

Wilson Lutheran Church
401 310th Street
Wilson WI 54027
Address Service Requested

Mission Statement
Gathered. Renewed. Sent

We are:
Gathered by the Spirit.
Renewed by the Word.
Sent to Serve

December 2022, Newsletter for Wilson Lutheran Church



Wilson Lutheran Church
401 310th Street, Wilson, WI 54027
Phone: 715-772-3150
Office Email: wiluth@wwt.net
Web Site: wilsonlutheran.org
Pastor: Rev. Bob Dahm
Pastor Email: PastorBob@wwt.net

Cover Picture by Pastor Doug Brandt

"From Worry to Wonder"

A Christmas Message from Bishop Laurie

On June 19, 2020 our granddaughter was born. She was born three months into the pandemic. Her parents were worried. Her grandparents were worried. It is challenging enough to be pregnant and give birth in the best of times but to give birth in the middle of a worldwide pandemic is an even greater worry. We worried about the unknown dangers this virus might present to the mother, the unborn baby, and the new born baby. Our worries kept us up at night. Our worries were relieved when she was finally born, perfect in every way. Our worry gave way to wonder-filled joy. Worry transformed to wonder as we looked back to see how God was holding and carrying them through the unavoidable worry. Our worry transformed to gratitude and wonder watching for what God would be up to next in her tiny life.

It's December 2022. We prepare to celebrate the birth our Lord Jesus. This Advent we come with our fears and worries too. We are living in the midst of challenging times in our country. The very foundation of our nation seems less stable. We each come with our own personal set of worries and fears about our families, health, finances, work, safety, the future...What is it that keeps you up at night? What are you worried about today?

Folks across our church are experiencing doubts and uneasiness about the future of their church. Does it keep you up at night? What are the threats to your church's future? How can the conversation move from fear and worry to wonder? As the miracle of Christ's birth is celebrated this season, we can move from worry to wonder. We wonder what God is up to now in this day and age. Together we wonder what God's will is for the future of our church. Together we wonder; how can we use the abundance and blessings, (what we do have and opportunities in front of us), to make a difference in Jesus' name.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. Luke 2:8-10a

Shepherds living in the fields watched over their sheep to keep them safe. There were dangers that kept the shepherds up at night and plenty of things for the shepherd's to worry about in the cold night like wild animals, predators, thieves, & bad weather. There was so much to worry about, but one night an angel of the Lord, all shiny and bright appeared and transformed their fears and worldly worry to divine wonder.

To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" Luke 2:11-14

Friends, you are precious, beloved, baptized children of God. We know that the antidote to worry is to trust in God.

During this Advent, Christmas and Epiphany season I pray that your worries will be transformed to wonder at what God **is** doing and promises **to** do in your lives and in our churches. May the miracle of Christ's birth transform your worries to wonder! I am grateful for your partnership in ministry.

Peace be with you,

Rev. Laurie Sta. O'Brien

Anticipation, Waiting: The Answer

Anticipation is a word we hear a lot during Advent. The prophet Micah anticipates the coming of *“one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.”* The psalmist prays *“how long, O Lord? Will you be angry forever?”* Jesus calls us to it in Matthew’s gospel. Of the coming of God’s kingdom he tells us, *“it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth”*.

Anticipation can bring with it anxiety, fear, and despair. Perhaps we’re anxious about the outcome of a medical test, the success of a surgery, or the health of a loved one. It may be the fear of losing a job and despair over finding a new one, or just the uncertainty of the future for our children with all the turmoil in today’s world. When we experience those feelings we respond in prayer, as did the psalmist, with words like, *“how long, O’ Lord?”*

One thing about anticipation, the common denominator is waiting. It’s perhaps the hardest thing human beings have to do. Whether we wait stressed out, worried sick, or in joyful anticipation, we wait.

We don’t like to wait long either. The less we have to wait the happier we are. Yet, Advent is that time of waiting, and Christ admonishes us to be alert at all times; not to let our hearts be worn down by the worries – the anxiety, fear and despair – of the world. Rather, we are told to joyfully anticipate the coming of God’s kingdom.

God answered the prayer of God’s people, *“how long, O’ Lord?”* with the birth of his Son, the birth we celebrate and give thanks to God for on Christmas Day.

Because God answers our waiting, our Advent anticipation is not colored with anxiety, fear, or despair. That is so because we are the children of a God who loves us so much that God sent God’s Son to be with us always; not to judge us for our sins, but to save us from them; not to lead us to death, but to bring us to eternal life; to relieve us from our anxiety, fear, and despair with words of hope, peace, and joy.

Because God is the answer to our waiting, it is the second coming of God’s Son for which we also wait in joyful anticipation. We wait for the time when all our anxieties, all our fears, and all our despair will be banished from a world filled with war, violence, and evil of every kind; the time when the darkness of this world will be overcome by the light of Christ.

It is this for which we obediently and patiently wait, joyfully anticipating the coming again of our Lord and Savior. He came once and promises to come again. It won’t be quickly enough to suit us, but we’re just going to have to wait. He will come again, in God’s own time, to be the answer to our waiting – to our prayer – *“how long, O, Lord?”*

Three Parts to the Season

Susan Palo Cherwien

There are three parts
To this season:
the waiting
and the waiting
and the waiting.
Waiting for the Christ child to
come,
to be sure,
who we know already came.
Waiting for the burning coming
of the Christ in our hearts,
for the I-am-with-you-always.
Waiting for the great coming
of the reign of God
when each table is a banquet
and bread lines will be no more.

There are three
Comings to this season,
and three waitings,
and three yearnings.
And God the answer
To them all.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

December 2022 – Season of Advent and Christmas

“Advent carries two simultaneous visions of our expectations: we wait yet again the birth of the babe in the manger, and we also await Christ’s coming again to fulfill all things. We often prepare for Advent by ‘getting ready’ . . . Yet preparing for the coming of Christ is not a matter of having everything under control. Christ’s arrival disrupts – disrupts injustice, sin, and brokenness in a society in which we are deeply imbedded. A prayer for Christ to come to us is a prayer for a holy disruption of our lives that we cannot control and that we might struggle to accept.” *Sundays and Seasons, Year A 2023*

Sunday, December 4 – Advent 2

- ❖ Liturgy: Evangelical Lutheran Worship
- ❖ Color: Blue
- ❖ Holy Communion – Chancel Rail
- ❖ Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19, Romans 15:4-13
- ❖ Holy Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12: Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

Sunday, December 11 – Advent 3

- ❖ Liturgy: Evangelical Lutheran Worship
- ❖ Color: Blue
- ❖ No Communion
- ❖ Readings: Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10, James 5:7-10
- ❖ Holy Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11: John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

Sunday, December 18 – Advent 4

- ❖ Liturgy: Evangelical Lutheran Worship
- ❖ Color: Blue
- ❖ Holy Communion – Continuous Serving
- ❖ Readings: Isaiah 7:10-16, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Romans 1:1-7
- ❖ Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25: Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

- ❖ Liturgy: Evangelical Lutheran Worship
- ❖ Color: White
- ❖ Holy Communion – Continuous Serving
- ❖ Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 1:11-14
- ❖ Holy Gospel: Luke 2:1-20: God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

Sunday, December 25 – Christmas Day

- ❖ Liturgy: Evangelical Lutheran Worship
- ❖ Color: White
- ❖ No Communion
- ❖ Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 98, Hebrews 1:1-12
- ❖ Holy Gospel: John 1:1-14: The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be "full of grace and truth."

MISSION STATEMENT

GATHERED – RENEWED – SENT

Gathered by the Spirit. Renewed by the Word. Sent to Serve.

Pastor's Office Hours: Pastor Bob may be reached at the church office, 715-772-3150, Wednesday through Friday, and Saturday morning. In the event of an emergency or hospitalization, he can be reached at 715-235-4900 (home), 612-270-3838 (cell), or by email at PastorBob@wwt.net.

Wilson Council: The next regular meeting is scheduled for 12:30 p.m. Thursday, December 8. All members of the church are welcome to attend.

November 10 Council Meeting Highlights: *(Complete minutes are available in the church office.)*

Mary Brandt presented information on the status of the Allen organ that is in the balcony. After discussing all the different options it was decided not to repair the organ, to leave it where it is and to bring the old Yamaha Clavinova digital piano, that is in the fellowship hall, up to the balcony for special music at Christmas and Easter.

- The concrete jacking on the sidewalk is completed.
- Darlene will work on the Wilson Member Directory after the first of the New Year.
- Cemetery signs are all done.
- Fellowship time after Worship Services will began in January 2023.
- Thank you note from Feed My Starving Children was read.
- Louanne made a motion to set out the Green Jug from Thanksgiving till the end of December, all proceeds will go to ELCA Good Gifts Program, second by Barb Lamb.
- We will again do Virtual Christmas Poinsettias as well as purchasing a few real Poinsettias for around the alter.
- Christmas Eve services will be at 3:00 PM.
- We discussed possibly doing Lessons and Carols Service or singing familiar Christmas Carols for the Sunday Christmas Day Worship.
- A budget meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 16 at 10:30.

Tuesday Community Supper: Gethsemane Lutheran Church will be serving the Tuesday Community Supper from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6th, in the Fellowship Hall at Gethsemane. The menu is scalloped potatoes and ham, green beans, roll and Christmas cookies. Take-outs will be available, but they will need to be picked up inside. All are encouraged to remain to enjoy the company of friends and neighbors.

Gethsemane Lutheran Church is located at 1350 Florence Street, Baldwin, Wisconsin. This is a free meal open to anyone in the community. Area churches, businesses and organizations take turns preparing and serving nutritious meals.

Food Pantry Support: Thank you for your continuing support of our Food Pantry program serving the five area food pantries: Baldwin, Elmwood, Glenwood City, Spring Valley, and Woodville. People are continuing to seek help from food pantries so your contributions are especially welcomed. Your November donations aided the Spring Valley Food Shelf. December contributions will be directed to the Woodville food shelf.

We all know food items are in high demand, especially during this time of year, but there are other items not often thought of when we make donations. In addition to food items, consider the following:

- **Spices** - Think about it. People who rely on the food bank eat a lot of canned food, rice, oatmeal, white bread, etc. They also love spices, i.e. seasoned salt, cayenne pepper, chili powder, cumin, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, oregano, basil, and so on.
- **Feminine Products** - Can you imagine being worried about affording these? Pads, tampons, panty liners, etc.

- **Chocolate** - People don't need it, but think about being in their shoes and how nice it would be to be given a chocolate bar or brownie mix along with your essentials.
- **Toiletries** - Grocery stores are great about donating surplus or unsold food, but they have no reason to donate toilet paper, tooth paste, soap, deodorant, shampoo, etc., and food stamps often don't cover these items.
- **Canned Meats and Jerky** - This isn't true of all food banks, but some struggle to give users enough protein.
- **Crackers and Tortillas** - They don't spoil and everybody likes them.
- **Baby Toiletries** - Diapers, baby wipes, baby formula, baby shampoo, baby soap, baby food, bottles, etc.
- **Soup Packets** - Sometimes you look at rice, beans, instant potatoes, and cans of vegetables and think, "What do I make with this"? Hearty soup is a complete meal.
- **Socks** - From a former homeless person: "Socks mean the world to you. They keep you warm, make you feel like you have something new, and just comfort you!"
- **Canned Fruit Other Than Pineapple** - Food banks get a lot of pineapple donated. Their clients love it when other kinds of fruit are available.

PARISH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES – DECEMBER 2022

| Birthdays | | | | Anniversaries | |
|-----------|-----------------|---------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Dec. 2 | Trenton Faber | Dec. 21 | Dave Powers | Dec. 4 | Sandy & Terry Thorsen |
| Dec. 5 | Dalton Faber | Dec. 21 | Braden Gregg | | |
| Dec. 5 | Arlan Hague | Dec. 23 | Rex Brandt | | |
| Dec. 15 | Curt Gregg | Dec. 30 | Joni Finder | | |
| Dec. 19 | Barbara Knopps | Dec. 30 | Bradyn Lamb | | |
| Dec. 20 | Kent Butler | Dec. 31 | DeeAnn Rambo | | |
| Dec. 20 | Nicole Spielman | | | | |

ASSISTING WITH WORSHIP

| Month | Altar Care | Communion Assistant | Ushers | Sundays |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| December | HELP NEEDED | Kathy Borton | Barb Kronholm | 4 Sundays Plus Christmas Eve |
| January | Barb Lamb | Barb Knopps | Dave and Linda Powers | 5 Sundays |

ACOLYTE and READER SCHEDULE

| Month | Date | Acolyte | Reader |
|---------------|------|-----------------|----------------|
| December | | | |
| | 4 | Lucie | Linda Powers |
| | 11 | Owen | Ryan Peterson |
| | 18 | Ryan | Doug Faber |
| Christmas Eve | 24 | Brady and Lucie | Kathy Borton |
| Christmas Day | 25 | Owen | Barb Knopps |
| January | | | |
| | 1 | Ryan | Ginny Overland |
| | 8 | Brady | Tract Davis |
| | 15 | Lucie | Dean Rambo |
| | 22 | Owen | Ryan Peterson |
| | 29 | Ryan | Janet Brandt |

2023 WORSHIP HELP SIGN UP SHEETS

Sign Up Sheets for Altar Care, Communion Servers, and Ushers are located on the table in the narthex. If you are able to help for a month, or share a month with another, please add your name to one or more of the lists. Your help is an important part of our worship and so very much appreciated.

UPCOMING EVENTS

| DATE | Time | EVENT |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| December 11 | 9:00 a.m. | Wes Timm Baptism |
| December 18 | 9:00 a.m. | Sunday School Christmas Program |
| December 14 | 7:00 p.m. | Service of Healing and Hope |
| December 24 | 3:00 p.m. | Christmas Eve Worship |
| December 25 | 9:00 a.m. | Christmas Day Worship |

WELCA MEETINGS TO RESUME IN JANUARY

After a lengthy hiatus, Wilson's WELCA (Women of the ELCA) will resume regular monthly meetings beginning at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, January 12. Monthly meetings will be held the second Thursday of each month. Pastor Bob will lead a Bible study from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., followed by a business meeting. All women of the church are invited to attend.

WAITING FOR THE LIGHT - SERVICE OF HEALING AND HOPE

As we prepare for the coming of the Christ child, join us for *Waiting for the Light - A Service of Healing and Hope*, at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 14th.

The Church's ministry of healing emphasizes caring for the sick in the widest possible understanding of the term. The need for healing is not limited to those desiring help for a specific illness or injury. The Christian assembly at worship embraces the gift of healing for emotional, spiritual, relational, and physical needs; whatever troubles your body, mind, heart, and spirit.

The stress and pressures of the last year, combined with those of the holiday season, highlight our need for healing. Likewise, Advent's themes of waiting, repentance, reflection, and preparation may reveal hurts and brokenness that cry out for mending. With all creation we look for reconciliation, restoration, and wholeness as we wait in hope for the coming of the Christ child, the source of our hope and the light of the world.

Join us for a time of solemn meditation, reflection, prayer, candle light worship, corporate and individual confession and absolution, and Holy Communion as we come together as God's people to received God's healing word of hope.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Don't miss our Sunday School Christmas Program during our regular worship on Sunday, December 18, and join us for our Christmas Eve worship, at 3:00 p.m., Friday, December 24.

2022 WEST CAP HOLIDAY GIFT PROGRAM

As we look forward to gathering with our family and sharing another joyous holiday celebration, there are many who are dreading this season. We want to lighten the burden felt by so many families right here in our community by once again hosting our Holiday Gift Program. For those of you who don't already know, we (WEST CAP) provide gifts to children in the Boyceville, Glenwood City, and Spring Valley school districts.

The Holiday Gift Program is only possible because of the generous donations made by community members like you. We are asking our area businesses to help pout and share your good fortune this season.

If you would like to open your heart and make a contribution to our 2022 Holiday Gift Program, please do one of the following:

- Pick-up a tag for a child(ren) to adopt
- Mail in a monetary donation to PO Box 308, Glenwood City, WI 54013
- Call Kristen and ask how you can help at 715-280-3067
- Email your interest in helping to westcap@westcap.org.

Thank You,
Kristen Curvella
West CAP Administrative Manager

FIRST COMMUNION CELEBRATION



Maggie Gray celebrated First Communion with her family on October 30. Welcome to the Lord's Table Maggie.

VIRTURAL POINSETTIAS

We continue our newest Christmas tradition with Virtual Poinsettias filling the windows of our church building, a tradition that has been so welcomed by the five food shelves we support: Baldwin, Elmwood, Glenwood City, Spring Valley and Woodville. Last Christmas the 72 poinsettias you order provided approximately \$140 to each food shelf, allowing the food shelves to purchase perishable items not received from other sources. Your generosity has made a real difference, and meant to much our neighbors in need.

To participate, complete the order form below and return it to the church office with a check, made payable to Wilson Lutheran Church, in the amount of \$10.00 per plant. An order envelope will also be included in each Sunday's service folder. Please have your orders in to the church office by Monday, December 19.

Those in whose name the gift is given will have a Virtual Poinsettia, like the one below, placed in the windows. The names of the giver and those honored will be included on each "plant". They will also be listed in the Christmas Eve service folder and the January newsletter.

Let's brighten the snowy winter landscape on "Wilson Lutheran Hill" by filling our church windows with the beauty of red "virtual" poinsettias.

VIRTUAL POINSETTIA ORDER

_____ **Poinsettias @ \$10.00 each**

Given by:

In Honor of

In Memory of

_____ **(#) To the Glory of God**



Make checks payable to Wilson Lutheran Church. Please order by Monday, December 19

**Revised Common Lectionary
Daily Readings – Year A
December 2022**

| Date | Day | Psalm | First Reading | Second Reading | Gospel |
|------|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Thursday | Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 | Isaiah 4:2-6 | Acts 1:12-17,21-26 | |
| 2 | Friday | Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 | Isaiah 30:19-26 | Acts 13:16-25 | |
| 3 | Saturday | Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 | Isaiah 40:1-11 | | John 1:19-28 |
| 4 | Sunday | Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 | Isaiah 11:1-10 | Romans 15:4-13 | Matthew 3:1-12 |
| 5 | Monday | Psalm 21 | Isaiah 24:1-16a | 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 | |
| 6 | Tuesday | Psalm 21 | Isaiah 41:14-20 | Romans 15:41-21 | |
| 7 | Wednesday | Psalm 21 | Genesis 15:1-18 | | Matthew 12:33-37 |
| 8 | Thursday | Psalm 146:5-10 | Ruth 1:6-18 | 2 Peter 3:1-10 | |
| 9 | Friday | Psalm 146:5-10 | Ruth 4:13-17 | 2 Peter 3:11-18 | |
| 10 | Saturday | Psalm 146:5-10 | 1 Samuel 2:1-8 | | Luke 3:1-18 |
| 11 | Sunday | Psalm 146:5-10 | Isaiah 35:1-10 | James 5:7-10 | Matthew 11:2-11 |
| 12 | Monday | Psalm 42 | Isaiah 29:17-24 | Acts 5:12-16 | |
| 13 | Tuesday | Psalm 42 | Ezekiel 47:1-12 | Jude 17-25 | |
| 14 | Wednesday | Psalm 42 | Zechariah 8:1-17 | | Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34 |
| 15 | Thursday | Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 | 2 Samuel 7:1-17 | Galatians 3:23-29 | |
| 16 | Friday | Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 | 2 Samuel 7:18-22 | Galatians 4:1-7 | |
| 17 | Saturday | Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 | 2 Samuel 7:23-29 | | John 3:31-36 |
| 18 | Sunday | Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 | Isaiah 7:10-16 | Romans 1:1-7 | Matthew 1:18-25 |
| 19 | Monday | 1 Samuel 2:1-10 | Genesis 17:15-22 | Galatians 4:5:8-20 | |
| 20 | Tuesday | 1 Samuel 2:1-10 | Genesis 21:1-21 | Galatians 4:21-5:1 | |
| 21 | Wednesday | 1 Samuel 2:1-10 | Genesis 37:2-11 | | Matthew 1:1-17 |
| 22 | Thursday | None | Isaiah 33:17-22 | Revelation 22:6-7, 18-22 | Luke 1:46b-55 |
| 23 | Friday | None | 2 Samuel 7:18, 23-29 | Galatians 3:6-14 | Luke 1:46b-55 |
| 24 | Saturday <i>Christmas Eve</i> | Psalm 96 | Isaiah 9:2-7 | Titus 2:11-14 | Luke 2:1-20 |
| 25 | Sunday <i>Christmas Day</i> | Psalm 98 | Isaiah 52:7-10 | Hebrews 1:1-12 | John 1:1-14 |
| 26 | Monday | Psalm 148 | Wisdom 4:7-15 | Acts 7:59-8:8 | |
| 27 | Tuesday | Psalm 148 | Proverbs 8:22-31 | 1 John 5:1-12 | |
| 28 | Wednesday | Psalm 148 | Isaiah 49:13-23 | | Matthew 18:1-14 |
| 29 | Thursday | Psalm 20 | Jeremiah 31:15-22 | | Luke 19:41-44 |
| 30 | Friday | Psalm 20 | Isaiah 26:1-9 | 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 | |
| 31 | Saturday | Psalm 20 | 1 Kings 3:5-14 | | John 8:12-19 |

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Prayer Ventures
December 2022**

1 *World AIDS Day* Today we join our neighbors, siblings in Christ and companion churches around the world in remembering all who have been and continue to be affected by HIV and AIDS. Give thanks for the progress we have made in effective prevention, treatment and care and in discouraging discrimination against those who are HIV-positive; pray that we will not grow complacent but continue to make progress; and give thanks for the ongoing work of the ELCA's HIV and AIDS ministry.

2 Give thanks for our faith, which embodies hope and anticipation as well as confidence and joy in God's promises and grace, which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

3 *International Day of Persons with Disabilities* Pray for our neighbors here and around the world who live with disabilities, that they might be welcomed, respected, valued and fully included in every aspect of the church and society. Give thanks for the wide-ranging work of ELCA Disability Ministry, Lutheran Services in America–Disability Network and other ministry partners.

4 Pray that, like John the Baptist, we will share the good news of Jesus and the love of God with boldness and humility and will invite all people to believe and be baptized into a new life in Christ, free from the confines of sin, despair and death.

5 Give thanks for the ELCA's Good Gifts catalog, which lifts up the diverse needs of our neighbors and offers opportunities to respond with gifts that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives around the world — from honeybees and irrigation systems to trauma counseling and vocational training for entrepreneurs.

6 "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Romans 15:7). Pray that the Spirit will help us live in unity and celebrate the faith that binds us together as siblings in God's family; pray that we will invite and welcome people into our communities of faith so that they too might experience the gifts of joy, grace and mutual care as siblings in Christ.

7 Give thanks and pray for the work and enthusiasm of those applying for ELCA World Hunger Education and Networking Grants, which help congregations and synods build partnerships, provide training and education, plan service learning and host events with people passionate about ending hunger.

8 Pray for ELCA missionaries serving with our global companions in Africa: the Rev. Elisabeth Johnson and Anne and Willie Langdji (Cameroon); the Rev. Alex LaChapelle (Kenya); the Rev. Janelle Neubauer (Rwanda); and the Rev. Brian Palmer and Rev. Linda Johnson Seyenkulo (Liberia).

9 Pray that God will work through us to help goodness, honesty, justice, peace, generosity and compassion flourish in the world.

10 Give thanks for scientists, researchers and teachers of science and math; they help us acquire skills for daily life, explore and better understand creation, expand our appreciation of God's handiwork, and develop new technologies for the health and well-being of humanity and our environment.

11 People of faith are not immune to questions or doubts. Give thanks for God's patience with us and for the Spirit's work of strengthening our faith, revealing the mysteries and wonder of God's boundless love for humanity, and helping us understand Scripture and faith in the context of life today.

12 Pray for farmers and ranchers as they prepare their fields, animals and equipment for winter, and for those planting and harvesting during winter. Give thanks for their vocation of feeding the world, their care for the environment and their wisdom about seasons and cycles of life.

13 Pray that, with the use of Advent candles and wreaths, we will embrace faith traditions and practices that center us on God's grace and forgiveness, received through the gift of Jesus Christ.

14 "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant" (Luke 1:46-48). Join in the song of Mary and give praise and thanksgiving for God's love, mercy and attentiveness — blessings experienced from generation to generation.

15 Ask the Spirit to help us invite and welcome with enthusiasm our neighbors and surrounding community to join in our congregational activities, celebrations and worship during Advent and Christmas, and throughout the year.

16 *Las Posadas* This tradition, popular in Mexico and observed by some ELCA congregations, uses lighted paths and processions from house to house to follow Mary and Joseph's journey through Bethlehem in search of lodging. Pray that our recollection of Mary and Joseph's experience

will prompt us to welcome strangers, immigrants, refugees and neighbors in need.

17 Pray for those who suffer depression, loneliness and anxiety, especially during the holidays. Ask God to help us be attentive to people around us who are struggling, that they might find understanding, hope, support, inclusion and caring companions in our communities of faith.

18 *International Migrants Day* Pray that we will support and accompany migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in their difficult pursuit of safety, justice, self-sufficiency and family stability.

19 Remember in prayer ELCA Global Mission personnel and missionaries who are celebrating Advent and the birth of Christ in the communities and congregations of our global companions around the world.

20 Remember those who are alone during this time of community celebrations, meals and worship, including refugees, immigrants, and those who are imprisoned, confined to home or an institution, without family, or separated from family and community by work or deployment.

21 *Winter solstice* Reflect on the intricacies of the universe that govern the movement of our solar system, the changing seasons and how people experience seasons in different hemispheres of the world. Praise God for a life-sustaining creation that inspires awe, curiosity and humility!

22 “Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved” (Psalm 80:3). Give thanks for God’s mercy and favor, which grant us new life and hope — not because we deserve it or have lived good lives but because God is gracious and generous beyond human comprehension.

23 Remember those who serve and work in our communities during the holidays. May we assure them of our love, concern and gratitude, and create opportunities to include them in our celebrations and worship, especially when they are unable to be physically present.

24 *Christmas Eve* Offer prayers of thanksgiving and joy for the gift of Jesus, our Savior, life and hope, who brings light to the darkness, “for he came down from heaven above to help a world in need” (ELW 271).

25 *Christmas Day* All glory and praise to God — everything we have seen, heard and been taught about Jesus Christ, our hope and salvation, is true. Give thanks that God’s love and mercy, present in the birth of Christ, have shaken the world and awakened our hope.

26 *Kwanzaa* Today begins Kwanzaa, a weeklong celebration of African culture and traditions that emphasizes family, community and shared principles. Give thanks for the rich and enduring traditions, celebrations and practices of our African American siblings and the global African community.

27 *John, apostle and evangelist* Give thanks for John and the other disciples, who trusted in and responded to Jesus’ call, leaving behind their previous lives to experience God’s presence and love through Jesus Christ and to do God’s work in the world. Ask the Spirit to guide, inspire and equip us for sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor in a world of constant change and new challenges.

28 Hope, joy, love and faith are infectious. Pray that the hope and joy stirred by our faith in God’s love and presence in the world will spill over into our personal and professional relationships and our interaction with strangers.

29 Pray that we will be ever mindful of our baptism, which brings us identity and purpose “through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). Give thanks that we are equipped, encouraged and sustained by our siblings in Christ throughout our lifelong journey of faith.

30 The birth of Christ, manifesting God’s love for humanity, changed everything, forever. We celebrate the joy and significance of Christmas and pledge our lives in constant witness to God, who embraces and loves us with all our flaws, complexities and questions.

31 *New Year’s Eve* What do you hope for in the coming year? What are your aspirations? Give thanks for the assurance we receive through our baptism, that we might live in God’s mercy and grace through the ups and downs of life, and pray that we will be supported during our journey by a vast and caring community of siblings in Christ.

DECEMBER 2022

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 9:00 Worship with Holy Communion 10:00 Sunday School | 5 Pastor's Sabbath | 6 Pastor's Day Off | 7 6:00 Confirmation Class | 8 12:30 Council Meeting | 9 | 10 |
| 11 9:00 Worship Wes Timm Baptism 10:00 Sunday School | 12 Pastor's Sabbath | 13 Pastor's Day Off | 14 7:00 Service of Healing and Hope | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 9:00 Worship with Holy Communion Sunday School Christmas Program Newsletter Deadline | 19 Pastor's Sabbath | 20 Pastor's Day Off | 21 No Confirmation Class | 22 | 23 | 24 3:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship |
| 25 Christmas Day 9:00 Worship  | 26 Pastor's Sabbath | 27 Pastor's Day Off | 28 No Confirmation Class | 29 | 30 | 31 New Year's Eve  |