

DECEMBER 2025



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
631 Grand Street, Allegan Michigan



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Michele Radke - December 11

Linda Scott - December 11

Pr. Dan Ward - December 11

Russell Davis - December 13

Michael Aksamit - December 15

Sandy Horwath - December 18

Kaylee Haas - December 19

Bernie Lenau - December 21

Trevor Horwath - December 27

Mallory Horwath - December 29



NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Keith & Linda Scott - December 14
Bill & Jessie Cronkhite - December 15

Month December Clipart



WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR DECEMBER

December 7

Reader - Karen Acosta
Assistant - Jim Horwath
Counters - Joyce Davis & Joyce Davis
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

December 14

Reader - Bernie Lenau
Assistant - Donna Preisler
Counters - Joyce Davis & Mike Aksamit
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

December 21

Reader - Michele Radke
Assistant - Mike Fusillo
Counters - Laura Compton & Sharon Aksamit
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

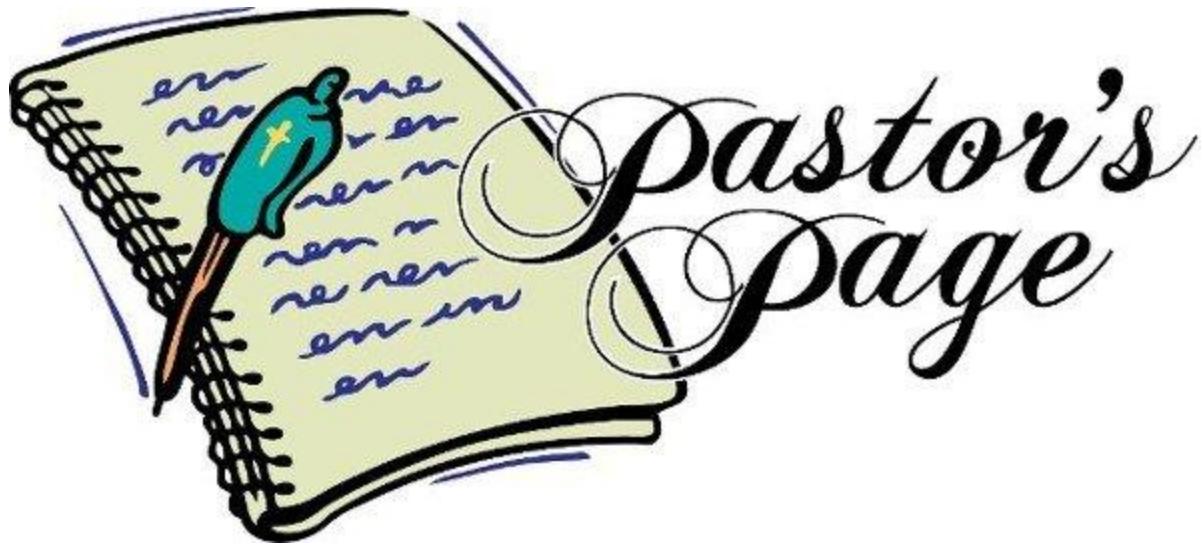
December 24

Reader - Donna Preisler
Assistant - Jim Horwath
Counters - Joyce Davis & Sharon Aksamit
Greeters - Jim & Marie Combs

December 28

Reader: - Jennifer Vance
Assistant: - Mike Acosta
Counters: - Laura Compton & Jim Combs
Greeters: - Jim & Marie Combs

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS: We really appreciate everyone that serves during our worship service and *would love to have more people involved*. If you would like to serve as a reader, worship assistant, counter, or greeter, please talk to Pastor Chris or Ken Kingsbury. We can be reached in the office Monday through Thursday from 9 am to 1pm.



December: Incarnation

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

John 1:1, 14

Truly, this is a shocking notion.

"You mean a baby being born? That happens all the time! Nothing shocking about that – if it didn't happen all the time, there wouldn't be any more people!"

No, I don't mean that a baby was born. I know that we have to keep having babies or the human race will cease to exist. In fact, everyone knows that. It's why, I think, Christmas gets more cultural traction than Easter – because babies being born makes sense to everyone (it's at least part of the reason).

That's not the shocking part.

The shocking part is that God chose to become human.

The Almighty Creator of the universe – verse 3 "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being," or, as we say in the Nicene Creed "through him all things we made" – chose to become a human being.

He laid aside his Almighty Power to become a small, weak, frail, and fragile human being. His mom had to change his diapers. He knew joy and sorrow, got frustrated, tired, hungry, and even angry.

He felt forsaken by his father and cried out to God from the cross. He died.

Yes, there is a penitential aspect to Advent, because we remember that God wasn't just born, he was born to and among fallen, sinful people because the plan was to die.

He was born knowing that he would have to die; yes, because all human beings die, but also because that was literally God's plan ("the definite plan and foreknowledge of God," Acts 2:23) from the beginning: for Jesus to suffer and die the way he did "for us and for our salvation."

That's the shocking part.

"Incarnation" literally means "en-fleshed," that Almighty God chose to become a limited, stinky, sweaty, smelly human being. Really, it's unfathomable.

The earliest Christians said “that which is not assumed is not saved” – that Christ became one of us in order to save us.

He joined us in life and death in order that we might join with him in life everlasting.

That’s the incarnation. God, the All Powerful Source of Life, became “enfleshed,” became human, became one of us, so that he might save us.

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

SDG,

Pr. Chris

Notes:

The annual meeting of the congregation will be on Sunday, 14 December, immediately following worship.

It’s important for me to remember that about half of the people looking back at me on a Sunday morning were not here four years ago, which means that something I wrote or said in 2023 may not be common knowledge anymore. (Of course, I’m sure that if you were here in 2022 or 2023 you, of course, remember the things I’ve written or said... 😊) This means that, periodically, we (or I, in this case) need to explain things that we (or I) sometimes take for granted. In this case, like “SDG.” It’s how I sign my letters and e-mails, and it’s part of how you know that I’m me and not some imposter. No, it’s not “some Army thing.” 😊 It’s just shorthand. SDG is short for Soli Deo Gloria, which is Latin for “to God alone be the glory.”

The fact that half the people looking back at me on a Sunday weren’t here four years ago has other ramifications, but we’ll talk about that soon ...

The annual meeting of the congregation will be on Sunday, 14 December, immediately following worship.

Advent begins on Sunday, 30 November, and with it begins a new church year. This is “Year A,” when the gospel readings come mostly from Matthew (with some John sprinkled here and there). Since Advent is 25 days long this year, and Matthew is 28 chapters, the days do not line up exactly.

30 November: Matthew 1-2

01 December: Matthew 3

02 December: Matthew 4

03 December: Matthew 5-7

04 December: Matthew 6

05 December: Matthew 7

06 December: Matthew 8

07 December: Matthew 9

08 December: Matthew 10

09 December: Matthew 10

10 December: Matthew 11

11 December: Matthew 12

12 December: Matthew 13

13 December: Matthew 14

14 December: Matthew 15

15 December: Matthew 16
16 December: Matthew 17
17 December: Matthew 18
18 December: Matthew 19
19 December: Matthew 20
20 December: Matthew 21
21 December: Matthew 22
22 December: Matthew 23-25
23 December: Matthew 26-27
24 December: Matthew 28

Pr. Chris will be at the Rock Island Arsenal 7-13 December **but he will NOT miss Sunday worship.**

The annual meeting of the congregation will be on Sunday, 14 December, immediately following worship.

These are the folks for whom we've been praying as of the writing of this note:

Meghan is the forty-year-old daughter of Pr. Maria Rutland; Meghan has very aggressive cancer.
Pr. Julia Humenik's mother, Cheryl, has terminal cancer.

Leslie and Lynda are Lori's sisters.

Gail is Donna Moeller's neighbor.

Mike is Laura Compton's neighbor, and Lisa is his wife.

Arleen is Laura Compton's sister.

Pat is Sam Gorr's mother-in-law.

Bill Brown is Jessie's friend.

Sara, Sandy Rankin, Ricky, and Jeff were added by Maryann Fusillo.

Jacob, Katie, Tyler, and Elsie were added by Joyce Davis.

Jeff was added by Sharon Aksamit.

Keith, Dawn, Dan, Doug, Tammy, Dottie, Ken, and Marie are all members.

Because our prayer list has gotten so long, **I plan to clear the prayer list at the end of December.**
You are welcome to put anyone back on the list, just let Pr. Chris and Ken Kingsbury know.

Confirmation and adult Sunday school will not meet on Sunday, 28 December. Confirmation will start again on Sunday, 11 January 2026 and adult Sunday school start again on Sunday, 18 January 2026.

Our next confirmation fundraiser will be a cookie exchange on Sunday, 14 December. Please make your favorite Christmas cookies and then make up a plate of other people's favorite Christmas cookies after the annual meeting!

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION WILL BE ON SUNDAY, 14 DECEMBER, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWSHIP WORSHIP.

I am on vacation 25 December 2025 – 3 January 2026. Pastor Jim Foster will preach and lead worship on Sunday, 28 December.

I know these are not in December, but because they follow so closely on its heels, I add these:

We will degreen the sanctuary on Sunday, 4 January, after worship.

Our annual Epiphany worship service will be at Hope Lutheran Church in Plainwell (290 12th St., Plainwell) on the Epiphany, Tuesday, 6 January, at 5pm. Bishop Julie Schneider-Thomas will preach.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Quilting Group meets every Tuesday in the Quilting Room at 9am.

Bible Study Group meets every Wednesday at 10am in the Study Room. We discuss the Bible Readings for the upcoming Sunday Worship Service. Since Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve both fall on Wednesday this year, there will NOT be Bible Study on those dates

Praise Team Practice meets every Wednesday at 4pm. Watch the Bulletin and the church web page for changes during the holidays.

COFFEE FOR VETS meets on the *second Tuesday* of every month in the Fellowship Hall at 9am for coffee, cinnamon rolls, and fellowship. If you know of a veteran, please invite them to join our group. This is a great way for them to have fellowship and discuss shared experiences.



Zumba meets in the Fellowship Hall every Wednesday at 6pm and every Saturday at 10am, unless there is a conflict with a church function.

BIBLE AND BREW will meet on Monday December 8th at 5:30pm at the Trestle Stop in Hamilton. This is a great time to get to know one another better over a good meal and the individual discussion of interesting questions. Please come and join us. The signup sheet is on the Round Table.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL will meet at the home of Jim and Sandy Horwath (835 Ely Street) Monday evening December 15th at 5:30pm. We will begin with a pot luck meal and then begin the meeting. Members newly elected to the church council are asked to join in on this meeting.



BOOK GROUP will meet on Monday December 22nd at 1pm in the Fellowship Hall. This month we will read and discuss *If You Believe* by Kristin Hannah. We always choose the next month's reading at each gathering so join us and share your favorite book.



GUEST PREACHER: We are privileged to have Pastor Kate Van Valkenburg, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission, join us for worship on Sunday December 7th. She will give the sermon message for that Sunday. Pastor Chris will be here to lead in the worship service.

GREENING OF THE CHURCH: will begin at 4pm on Saturday December 6th. If you are able and willing, we ask that you come prepared to help out. With many hands this can be an easy and fun event. It is always a joyous thing to see the sanctuary decorated in celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. We plan to finish by 5:30pm at which time we will break for a light meal. Please see the signup sheet on the Round Table. Young and old may enjoy our special guest. On Sunday, January 4th, we will remove the greens immediately after worship service.



GIVING TREE: It's up and populated with tags for you to pick what you want to shop for this year. It can be a food item, postage stamps, socks, gift cards, toys, etc. We are providing a Christmas meal and gifts to two families this year totaling 5 children and 3 parents. Nothing needs to be wrapped this year, but if you have large gift bags to donate to us to "wrap" the gifts, please leave them in the baskets provided for the donations. With each gift returned, please provide the tag to help us with our sorting. If you are purchasing a clothing item, a gift receipt would be appreciated in case the size or style is not correct. Thank you for your ongoing support and if you have any questions, please ask Sharon Aksamit.

YOUTH COOKIE EXCHANGE: Our young people will be holding another fund raiser on Sunday December 14th. Please support our youth by making your favorite Christmas cookies. Your donations will be greatly appreciated. Then also make up a plate of Christmas cookies for everyone to eat after the Annual Congregational Meeting.



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ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING will take place immediately after the worship service on Sunday December 14th. All current members are asked to please remain in your pews after the service.

COUNTERS, READERS, & WORSHIP ASSISTANTS are needed. We really enjoy having our laity participate in the service and the financial accountability of our church. But we really need more volunteers; especially counters. Please consider volunteering and let Ken Kingsbury in the office know.

PASTOR CHRIS WILL BE ON VACATION beginning Christmas Day through January 3rd. We are honored to have Pastor Jim Foster back with us to lead us in our worship service on Sunday December 28th. With Pastor Chris gone for that Sunday there will not be a confirmation class or Adult Study Group. Classes will resume later in January.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE is always a very special event and we will begin this year at 6:30pm with a Prelude and the worship service will follow at 7pm. If anyone is interested in participating in the Prelude (singing,

playing a musical instrument, reading, etc) please see Lori Querback no later than Sunday December 14th. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.





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