

# On Eagle's Wings



St. John's Monthly Newsletter – Dec. 2025

## Pastor's Paragraphs

The Gospel of John begins with these words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." And then a few verses later, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory." You'll hear those words read by candlelight in worship on Christmas Eve. Those words are ethereal, yet the truth they teach is very earthly.

God is a mystery to us. Our brains simply cannot comprehend God. God's nature is beyond us. Yet we completely depend upon God for everything: for life itself, for the nourishment that sustains our lives, and for eternal life after our fleshly bodies die. How are we to live in confidence in the midst of so much we can't understand?

Perhaps it is helpful if we remind ourselves of what makes our religion unique. Most ancient religions believed that the gods were unpredictable. They thought that rituals, sacrifices, and right actions would increase the chances that the gods would look favorably upon the people. Yet this was not guaranteed.

In contrast to them, the ancient Jews believed something different. They knew God was dependable and consistent. They believed that God wanted authentic humility and true devotion from people. But the nature of God remained a mystery. Current day Judaism is similar.

If we turn to Islam we find the Five Pillars. Those are fundamental priorities a person of faith is to live by. The idea is that by living them a person is acceptable to God and will receive eternal life after death.

I am respectful of the beliefs of other religions. I do not intend to downplay them. But I will use them to give a contrast that helps us understand the uniqueness of our faith. In all other religions the basic nature of God remains a mystery. Only in Christianity does God come to live a lifetime. Throughout that lifetime God (in the person of Jesus) teaches what God is like. Jesus enables people to see God face to face, and to interact with him like any normal human relationship. Then that all ends with God's ultimate (yet ironic) expression of power... being innocently executed. The resurrection and ascension follow, proving God's power over death. All of that teaches us about God in a way we can fully understand.

While Christmas is often about presents, decorations, parties, and warm feelings, at its root is the celebration of God revealing God's own self in a way that we can understand. God doesn't just tell us that God is loving. (Talk is cheap, after all!) God reveals it in flesh and blood so that there is no doubt.

What is God like? Look at Jesus. Christmas is the celebration that God has become flesh in order to fully reveal all that we need to know about God.

Blessings,  
Pastor Jon



## 10:30 Worship, December 21

The Sunday school children will be leading the 10:30 worship service on Sunday, December 21. We'll watch a play where two children decide to use artificial intelligence to create their own religion and god. It all seems good at first, but pretty soon it proves itself to be terrible; even world-destroying. The children ultimately discover the story of the birth of Jesus and the world-saving hope that it reveals.



## Christmas Eve Worship 7:00 Candlelight Holy Communion

By Zoom:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86360445683?pwd=EKgfV3NJIDo4B3FWPxnSjwwCe2LXZV.1>

# December Worship Assistants

	December 7	December 14	December 21	December 28
Greeters & Ushers	John and Linda Thompson	Sue Kaufmann	Helen Crown	Linda Flood
Acolyte	Alyssa Young	Charlotte Stroup	Elijah Young	Thomas Bullwinkle
Altar Care (10:30)	Nancy Pape		Nancy Pape	
Communion Assistants	Gary Boisseau		Rob Stroup	
Counters	Bruce and Connie Stevenson	Greg and Mary Zuege	Janice Lockwood & Burdie Gillern	Bill and Katy Stimmel
Coffee Hour				Parish Thanksgiving Dinner



The symbol for Matthew

(The gospel symbols: Matthew, a human with wings; Mark a lion with wings; Luke, an ox with wings; John, an eagle in flight - like the one on the header of the newsletter.)

## Gospel of Matthew

November 30<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of the new church year. We'll begin a year focused on the Gospel of Matthew, reading through the whole thing during worship.

November 30 (Advent 1) - Matthew 1:1-17

December 7 (Advent 2) - Matthew 1:18-25

December 14 (Advent 3)- Matthew 2:1-12

December 21 (Advent 4) - Children's Christmas Program

December 24 (Christmas Eve) – Luke 2:1-14

December 28 – Matthew 2:13-23



## Worship In-person and Zoom

10:30 is in-person worship in the sanctuary and also by Zoom. The Zoom link for 10:30 is emailed weekly. If you cannot connect to the 10:30 service with a computer you can still hear and participate in the service with any phone.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85898911838?pwd=Ho0hGtKqSjAnRpugabpkQTuY73SbyK.1>

Meeting ID: 858 9891 1838

Passcode: 020293

By phone:

1 929 436 2866 US (New York)



## 8:30 Breakfast Church during Advent

Our 8:30 worship service is having “breakfast church” during Advent (beginning with Advent 2). Tables will be set up in the fellowship hall. Worship will begin with a hymn and a prayer. Then worshippers will serve themselves whatever delicious breakfast foods have been prepared for that morning. As they eat the scriptures will be read and the service continues from there.

## Sanctuary Seating for Advent and Christmas

For the seasons of Advent and Christmas the seating in the sanctuary will be arranged in a U shape. The advent wreath will be placed in the center of the room where it will count down the Sundays to Christmas.

## Communion Cards

Please remember to fill out a communion record card if you have not done so this year. Cards are available on the usher's stand. All churches in the synod are being advised to be able to verify their voting roles. Voting members are those who in the last year: are confirmed, received communion, and given an offering recorded by the financial secretary.

## Weather Cancellations

If we need to cancel a worship service or event due to weather we will post it on the church's Facebook page and send it to the email list. Please contact Pastor Jon if you have any cancellation questions.

## Hat and Mitten Tree

The mitten tree will be in the gathering area until December 21st. The tree is to collect new hats, scarves and gloves/mittens. They will be given to needy families in our local area.



## Parish Thanksgiving Dinner

The annual Parish Thanksgiving Dinner will be held on Sunday, November 23rd after the 10:30 worship service. Please look for sign up sheets on the bulletin board in the gathering area to see what food items you can bring. Many of the dishes on the table this year will be from food grown in our own garden. Also be sure to bring an empty stomach ready to be filled!

## Finances (up through 10/31/25)

YTD Income \$156,706  
YTD Expenses \$157,065  
Difference \$(359.60)

## Family Promise Gifts

Family Promise is arranging for a number of families in the program to receive gifts for Christmas. A list of this needed/wanted is in the Gathering Area. If you are able to help please take a look and see what you can provide. Gifts are to be wrapped and at church by December 7<sup>th</sup>. Please see Mary Zuege for more information. Thank you to everyone who is helping with this.



## Gingerbread House Competition

Our 14<sup>th</sup> annual gingerbread house competition is scheduled for Sunday December 14<sup>th</sup> at noon. The walls (graham crackers) and glue (frosting) will be provided. Each family is asked to bring candy for decorating. The following Sunday the houses will be on display. The congregation can vote for their favorite.

If you've never built a gingerbread house, don't be afraid to try. Many of them collapse before judging anyway. Sign up in the Gathering Area.



-Thank you to all who helped to place paving stones in the prayer labyrinth. The rest of the stones will be arriving in early December.

-Thank you to John Cipollina for repairing and repainting the ceiling in the old entrance room.

-Thank you to everyone who provided a pie for Pie Sunday.

-Thank you to Tom Urbanic, Jim Spawton, Mike Ross, and Wayne Young for all coordinating to get the church's plow truck repaired.

## 2026 Stewardship Drive

Our 2026 stewardship drive wraps up with the Parish Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday November 23. Thank you to everyone who returned their materials already. If you are not able to return them by the 23<sup>rd</sup> please do so soon after. It helps the church council make plans for 2026. If you have any questions talk to Gary Boisseau or Wayne Young.

## Community Outreach Committee



Thanks so much to everyone that:

1. provided gift cards for Victor schools needy families.
2. brought in stuffing or made financial donations to help the Victor Farmington Food Cupboard Thanksgiving Baskets this year.



- Alex Clark, friend of the Shulers. He is a 38 year old father who was recently diagnosed with stomach and intestinal cancer.
- The family and friends of William Bullwinkle as they mourn his death.
- Paul Huber as he receives additional treatments to help with bone strength.
- Marilyn Bair who is weak and needs regular care.
- Patty Anderson, niece of Bruce Stevenson, who has congestive heart failure, declining kidney function, and diabetes.



### Living Lutheran Subscriptions

Living Lutheran is once gain a print magazine. Issues come out quarterly. You'll remember that our own Lint for Lent tradition was featured in the spring issue earlier this year.

A group subscription rate is available. It is \$17 annually if our church has 10 or more subscribers. If you're interested please talk to Pastor Jon.

## November Council Highlights

The church council held its regular monthly meeting on November 10. Major items on the agenda were:

- approving a lease for a new photocopier
- progress on the prayer labyrinth
- 2026 Stewardship Drive
- fellowship events for November and December
- cleaning out the upstairs storage room



### Organ Anniversary

We've only had our pipe organ in our sanctuary for five years, but the organ is actually 50 years old! It was originally built in 1975. It remains in very good condition. We're planning a special anniversary celebration for it in worship on December 14. We'll have a special coffee hour after the 10:30 service.



### November Bible Trivia Answers

1. In the parable of the Ten Pounds, what does the noblemen threaten to do to those who did not want him to be king over them? Answer: slaughter them in his presence (Luke 19:27)
2. In the parable of the Ten Pounds how many slaves receive money? Answer: ten (Luke 19:13)
3. When Jesus approached Jericho a blind beggar heard that Jesus of Nazareth was coming. What does he call Jesus as he shouts out for him? Answer: Son of Davd (Luke 18:37)
4. Did the twelve apostles understand Jesus when he told them he would be arrested and killed? Answer: No (Luke 18:34)

### December Bible Trivia Questions

All the answers may be found in the Bible readings chosen for worship in December.

1. In what type of building was Jesus when the Wise Men visit him?
2. To what nation does Jesus' family flee after the visit of the Wise Men?
3. What convinces Joseph to marry Mary despite her pregnancy?
4. What does Emmanuel mean?

# December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1  3-7 Violin Lessons  7:00 Boy Scouts	2  1:00 Women's Bible Study  3-7 Violin Lessons	3 8:30 Men's Breakfast Church decorating  3-7 Violin Lessons  7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous	4 10:00 Bible study at Lyons Church  10:00-2:30 Monarch Homeschool	5  2-7 Cello Lessons	6 <u>Nicholas, Bishop of Myra</u>
7 <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Holy Communion	8 12:00 Victor Ministerium  3-7 Violin Lessons 6:00 Church Council 7:00 Boy Scouts	9  1:00 Women's Bible Study  3-7 Violin Lessons	10 8:30 Men's Breakfast  3-7 Violin Lessons  7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous	11 10:00 Bible study at Lyons Church  10:00-2:30 Monarch Homeschool	12  2-7 Cello Lessons	13
14 <u>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Service of the Word Organ Anniversary 12:00 Gingerbread House Construction	15  3-7 Violin Lessons 7:00 Boy Scouts	16  1:00 Women's Bible Study  3-7 Violin Lessons 7:00 Property Committee	17 8:30 Men's Breakfast  3-7 Violin Lessons  7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous	18 10:00 Bible study at Lyons Church  10:00-2:30 Monarch Homeschool	19 Food Cupboard Food Delivery  2-7 Cello Lessons	20 Food Cupboard Christmas Food Distribution
21 <u>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Children's Christmas Program	22  3-7 Violin Lessons 7:00 Boy Scouts	23  1:00 Women's Bible Study  3-7 Violin Lessons	24 <u>Christmas Eve</u>  4:00 Candlelight Communion at Lyons 7:00 Candlelight Communion at Victor 7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous	25 <u>Christmas Day</u>  10:00-4:00 Vanderwall Family Dinner	26 <u>Stephen, Deacon and Martyr</u>	27 <u>John, Apostle and Evangelist</u>
28 <u>The Holy Innocents</u> 8:30 Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	29	30	31 <u>New Year's Eve</u>  7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous			



# St. John's Lutheran Church

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

*We are a community of faith  
committed to living and sharing the love of God.*

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*Address Service Requested*

### **December Newsletter**

12/14 Organ Anniversary

Gingerbread House Competition

12/21 Children's Christmas Program

12/24 Christmas Eve Worship