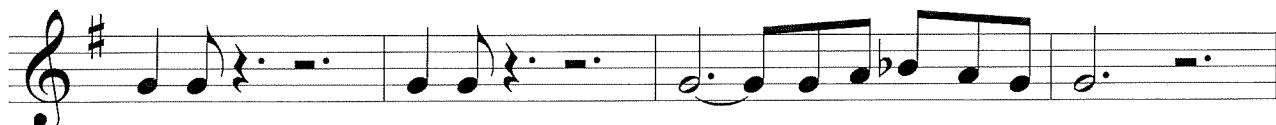
Love Has Come

(Please stand)

OFFERING SONG

Jesus, What a Wonderful Child

ELW # 297



Jesus, What a Wonderful Child

Je - sus, Je - sus, oh what a won-der-ful child.



Jesus, Jesus, so ho - ly meek and

mild; new life, new hope the child will bring.



new life, new hope the child will bring.

mild; new life, new hope the child will bring.

Lis-ten to the an - gels sing: "Glo-ry, glo- ry,
glo - ry," let the hea - ens ring.

Text: African American traditional, alt.

Music: African American traditional; arr. Rollo A. Dilworth, b. 1970

Arr. © 2007 Hal Leonard Corporation

WONDERFUL CHILD
PM

OFFERING PRAYER

L: God of glory,
great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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 our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ . . . And so with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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

L: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: A child has been born for us, a Son given to us.

C: **Come, receive the gift of Jesus.**

(Please be seated)

COMMUNION IS DISTRIBUTED IN TWO MANNERS AT FIRST LUTHERAN

† *You may commune in your pews.*

Individual communion kits are available at the Narthex doors.

† *You may come to the Table, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.*

LAMB OF GOD

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 sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION SONG

Love Has Come

ELW # 292

1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -
Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
gift of Christ-mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

(Please stand)

TABLE BLESSING

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

C: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L: Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.
Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

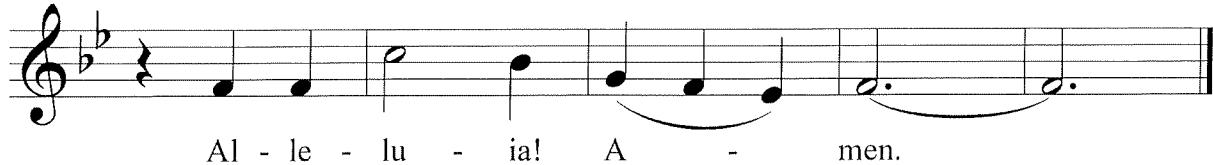
C: Amen.

BLESSING

P: The triune God,
glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.



Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.



Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

SENDING

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

C: Oh God,
your everlasting love for us is always trustworthy and sure.
We are grateful for the goodness you have shown us
through the years,
and we ask now for confidence to go forward into the future.
Bless our community of faith, bless our healing,
bless the changes that are before us, bless our pastoral leaders
who will shepherd us through this time of transition.
We thank you now for the wisdom you will show us
as we align with your will, and servant or servants
you are already preparing to send us in your blessed time.
Help us to keep looking to you to define our ministry and our future.
In his name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
Amen.

SENDING SONG

Cold December Flies Away

ELW # 299



1 Cold De - cem - ber flies a - way at the rose - red splen - dor.
2 In the hope - less time of sin shad - ows deep had fall - en.
3 Now the bud has come to bloom, and the world a - wak - ens.



A - pril's crown-ing glo - ry breaks while the whole world won - ders
All the world lay un - der death. Eyes were closed in sleep - ing.
In the lil - y's pur - est flow'r dwells a won - drous fra - grance.



at the ho - ly un - seen pow'r of the tree which bears the
But, when all seemed lost in night, came the sun whose gold - en
And it spreads to all the earth from the mo - ment of its



flow'r. On the bless-ed tree blooms the red - dest flow'r. On the tree blooms the light brings un - end - ing joy, brings the end - less joy of our hope, high - est birth; and its beau - ty lives. In the flow'r it lives, in the flow'r, and it



rose here in love's own gar - den, full and strong in glo - ry. hope, of our hope's bright dawn - ing, Son be - lov'd of heav - en. spreads in its heav'n - ly bright - ness sweet per - fume de - light - ful.

Text: Catalonian carol; tr. Howard Hawhee, b. 1953
Music: EL DESEMBRE CONGELAT, Catalonian carol
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

DISMISSAL

L: Glory to God in the highest!
P: And peace to God's people on earth!
L: Go in joy.
P: Embody God's redeeming grace.
C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

EL DESEMBRE CONGELAT

John Ferguson

Cold December Flies Away

Events in Review

<u>Sunday</u>	Jan 4
10:00AM	Church Service
<u>Monday</u>	Jan 5
10:00AM	Bible Study at Willows
5:15PM	Bell Choir Practice
<u>Tuesday</u>	Jan 6
<u>Wednesday</u>	Jan 7
7:00 PM	Worship & Music
<u>Thursday</u>	Jan 8
<u>Friday</u>	Jan 9
<u>Saturday</u>	Jan 10

Next Week

<u>Sunday</u>	Jan. 11
10:00AM	Church Service
<u>Monday</u>	Jan. 12
10:00AM	Bible Study at Willows
5:15PM	Bell Choir Practice
<u>Tuesday</u>	Jan. 13
<u>Wednesday</u>	Jan. 14
9:00 AM	Peace Corp
6:00PM	Property Committee Mtg
<u>Thursday</u>	Jan. 15
<u>Friday</u>	Jan. 16
<u>Saturday</u>	Jan. 17



If you have a prayer request for today, please raise your hand during announcements and a host will give you a green card to fill out.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 25, 2026
After Service



End of Year
GIVING
Statements

If you would like an End of Year Giving Statement. Please sign the Sheet on the Information Board or let the office know.



The Poinsettia Dedication Bulletin can be found On the table in the lobby.

Poinsettias may be taken home any time after this today's service.



January's Monthly Scroll along with Jan-March 2026 Portals of Prayer are now available on the lobby table

Cookie Sign up sheets are located on the Information Board in the hallway. The time is before and after Church Service. Approximately 4 dozen cookies are needed each week.



Contact Us



First Lutheran Church

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419-447-1323

www.firstlutherantiffin.com
firstlutherantiffin@gmail.com

Interim Pastor

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306
theskipster55@gmail.com

Our Worship Leaders

Altar Guild: Donna Brueggermeier,
Sharon Losey, Deb Hohman
Cantor: Elijah Shiley
Facebook Camera
Host: The Nominees
Reader: Melissa Chester
Worship Assistant: Melissa Chester
Director of Music: Curtis L. King
Minister: Pastor Brent Gardner
Lay Minister: Melissa Chester

Emergency Pastors

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306

Mike Porter

(585) 813-5009

Pastor Philip Scherr

(814) 756-9435

Our Mission Statement

“God is among us!”

“We are called to go out, care for all, share the gospel, forgive, reconcile and trust God for all that we need.”