

A Christ-centered community where we connect, learn, and serve.

# Fourth Sunday in Advent - December 21, 2025



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# Welcome! We're happy you're with us for worship today.

**IF YOU ARE VISITING FOR THE FIRST TIME,** please take a moment to sign in at the podium at either sanctuary entrance. We pray your time with us strengthens your faith in the Lord. We are a member congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). You can find more information about our beliefs at LCMS.org/about/beliefs.

**IF YOU HAVE SMALL CHILDREN,** we understand that God made them wiggly and noisy at times, but we also believe they should be with us in worship. If you need a moment, we have a nursery available to you through the hallway to the right of the altar. Children's bags are also available in the Narthex for use during service.

HOLY COMMUNION is celebrated at Ascension Lutheran on each Sunday. We receive this Holy Sacrament in the glad confidence that our Lord Jesus, as His word says, gives not only bread and wine, but also His true Body and Blood for us to eat and drink for the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:26-28). Our Lord invites to His table those who, repenting of their sins, believe His word that His body and blood are truly present for the forgiveness of our sins. All baptized believers who hold our confession of faith and have examined themselves according to Scripture's guidance (1 Corinthians 11:27-29), are invited to receive His Sacrament. If you are not yet baptized or are visiting us for the first time, we invite you to come forth during communion and fold your arms over your heart for a blessing. Pastor would be happy to discuss receiving Holy Communion at Ascension with you.

**AFTER EACH SERVICE** from September to May, please join us for a brief time of **FELLOWSHIP** with coffee and treats downstairs in our Fellowship Hall briefly before we begin our **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION** hour for those ages 2 and above.

If you have any questions, seek out Pastor, an usher, or a member with a name tag; they will be happy to help you out.

#### **SERVING TODAY:**

**ELDER(S):** Bob Booth & Cooper Blake

**LAY READER:** N/A

**USHERS:** Ron Curcio & Cristen Fiffik **ACOLYTE:** Christian Fleishauer

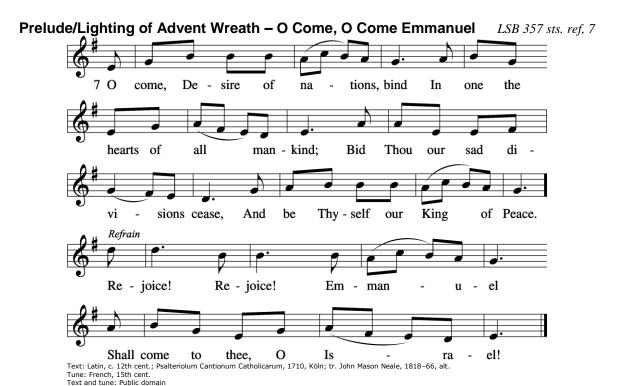
#### **SERVING DEC. 28TH**

ELDER(S): Cooper Blake & Bob Booth
LAY READER: Trish Young
USHERS: Lora Koontz & Edie Krom
ACOLYTE: Juliette Schroeder

# Fourth Sunday in Advent

# Pre-Service - O Come O Come Emmanuel Silent Night

#### Welcome



Our service today follows Divine Service Setting Two in the Lutheran Service Book starting on page 167.

# Confession and Absolution

Stand

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.

# **Hymn of Invocation – Emmanuel**

#### Chorus

Come come Emmanuel Son of God appear Heaven and earth rejoice Salvation is drawing near Salvation is drawing near

#### Verse 1

O come O come Emmanuel And ransom captive Israel That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear (Chorus)

#### Verse 2

O come O Wisdom from on high Who ordered all things mightily To us the path of knowledge show And teach us in her ways to go (Chorus)

#### Verse 3

O come O Rod of Jesse's stem From ev'ry foe deliver them That trust Your mighty pow'r to save And give them vict'ry o'er the grave (Chorus)

#### Verse 4

O come Desire of nations bind In one the hearts of humankind Make all our sad divisions cease And be for us the King of Peace (Chorus)

#### **Ending**

Rejoice Emmanuel
Shall come to thee O Israel
Rejoice Emmanuel
Shall come to thee O Israel

Exhortation 1 John 1:8–9

- P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 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.
- 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.

# **Greeting of Peace**

Following the Absolution, 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 (Matthew 5:22–24; Ephesians 4:1–3).

#### Service of the Word

Introit

Psalm 130:5–8; antiphon: Isaiah 64:1

- P Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence.
- I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
- P my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.
- © O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.
- P And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.
- Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
- as it was in the beginning,
  - is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- P Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence.

Kyrie Mark 10:47

**A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.



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



A 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.



A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.



A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



# Hymn of Praise - Gloria in Excelsis

Luke 2:14; John 1:29

A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.





# **Salutation and Collect of the Day**

**P** The Lord be with you.



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.



Sit

#### **Old Testament Reading**

Isaiah 7:10-17

<sup>10</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup>"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup>And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup>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.

Psalm 24

- The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.
- for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.
- P Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?
- He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.
- P He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

- P Lift up your heads, O gates!
  And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
  that the King of glory may come in.
- Who is this King of glory?
  The LORD, strong and mighty,
  the LORD, mighty in battle!
- P Lift up your heads, O gates!

  And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
- Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!

Epistle Romans 1:1–7

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and 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, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>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.
- Thanks be to God.

Stand

# Alleluia and Verse John 6:68 Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia

Holy Gospel Matthew 1:18–25

- P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.
- **G** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>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.
- Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

# **Children's Message**

Pastor Thompson

# Hymn of the Day - What Child is This

LSB 370

# **Sermon** Pastor Thompson

Stand

#### **Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,

begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man:

and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead.

whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and alorified.

who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life + of the world to come. Amen.

# Prayer of the Church

[1 Timothy 2:1-4]

After each prayer, the response will be:

- **P** Lord, in Your mercy,
- Hear our prayer.

Sit

# Offering

Meditation Song - Jesu Bambino

Choir



# Service of the Sacrament

#### **Preface**

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

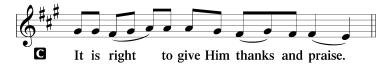
P The Lord be with you.



P Lift up your hearts.

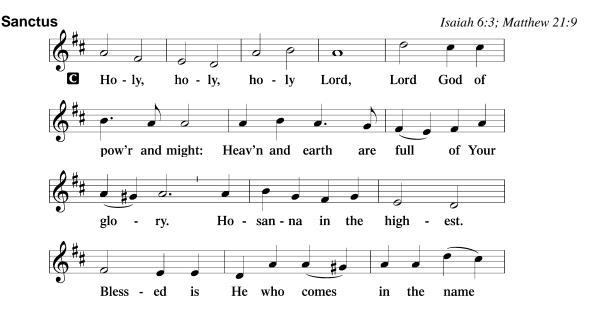


P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



## **Proper Preface**

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:





# **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

**The Words of Our Lord***Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20;1 Corinthians 11:23–25* 

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

#### **Proclamation of Christ**

1 Corinthians 11:26: Revelation 22:20

- P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Lord's Prayer Matthew 6:9-13

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.

Pax Domini John 20:19

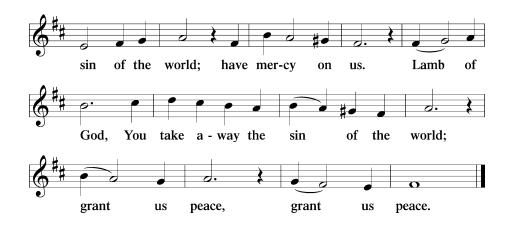
**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.



Agnus Dei

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



Sit

# **Holy Communion**

# Distribution Hymns - Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

LSB 621

# **Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery**

#### Verse 1

Come behold the wondrous myst'ry
In the dawning of the King
He the theme of heaven's praises
Robed in frail humanity
In our longing in our darkness
Now the light of life has come
Look to Christ who condescended
Took on flesh to ransom us

#### Verse 2

Come behold the wondrous myst'ry
He the perfect Son of Man
In His living in His suff'ring
Never trace nor stain of sin
See the true and better Adam
Come to save the hell-bound man
Christ the great and sure fulfillment
Of the law in Him we stand

#### Verse 3

Come behold the wondrous myst'ry
Christ the Lord upon the tree
In the stead of ruined sinners
Hangs the Lamb in victory
See the price of our redemption
See the Father's plan unfold
Bringing many sons to glory
Grace unmeasured love untold

#### Verse 4

Come behold the wondrous myst'ry Slain by death the God of life But no grave could e'er restrain Him Praise the Lord He is alive What a foretaste of deliv'rance How unwavering our hope Christ in power resurrected As we will be when He comes

# **Ending**

What a foretaste of deliv'rance

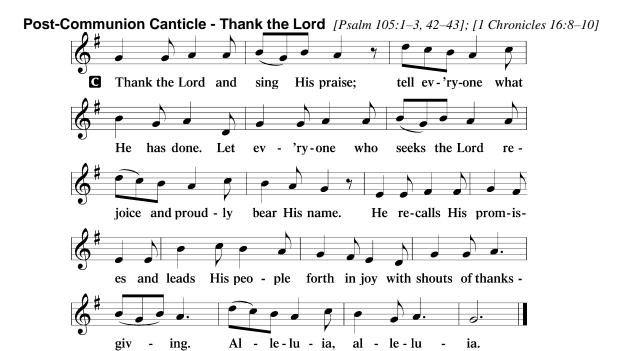
How unwavering our hope Christ in power resurrected As we will be when He comes

#### **Communion Dismissal**

- P Now may this true body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, strengthen and preserve you, in body and soul, unto life everlasting. Depart in His peace 

  → and with joy.
- C Amen.

Stand



#### **Post-Communion Collect**

**A** Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



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 

→ give you peace.



# **Closing Hymn - God With Us**

#### Verse 1

Oh You've come to bring peace to be Love
To be nearer to us
You've come to bring life to be Light
To shine brighter in us
Oh Emmanuel God with us

#### Chorus

Our Deliverer You are Savior In Your presence we find our strength Over ev'rything our Redemption God with us You are God with us

#### Verse 2

Oh You've come to be Hope to this world

Sit

For Your honor and name
And You've come to take sin to bear
shame
And to conquer the grave
Oh Emmanuel God with us
(Chorus)

# **Bridge**

You are here You are holy We are standing in Your glory (Lord) (REPEAT) (Chorus x2)

# **Ending**

Oh God with us You are God with us

#### **Announcements**

**Memory Verse For The Week:** Matthew 1:23 - "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

#### Dismissal

- P Go in peace and
- Serve the Lord!

#### Acknowledgments

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Looking Ahead - Next Week's Verses: Jer. 31:15-17; Psalm 54; Rev. 14:1-5; Matt. 2:13-18

# This week we pray for:

- NEW: The family and friends of Barb Vinson who died in the faith, that
  they may be comforted by the promises of her baptism and the
  resurrection to eternal life.
- The family and friends of Marge Vossler, grandmother to Chris Schroeder, who died in faith. Comfort then with the hope and promise of the resurrection in Jesus.
- Darryl Gunther for healing for his eyes.
- Barb, Jackie Dolph's sister, as she undergoes treatment for cancer, that the treatments are effective.
- We give thanks for the progress Jim Obringer Sr. has made recovering from his stroke. We pray you continue to grant him a return to even more mobility.
- Shirley Waselko, who has started another round of chemo treatments every six weeks. Prayers that she continues tolerate the treatments and that they continue to work.

\_\_\_\_\_

# **Church News & Announcements:**

<u>Happy Birthday to:</u>
Glenna Powers December 21<sup>st</sup>
Lindsay Fleishauer December 22<sup>nd</sup>

<u>Christian Education Hour -</u> Join us at 11am (after some tasty treats in the Fellowship Hall) for one of our Bible Classes and Sunday School! Options are available for those aged 2 and above. See the Learn bulletin board in the Narthex for more info and about future classes and offerings.

<u>Sunday School-</u> Sunday school meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the education room and is divided into three classes: PreK taught by Mrs. Fleishauer; K-2<sup>nd</sup> taught by Mrs. Lopresto and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> taught by Mrs. Koontz. There are signs located outside of each classroom.

Youth Group (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>)- Join Janine Nicolette in the Youth Room as she will present Children & Teen Study.

# **Adult Bible Class-**

- <u>Foundations of Faith-</u> Join us for a 12-week class on the Foundations of the Lutheran Confession of the Christian faith. This class is for visitors looking to become members of our congregation, transfers from other LCMS congregations, and anyone who wants to get a refresher on the basics of the Christian faith. We will meet in the Fireside Room each week during the Christian Education hour. Any questions, see Pastor Thompson.
- Adult Topical Study- Join Mike Fiffik in Fellowship Hall for a workbook study of the book of Titus.

<u>Prayer and Praise:</u> There will be no Prayer & Praise for the next two weeks due to the holidays. Prayer & Praise will resume on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

<u>A/V Booth Helpers Needed:</u> We are looking for volunteers to help in the A/V Booth. If interested, please reach out to me at <u>pastor@ascensionpgh.com</u>.

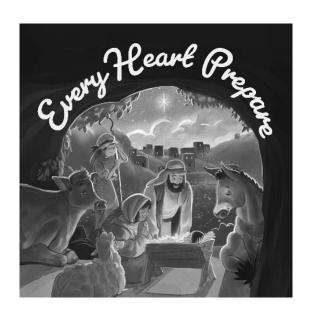
New Members needed for Praise Team — With the departure of some of our long-time Praise Team members we need some new people to help serve the worship of the congregation on Sundays. Please prayfully consider joining our Praise Team! If you have any questions, please contact Lisa or Emily Marcellus.

Office closed: The church office will be closed on Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup>.

ATTENTION MEMBERS: Looking for a way to serve? How about joining the Altar Guild? Only one month a year to set up the altar and a year's worth of good feelings from your service! Contact Nancy Hughey at 412-780-5641 to find out how you can help. Thank you.

Game Night & Taco Bar Fellowship Night: We're thrilled to invite you to our upcoming churchwide Game Night, featuring a delicious taco bar dinner! Join us on Saturday, January 10 from 5-7:30pm for a fun evening. If you plan to attend, please sign up in the Narthex to bring an ingredient for the meal and don't forget to bring your favorite game. See you there! Questions to Lora Koontz or Pastor.

This week at Ascension Lutheran Church:		
Sunday 12/21	Divine Service Christian Education Hour Bell Rehearsal	9:30 AM 11:00 AM 11:00 AM
Wednesday	Christmas Eve Special Christmas Music Christmas Eve Service	5:40 PM 6:00 PM
Thursday	Christmas Day Service Church Office Closed	10:00 AM
Sunday 12/28	Divine Service	9:30 AM



# Advent/Christmas Service Schedule

Mid-Week Advent Services - Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 p.m.

Children's Christmas Program – Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> – 9:30 a.m. Christmas Eve Service – Special Christmas Music starts at 5:40 p.m. Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Service - Thursday, December 25th - 10:00 a.m.