

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



A Real Christmas Results In Great Joy
Third Sunday in Advent

December 15, 2024



Welcome To Worship

If you are a visitor to our church, we extend you a warm welcome. We are happy you are here. Please fill out a Connect Card to let us know how we might continue to serve you.

It's encouraging to see parents bring their families to worship the Lord. If your child becomes restless, you can use the Family Room to calm them. Quiet bags and children's bulletins are also available to keep little ones busy. Restrooms are located in the hallways along either side of the worship space. For those with special needs, large print copies of the service folder and listening devices are available from the ushers. One of our ushers can help you find the restrooms or family room and answer any other questions.

Service Notes For This Service



Multiple studies have proven that the holiday season exacerbates mental health issues. For some, the pressure to have “a perfect Christmas” can be overwhelming. For others, their loneliness is amplified. Such people need a real Christmas, one that results in great joy. But joy is not the same thing as happiness. It is infinitely better. Happiness is an emotion. Joyfulness is a condition. Happiness comes from your circumstances. Joyfulness comes from Christ assuring you of his abiding love and your glorious future. Therefore, happiness—“holiday cheer”—is fleeting. Joyfulness is enduring.

The historic Christian Church gave Latin titles to each Sunday. They titled the Third Sunday in Advent “Gaudete,” which means “Rejoice!” As we reach the midway point of Advent, we ask Christ to empower us to do just that.

Today's service includes a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. For personal preparation, consider using the Questions for Examination on page 10 of this service folder or Christian Questions on page 295 of the blue hymnal.

Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Peter Plagenz; Accompanist Marilyn Foley; Offering Music, Garth & Kristi Perry; Church Choir; Joyful Ringers Handbell Choir

Acknowledgements

Setting One from Christian Worship. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version® (EHV®) © 2017 Wartburg Project. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Liturgical and musical settings of Scripture based on text from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

The Service: Setting One

After the gathering rite, the service continues with The Word on page 160 of the hymnal.

Welcome

Hymn

305 Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

James 4:6,10

Dear friends, the season of Advent is a time of preparation as we await Christ's second coming on the Last Day. We prepare our hearts to meet him as we humbly seek his forgiveness.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness; therefore, you are feared.

Psalms 130:3,4

Response

956 Holy Is Your Name (sts.1-2)



1 My _____ soul is filled with joy as I
2 I am low - ly as a child, but I



sing to God, my Sav - ior. You have looked up - on your
know from this day for - ward that my name will be re -



ser - vant, you have vis - it - ed your peo - ple.
mem - bered, and the world will call me bless - ed.

Refrain



And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -



a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the



peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name!

Text: anonymous, alt. Tune: Scottish. Text and tune: Public domain

Absolution

God's promise to Abraham and his descendants was fulfilled in the coming of his Son. Jesus Christ humbled himself by submitting to God's law. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death on a cross. God promises to lift up the humble and fill the hungry with good things because of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor,
so that we through his poverty might become rich.**

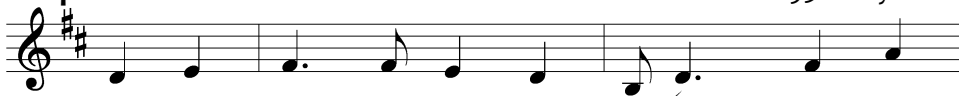
2 Corinthians 8:9

Even as we await Christ's second coming, he comes to us here and now in the words he gives his messengers to speak: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Response

956 Holy Is Your Name (sts.3-4)



3 I pro - claim your pow'r, O God! You work
4 To the hun - gry you give food, send the



won - ders for your ser - vants; you have scat - tered the proud -
rich a - way with noth - ing. In your mer - cy you are



heart - ed, you have lift - ed up the low - ly.
mind - ful of the peo - ple you have cho - sen.

Refrain



And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -



a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the



peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name!

Text: anonymous, alt. Tune: Scottish. Text and tune: Public domain

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We light three Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.

We remember Jesus, who came in answer to his people's prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

We hear his call to see the light.

We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.

While the candles are being lit, the congregation sings:

Response

956 Holy Is Your Name (sts.5)

5 In your love you now ful - fill all you
prom - ised to your peo - ple. I will praise you, God, my
Sav - ior, ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy.
Refrain
And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -
a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the
peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name!

Text: anonymous, alt. Tune: Scottish. Text and tune: Public domain

Be seated

10:30 - Baptisms

Gus Todd Blaskowski and Everett Daniel Jaworski

The Word

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts, and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14–17

We can rejoice, because the Lord has saved us and delights in us.

¹⁴Sing out, daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, you daughter of Jerusalem. ¹⁵The LORD has removed the judgment against you. He has turned back your enemy. Israel's king, the LORD, is in your midst! You no longer need to fear disaster. ¹⁶In that day Jerusalem will be told, "Do not be afraid, O Zion. Do not give up. ¹⁷The LORD your God is with you as a hero who will save you. He takes great delight in you. He will quiet you with his love." (EHV[®])

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Anthem

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Second Reading

Philippians 4:4–7

What is the reason for our enduring joy? The Lord is near to us.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (EHV[®])

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 11:10



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

I will send my messenger a- / head of you,
who will prepare your way be- / fore you.

Refrain

Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

Those who rejoice in the good news of salvation joyfully produce fruits of repentance.

⁷So John kept saying to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Therefore produce fruits in keeping with repentance! Do not even think of saying to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ because I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. ⁹Even now the ax is ready to strike the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is going to be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰The crowds began to ask him, “What should we do then?”

¹¹He answered them, “Whoever has two shirts should share with the person who has none, and whoever has food should do the same.”

¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized. They said, “Teacher, what should we do?”

¹³To them he said, “Collect no more than what you were authorized to.”

¹⁴Soldiers were also asking him, “And what should we do?”

He told them, “Do not extort money from anyone by force or false accusation. Be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might be the Christ. ¹⁶John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But someone mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸Then with many other words, he appealed to them and was preaching good news to the people. (EHV®)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Children's Message

Hymn of the Day

324 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

Sermon

Stand

Nicene Creed

**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 in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian 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.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Today, the prayer will be offered by individual petitions. Each petition will end this way:

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

The final petition will end this way:

...who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Special Prayers This Week

- † For Martin Jackson, who was placed on hospice care
- † For Edna Haferman, who is experiencing health issues
- † For our 1st grade teacher, Mrs. Michelle Korth, who received a call to teach at Trinity in Marshfield.

†
†
†

Connect Card and Offering

Please take a moment to fill out a Connect Card. After a few moments, the ushers will come forward to collect the offering. You may place your Connect Card and any offering you brought in the plate as it is passed. Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. If the gospel message has moved you to give and you would like an electronic option, you can scan this QR code with your mobile phone. It will connect you with our website's giving page.



Musical Offering

The Redeemer Will Come

Questions for Examination

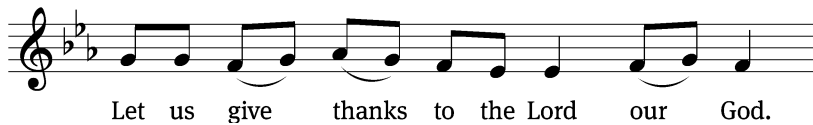
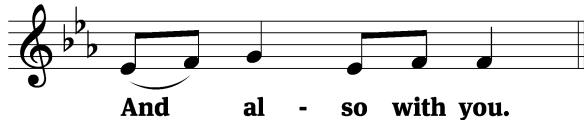
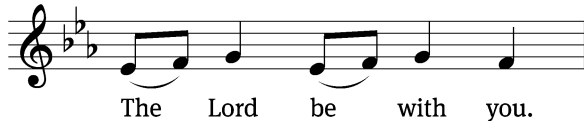
- † *Do I believe that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness?*
- † *Do I believe that Jesus died on the cross to win forgiveness for me?*
- † *Do I believe that Jesus offers his true body and blood with the bread and wine in this sacrament?*
- † *Do I believe this sacrament strengthens my faith and strengthens me to live a God-pleasing life?*
- † *Am I a member of a church that belongs to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) or Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)?*
- † *If you answered "no" to any of these questions, please hold off on communing with us today. Following worship, one of the pastors would be happy to explain why we ask you to do this.*

The Sacrament

Stand

Preface


CW 165



It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 167



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en-ly hosts:
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san - na, ho -
san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he,
bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

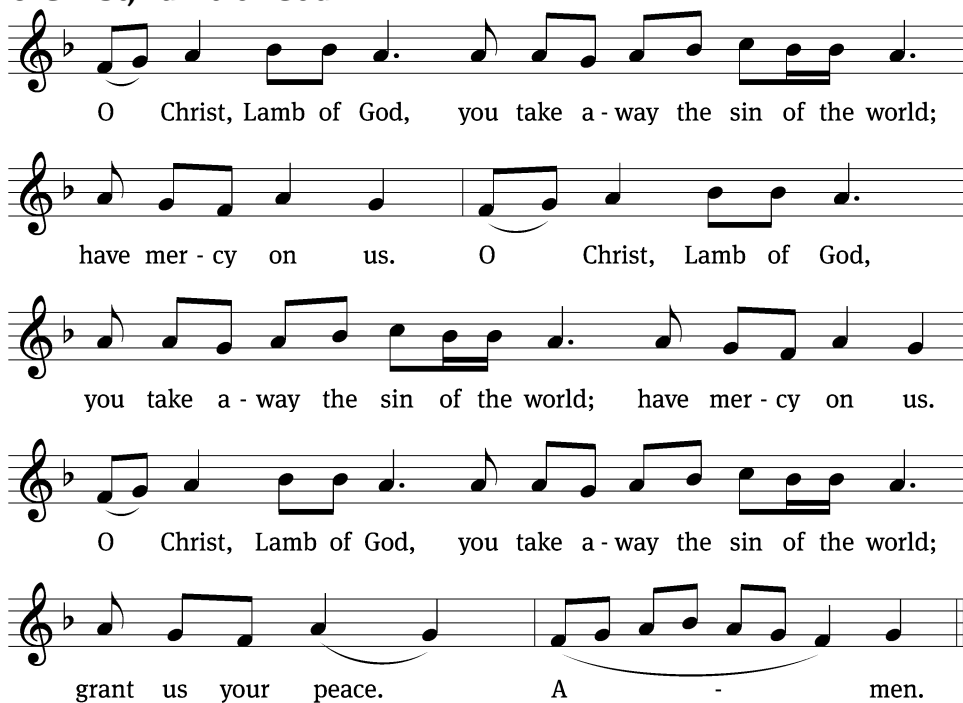
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

CW 169



O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - men.

Be seated

Distribution

Distribution Hymn

524 Rejoice, the Lord Is King

Stand

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

Be seated

Hymn

366 O Rejoice, All Christians Loudly (sts.1-3)



Take Home Questions

Zephaniah 3:14-17

1. Zephaniah is a short book (only 3 chapters). Take a few moments to read through the book in its entirety. How would you summarize its main messages?
2. In what ways does this greater context affect the message of these verses?

Philippians 4:4-7

1. Paul gives a number of commands in these verses alongside two statements of fact, one of which simply says. “The Lord is near” (v. 5). In what ways does this truth color each of the surrounding commands?
2. What barriers, habits, or thought patterns stand in the way of you “rejoic[ing] always” in your life?

Luke 3:7-18

1. “Joy” and “rejoice” are words that are not found in this reading. Yet, in what ways do we see these things in action in this account? (Hint: read Psalm 51:7,8.)
2. In what ways do you see Isaiah’s prophecy (Lk 3:4-6) fulfilled in John’s preaching in these verses?

News & Announcements



This Sunday's Bible Study Hour:

1 Peter – Chapter 3

Join us in the cafeteria from 9:15 to 10:15 AM

School Christmas Service

Dec. 21 | 4:00 pm

Our school children will lead a special Christmas worship service next Saturday, Dec. 21 at 4:00 pm. In addition to narration and recitations by the students, the congregation will join in singing many familiar Christmas carols. A cookie social will follow the service. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Dress Rehearsal – Be a part of the audience for the dress rehearsal of the School Christmas Service. The students need to perform before a real audience to help them get used to that situation and to overcome some of their nervousness. The dress rehearsal is on Friday, Dec. 20 at 10:00 am.

DID YOU
KNOW?



NLHS Christmas Concert Today

Dec. 15 | 3:00 pm

Some grade school and high school students from our congregation will be part of the Christmas Concert at Northland Lutheran High School (NLHS) this Sunday, Dec. 15 at 3:00 pm. Students from St. Paul's Lutheran School will join band students from other Lutheran grade schools to form a joint grade school band. NLHS's band and choirs will also perform. These groups include some St. Paul's members. Look for them during the concert, which is open to the public. NLHS is located at 2107 Tower Road in Kronenwetter.

The Last Advent Supper This Wednesday

Dec. 18 | 4:45-6:00 pm

The Board of Elders will serve the last fellowship meal of Advent. Their menu includes BBQ sandwiches and coleslaw. The meal is served from 4:45 to 6:00 pm, between the midweek services. Your donation of cookies or bars is appreciated.

Last Day to Order Physical Scrip Cards

Dec. 15

Today, Dec. 15, is the last day to order physical scrip cards and receive them before Christmas. If you miss the deadline, you can always order ecards online to give as gifts. Just print or scan and send to your friend or loved one. We also have some physical cards in stock, which you can purchase in the office or in the Welcome Center on Sunday.

In November, St. Paul's Scrip Program generated \$1,888.28 in direct tuition payments for families and contributions to our school's tuition assistance fund. Thank you for using scrip!

Is That a New Face?

Did you know that since our last church directory was published we have 81 new adult members? They brought with them 29 children. Plus since that 2019 church directory, our members have had another 28 children, some who are now in 4K! What a blessing from God, but who are all of these new people?

If you haven't introduced yourself already, you can learn their names when we publish our new church directory. We would like everyone to participate. Photo sessions will be held Feb. 6-8 & 10-12. There is no cost to you, and you will receive a free 5 x 7 or 8 x 10 photo. To book your photo session, visit <https://book.usession.com/s/MotFamuJJ->, use the link on our website, call the church office, or use this QR code.



Assist with Scheduling Photo Sessions

Volunteers are needed to help book photo sessions for our church directory. This might involve scheduling appointments before or after worship and/or calling members to help them book a timeslot over the phone. This help is needed over the next several weeks until early February, so if you can take even one shift it would be appreciated. To volunteer, see the signup sheet on the Ministry Table or contact Judy Stensberg in the office (715-421-3634).

RSVP for the Anniversary Meal

Last weekend, we placed RSVP cards in member mailslots. Please return your card indicating how many people will be attending the 125th Anniversary luncheon on Jan. 26. This is a catered meal, and the cost is \$18.50 per plate. Your response is needed by Jan. 12.

Do You Enjoy Theater, Public Speaking and/or the Arts?

If so, Northland Lutheran High School (NLHS) has a service opportunity for you! They are seeking two to three judges for our Forensics team. This commitment involves completing an online adjudicator training program (paid for by NLHS) and judging up to three Forensics meets in February, March and early April. If you are interested in serving as a judge, please contact Jennifer Heisinger by email (jheisinger@nlhs.org) or by phone (715-409-6022).



Christmas Eve Worship at 6:30 PM
Christmas Day Worship at 9:30 AM





Basketball Refs Needed

Our school is looking for referees for two home basketball games. Those games are Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 5:00 pm and Friday, Feb. 7 at 5:00 pm. You will be paid for your services. Contact Mr. Biesterfeld if you can help out.

Men's Devotional Basketball Starting

Dec. 16 | 5:30-8:00 pm

Stay active and have some fun with your brothers in Christ. Men's Devotional Basketball is starting up this Monday, Dec. 16 and will run through early March. Play basketball and hear a little bit of God's Word - 5:30-8:00 pm every Monday. This is a great opportunity to invite a friend!

Mark Your Calendar: Freshman Registration at NLHS

Jan. 21-22

Freshman registration at Northland Lutheran High School is Tuesday, Jan. 21 and Wednesday, Jan. 22. Schedule a time, either 4:00-5:30 or 6:00-7:30, at NLHS.org. If those days and times don't work for you, please contact Andrew Schoenfeld at (608) 622-8304 or aschoenfeld@nlhs.org to set up an appointment.

A Few More Actors Needed for Live Nativity

The Kronenwetter Mission is still seeking volunteers for a few roles in their Live Outdoor Live Nativity: 2 Wisemen, 1 Joseph, several shepherds, and 4 parking attendants. The actor's roles can be adults or children. There is only 1 rehearsal left, this Friday, Dec. 20, 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Call Brenda Kruncos, or just show up for rehearsal. The event will be held at Northland Lutheran High School on Saturday, Dec. 21, 4:00-9:00 pm. This event is organized by The Kronenwetter Mission Core Group to share the message of Jesus, our Savior, with people in the Wausau area.

Gifts from Thrivent

We recently received gift totaling \$104 from Thrivent Financial through their Thrivent Choice program. These gifts were made possibly by our members who took time to designate us as their charity to receive grants. If you own insurance or annuity products with Thrivent, please contact them to find whether you qualify to participate in Thrivent Choice. Even small gifts add up.

Upcoming Events

- Dec. 21 Live Nativity in Kronenwetter
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Service at 6:30 pm
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day Service at 9:30 am
- Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Service at 6:30 pm
- Jan. 26 125th Anniversary Celebration
- Feb. 6 Church Directory Photos Begin



Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship
	3:00 PM	Christmas Concert at Northland Lutheran High School
Monday	4:30 PM	Choir Practice in the Balcony
	5:30 pm	Men's Devotional Basketball in the gym
Tuesday	6:45 AM	Men's Bible Study at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
	9:45 AM	Women Walking in the Word in the Resource Center
	6:30 PM	Leadership Council in the Resource Center
Wednesday	8:30 AM	Principal to Parent Bible Study
	8:55 AM	School Chapel Service
	4:00 PM	Midweek Advent Service
	4:45 PM	Fellowship Meal
	6:30 PM	Catechism Class in the Bible Study Room
	6:30 PM	Midweek Advent Service
Thursday	7:00 AM	Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
	1:30 PM	Newsletter Assembly in the Volunteer Workroom
Friday	10:00 AM	Dress Rehearsal for School Christmas Service
Saturday	4:00 PM	School Christmas Service
Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship

Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 179

Next Sunday

Theme: A Real Christmas Will Lift Up the Lowly

Readings: Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-55





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