

DECEMBER 2024



# *The*Visitor

Christmas Eve  
Candlelight  
Services  
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*God comes  
to be with us.*

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60th Anniversary**

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**...and more!**



**A Community in the Model of Christ**

## From the Pastor...

**Emmanuel—“God-with-us”—is a centerpiece during Advent, but it also has been a motto of many kings, especially Lutherans.** Throughout history, it has been more weighted on the “us” side, regrettably, as it has insisted God’s blessing and support for the regime claiming it, over and against the enemies of the state. Between the Swedish Empire, the Prussian and then German Empires, and the Russian Empire, and most recently, the Third Reich, the motto has been a political weapon. But if we think the messaging of “God with us” is the only instance of weaponizing Scripture, we may be horrified to discover just how often and egregious the misuse can be, even in recent history.

**It is a fact that religions have politicized and weaponized god for millennia. Earliest nation-states and empires had rulers that were conveniently aligned with the gods, if not, they were incarnations of the deities themselves.** Pharaohs under Ra, the Emperors of China under the Jade Emperor, the rulers of Greece, Rome, even the kings of Israel—all power ascribed to elites and derived from the blessing and righteous authority of heaven.

We could also read “emmanuel” – God with us – as an all-too-human, perhaps righteous and just, but especially divinely-ordained ruler. And, even in our own age, the victor in elections can be easily aligned with the divine will. If whoever succeeds—even for a moment—as we are wont to think must have the special blessing of God, on their side with them. **We could begin to believe that little has changed.**

**But the words of the prophets we hear in Advent and Lent speak to a different reality.** We hear of the vision of Emmanuel—the vision of God’s endless and just rule. The rule of God comes not only with a new and righteous ruler, but in the coming of heaven

on earth, and God with it. God as sole and direct ruler changes how we understand God working in the world, even as we wait for that reign to come to fruition.

The words of the prophet, Zephaniah, speak to our own desires for God’s reign to come. Even in our time, the ancient hope of God’s people lives on, we take up their anticipation and their yearnings for God to fulfill the promise to relieve the suffering world and make it great again. Zephaniah proclaims God is with us—in our midst—God is not apart from this world. God promises to bring renewal with...love—God will “save the lame and gather the outcast, and will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.” But Zephaniah exhorts the people to keep living, to keep going. **All things are not yet fulfilled is not a sign of God’s absence, or a denial of God’s blessing: “do not fear...do not let your hands grow weak.”** God is working in the world, with us, and we only need remember God’s rule that does not show favor to the powerful, but the discarded and disempowered.

**God acts justly; the markers of success we hold—wealth, power, military might, privilege—those do not demonstrate the reign and rule of God.** The power to alleviate suffering, to restore what is lost, to guarantee safety and to bring an end to divisions and inequity, the sharing of the wealth and abundance of



creation for all creatures, and the privilege and glory that God alone is righteous—these are the signs that God is with us. **The coming rule of God leaves no room for doubt; all will see and know God is with us—a world that hopes for change.**

–Pastor Thomas

**Save the Date: Holden Village 2025**  
July 13-20 | Holden Village  
Registration starts January 1st

Craving a deeper connection with nature, quality time with fellow parishioners, or a much-needed break from the digital grind? Great news! Our Redeemer’s is heading to Holden Village again next summer.

**Save the date: Registration opens January 1st!**  
Stay tuned for updates and start planning for an unforgettable week.

# What's Happening in December

## IN THIS NEWSLETTER

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9 COMMUNITY

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## OUR REDEEMER'S STAFF

- Thomas Voelp, Pastor  
pastorthomas@ourredeemers.net  
(206) 783-7900 ext. 2
- Gian Foddai, Informal Worship & Music Director  
gianfranco@ourredeemers.net
- Karen Lee, Traditional Worship & Music Director  
karen@ourredeemers.net
- Debbie Lematta, Communications Coordinator  
communications@ourredeemers.net
- Lake Neill, Service Coordinator  
neilllake13@gmail.com
- Karie Stearns, Parish Administrator  
administrator@ourredeemers.net

Office Phone: (206) 783-7900

Office Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 10am-3pm

**OUR VISION:** In the model of Christ and for the life of the world, we are an inclusive, devoted, caring, and spiritual community that accepts challenges, takes risks, and grows.



### December 1, Sunday ADVENT 1

#### 9 AM - Informal Worship

9 AM - Sprouts In-Person | Downstairs  
10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes | Downstairs  
10 AM - Adult Forum | Fellowship Hall

#### 11 AM - Traditional Worship

December 2, Monday

5 PM - Church Ladies Beer Night | Old Stove Gardens

December 3, Tuesday

7 PM - LiVE Synod-wide Bible Study | Zoom

December 4, Wednesday

11 AM - Staff Meeting  
5 PM - B.A.T. Meeting  
7 PM - Choir Rehearsal

December 5, Thursday

7 PM - Informal Worship Band Rehearsal

December 7, Saturday

9 AM - Lucia Rehearsal | Sanctuary  
2 PM - Christmas Eve Hand Bells Rehearsal

### December 8, Sunday ADVENT 2

#### 9 AM - Informal Worship

9 AM - Sprouts In-Person | Downstairs  
10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes | Downstairs  
10 AM - Confirmation | Library  
10 AM - Adult Forum | Fellowship Hall

#### 11 AM - Traditional Worship

5 PM - LUCIAFEST | Our Redeemer's

December 10, Tuesday

7 PM - LiVE Synod-wide Bible Study | Zoom

December 11, Wednesday

7 PM - Choir Rehearsal

December 12, Thursday

7 PM - Informal Worship Band Rehearsal

December 14, Saturday

10 AM - Pageant Rehearsal  
2 - 4 PM - Christmas Eve Bells & Orchestra Rehearsal

### December 15, Sunday ADVENT 3

#### 9 AM - Informal Worship

9 AM - Sprouts In-Person | Downstairs  
10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes | Downstairs  
10 AM - Confirmation | Library  
10 AM - Adult Forum: "Embodied Church"

#### 11 AM - Our Redeemer's Christmas Pageant

2 PM - Ballard Sunday Dinner | Ballard First Lutheran

December 17, Tuesday

7 PM - BLUE CHRISTMAS

December 18, Wednesday

11 AM - Staff Meeting  
7 PM - Choir Rehearsal

December 19, Thursday

7 PM - BEER & CAROLS | Fellowship Hall

December 21, Saturday

2 - 4 PM - Christmas Eve Bells & Orchestra Rehearsal

### December 22, Sunday ADVENT 4

#### 9 AM - Informal Worship

9 AM - Sprouts In-Person | Downstairs  
10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes | Downstairs

#### 11 AM - Traditional Worship

### December 24, Tuesday CHRISTMAS EVE

11 AM - Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
10 PM - Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 25, Wednesday

CHRISTMAS, Office Closed

December 29, Sunday

10 AM - Combined Worship



# Living Generously

## Our Redeemer's Mission Budget

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

July – October (33.33% thru FY)

This is our Mission Budget report. To view the Financial Snapshot spreadsheet for Our Redeemer's thru October 2024, visit this [LINK \(https://rebrand.ly/vc5bwn9\)](https://rebrand.ly/vc5bwn9). If you have questions or concerns about Our Redeemer's financial status, contact Karie Stearns, [administrator@ourredeemers.net](mailto:administrator@ourredeemers.net).

| Income                     | 2024-2025 Approved Budget | Income Thru 10.31.24 | % of Budget Year to Date | Over (Under) Budget Year to Date |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Envelope & Loose Offerings | 515,075                   | 123,054              | 24%                      | (48,638)                         |
| Church Use                 | 84,375                    | 24,581               | 29.1%                    | (3,544)                          |
| Fundraising (Auction)*     | 26,000                    | 0                    | 0.0%                     | (8,667)                          |
| Interest                   | 500                       | 72                   | 14.3%                    | (95)                             |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>        | <b>625,950</b>            | <b>147,706</b>       | <b>23.6%</b>             | <b>(60,944)</b>                  |

| Expenses                 | 2024-2025 Approved Budget | Expenses Thru 10.31.24 | % of Budget  | Over (Under) Budget Year to Date |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Social Justice/Outreach  | 52,827                    | 12,305                 | 23.3%        | (5,304)                          |
| Pastoral Staff           | 122,033                   | 38,895                 | 31.9%        | (1,783)                          |
| Worship & Music          | 67,609                    | 20,032                 | 29.6%        | (2,505)                          |
| Fellowship & Caring      | 20,727                    | 2,879                  | 13.9%        | (4,030)                          |
| Faith Formation          | 25,904                    | 3,950                  | 15.3%        | (4,684)                          |
| Stewardship              | 8,418                     | 1,855                  | 22.0%        | (951)                            |
| Communications           | 49,985                    | 14,962                 | 29.9%        | (1,699)                          |
| Facilities               | 168,944                   | 82,312                 | 48.7%        | 25,997                           |
| Administration           | 166,169                   | 36,380                 | 21.9%        | (19,009)                         |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>    | <b>\$682,616</b>          | <b>213,571</b>         | <b>31.3%</b> | <b>(13,968)</b>                  |
| <b>NET INCOME (Loss)</b> | <b>(\$56,666)</b>         | <b>(65,865)</b>        |              | <b>(46,976)</b>                  |

Income comparison of actuals to budget (over/under budget year to date) is skewed for both auction and total income as the auction is set to occur later in the year. Expense comparison of actuals to budget (over/under budget year to date) for facilities is skewed as entirety of basement leak expenses for the year have been paid.

For questions/concerns, to set up giving, or to change your giving, please contact Administrator, Karie Stearns at [administrator@ourredeemers.net](mailto:administrator@ourredeemers.net). Thank you for your support!

## Celebrating December Birthdays!

- |                      |                    |                      |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Orin Beranek       | 6 Bob Kromer       | 16 Colin McBride     |
| 2 Kyle McBride       | 7 Ingrid Brissette | 16 Ilana Niedner     |
| 3 Harrison Hendricks | 7 Karen Wilson     | 19 Natasha Parker    |
| 4 Umar Abdullah      | 8 Juniper Niedner  | 20 Cathy Fransson    |
| 4 Erica Lee          | 9 Emily Malone     | 26 Julie Lowe        |
| 4 Randi Parker       | 13 Anne Lewis      | 26 Johnna Michaelsen |
| 4 Harold Sigurdson   | 14 Sean Brady      | 30 JoAnn Gibson*     |
| 5 Ed Kloth           | 14 Marian Forssen  |                      |
| 6 Fred Flickinger    | 16 Ada Brady       |                      |

\*\* Birthday blessings to JoAnn Gibson who is celebrating her 90 + birthday this month.



# Worship and Music

## Advent Sundays & Christmas Eve Help Needed

Celebrating Christmas Eve takes many hands and helpers at Our Redeemer's!

[SIGN UP LINK](#)



Celebrating Christmas Eve takes many hands and helpers at Our Redeemer's! We hope that you and your family might consider being a part of the ministry we offer together to our community. This is a day when we have the most visitors, and we want to be wonderful hosts, offering everyone an opportunity to experience the joy of Christ.

There are two services that day:

**4 PM - Family Christmas Eve Worship:** This kid-centered service is 45 minutes long, and is high energy and fun! Help is needed with:

- Greeting: Standing in the narthex with a smile and a welcome!
- Ushering: Handing out bulletins and candles, helping with the offering and communion.
- Communion Assistants: Setting up, serving, and cleaning up holy communion.
- Technology: Lighting and sound for the service.

**10 PM - Traditional Christmas Eve Worship:** This service involves choir and orchestra, handbells and candles, and the beautiful telling of the Christmas story. Help is needed with:

- Greeting: Standing in the narthex with a smile and a welcome!
- Ushering: Handing out bulletins and candles, helping with the offering and communion.

- Communion Assistants: Setting up, serving, and cleaning up holy communion.
- Musicians: Bells, orchestra, choir—we welcome your gifts! (see below)
- Technology: Lighting and sound for the service.

If you have any questions about helping out on one of our most important days of the year contact Pastor Thomas ([pastorthomas@ourredeemers.net](mailto:pastorthomas@ourredeemers.net)).

## Christmas Eve Hand Bells & Orchestra

Bring your instrument or learn to play hand bells to festive Christmas carols! **Practices are as follows:**

- Saturday, December 7 from 2:00–3:00 pm - hand bells only
- Saturday, December 14 and December 21  
2:00 pm hand bells; 3:00 pm orchestra instruments

**Instrumentalists will perform at Our Redeemer's at the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, December 24, 10:00 pm.** Questions? Contact Karen Lee, [karen@ourredeemers.net](mailto:karen@ourredeemers.net). Let Karen know you're participating, and she'll have a part ready for you!



### Poinsettias

Donate by December 15th

Donations are being collected for poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary this Christmas. Your donation may be given in memory of or to honor a loved one in your life and be acknowledged in our Christmas bulletins. Donate any amount you wish in a flower envelope available at church or give online: <https://bit.ly/3V6LLAw>.





# Worship and Music

## Blue Christmas

When the holidays are difficult.

Tuesday, 7 PM

December 17

While for some the holidays can be joyful, many of us struggle with grief and sadness. If this resonates with you, know you are invited to Blue Christmas. We gather just as we are to pray, ask God for consolation, and lay our burdens down at the foot of the cross.

You are welcome to participate as fully or as passively as you like. Peace to you.

Refreshments following the service provided by the Caring Committee Team. Childcare provided.

Don't hesitate to call the church office for more information. (206)783-7900



LUTHERAN • BALLARD  
2400 NW 85th Street, Seattle

## Come Sing With Us!

Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 15th, at 12:30 pm! Join us in the narthex as we bring holiday cheer to members of Our Redeemer's community who can't make it to church.

We'll grab our caroling books and head out to nearby nursing homes and assisted living facilities to share the spirit of the season with heartfelt and festive Christmas carols.

Don't forget to wear your favorite Christmas sweaters, scarves, hats—and, most importantly, your smile! Let's make this season merry and bright together! RSVP to Karen Lee: [karen@ourredeemers.net](mailto:karen@ourredeemers.net). All are invited to participate in this special experience!





# Faith Formation

## It's Christmas Pageant Time!

Sunday, December 15th, 11 AM (2nd Service)

Get ready for a heartwarming tradition! Our annual Christmas pageant will take center stage during the 11:00 AM worship service on Sunday, December 15th—and we want your kids to join the fun!

Children of all ages are welcome to participate. We'll gather for a single rehearsal on Saturday, December 16th, at 10:00 am to assign roles, distribute costumes, and bring this simple yet magical pageant to life.

It's a wonderful way to celebrate the season and create lasting memories.



Have questions? Let us know—we'd love to hear from you! Contact Lisa Thompson at [egglayer@comcast.com](mailto:egglayer@comcast.com).



## Free Classes & Events: The LiVE Project

LiVE (rhymes with “give”) is an acronym for *Living into Vocational Engagement*. **LIVE is a ministry of our synod that offers education opportunities for lay people, with the goal of forming Christian leaders able to make sense of God's world and our place in it.**

**CLASSES ARE FREE TO OUR REDEEMER'S CONGREGANTS.  
USE PROMO CODE "LIVEBUNDLE2024" WHEN REGISTERING.**

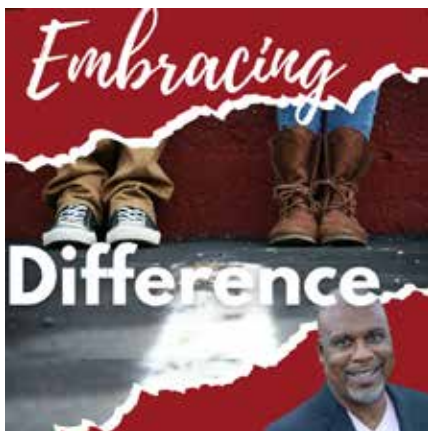
Learn more about the LiVE Project at <https://www.lutheransnw.org/ministries/the-live-project>.



## Abide: Going Deeper

**A FREE Synod-Wide Weekly Bible Study**  
Tuesdays at 7pm through December 10th via Zoom

LiVE retreats and courses are not meant to be stand alone offerings. We invited you to go deeper into the Biblical grounding of course/retreat themes in this weekly Bible Study on Zoom. Gather with folks from across our synod, as we abide curiously in God's Word together. This is a FREE offering, zoom link **HERE** (<https://rebrand.ly/a77grvi>).



## Save the Date: LiVE Embracing Difference Retreat

Sat, Feb 8th 9am-3pm

Another timely LiVE offering, this retreat will help us learn to practically connect to one another across differences. Fred Oduyoye is the founder of Reachable Reconciliation Ministry dedicated to building cultural bridges and reconciliation in families, churches, schools, corporations and communities.



# Faith Formation

## Embodied Church: Sacred Advent Expressions

Sunday, December 15, 10 AM | Fellowship Hall

The Advent season is filled with sacred moments that stir our hearts—Christmas lights piercing the winter darkness, choirs singing beloved carols, and sharing traditional meals with loved ones. But how do we fully understand and express these profound experiences that often go beyond words?

Join us on Sunday, December 15th, at 10:00 am for a special Embodied Church gathering to explore these resonant moments through reflection and practice.



## Save the Date: Smörgåsbord for the Soul

A local Saturday retreat January 11, 2025

As we step into the new year, it's the perfect time to reconnect with your inner self and set intentions for the future. Our Redeemer's Adult Faith Formation is offering a transformative Day Retreat that provides a sacred space to pause, reset, and tune into your soul. This retreat offers a unique opportunity to step back from the hustle and bustle of daily life and explore new spiritual practices for the year ahead. Stay tuned for more details!



## Luciafest Celebrates 60 Years!

Sunday, December 8, 5 PM | Our Redeemer's

Join us for a light-filled celebration of light, hope, and tradition at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in North Ballard, as we honor the 60th anniversary of Luciafest on Sunday, December 8, 5:00 pm.

Experience the magic of this cherished Swedish tradition featuring:

- Sankta Lucia and her attendants spreading light and charity.
- A stunning Lucia procession (tåg) with star boys and festive costumes.
- A delightful Cookie Smorgasbord of Scandinavian treats.
- Dancing around the Christmas tree with joyful music.

Let Lucia's message of faith and hope brighten your holiday season. Everyone is welcome to be part of this unforgettable evening!

## Join the Our Redeemer's Team: Faith Formation Coordinator

[LINK HERE \(https://rebrand.ly/mcfc4m\)](https://rebrand.ly/mcfc4m) for more information or find the description is under the tab "Staff" on our website.







# Community



## Mardi Gras is Coming!

Mark your calendars for February 8th as we celebrate Mardi Gras with festive southern food, music, and an auction to support Our Redeemer's ministries!

Want to join the fun and make an impact?

- Be part of the team helping to procure auction items.
- Have items to donate? We're looking for gift certificates, sports tickets, unique experiences, themed baskets, and more!

Next Auction Planning Meeting:

Date: Thursday, December 5th, 6:30 PM

*Together, let's make this event a success!*

For more information or to get involved, email Diana Myers at [dm3myers@gmail.com](mailto:dm3myers@gmail.com) or reach out to [auction.ourredeemers@gmail.com](mailto:auction.ourredeemers@gmail.com).

## Beer & Carols

Thursday, December 19, 7 PM

Be a part of a joyous evening of singing and Christmas merriment in the Fellowship Hall with Karen Lee and Gian Foddai! Bring a friend! Everyone is invited.



## Our Redeemer's Plays Host to Christmas Concerts

### December 1st Norwegian Ladies Chorus

The Norwegian Ladies Chorus of Seattle will perform their annual Christmas concert at Our Redeemer's on Sunday, December 1st at 3:00 pm. Everyone is invited! Suggested donation: \$15 at the door.



### December 15th Seattle Mannskor/ Everett Norwegian Male Chorus

Seattle Mannskor, with members of Everett Norwegian Male Chorus present an evening of holiday music, followed by a cozy reception with soup, coffee, and sweets. Tickets: <https://rebrand.ly/um05inl>.





# Social Justice



## When the Lights Went Out, the Love Stayed On!

On Sunday, November 17th, a power outage hit Ballard just as the Ballard Sunday Dinner crew was preparing meals for the 50+ guests who count on a warm meal at Ballard First Lutheran each week.

But even in the dark, this amazing team didn't miss a beat! With just their phone flashlights, they quickly pivoted to boxing up meals take-out style, ensuring everyone still got fed—even without power. The photo here are Amy Borgmeyer and Tom Bernard in action, showing that where there's a will, there's a way.

## Serve with Love at Ballard Sunday Dinner!


Every third Sunday of the month, Ballard Sunday Dinner (BSD) teams up with local churches at Ballard First Lutheran to provide a warm, hearty meal for our neighbors in need—especially important in these colder months. Our next dinner is December 17th.

We're looking for additional volunteers to join us! No experience? No problem. We'll guide you every step of the way until you feel confident. Let's make a difference together. Sign up here: <https://rb.gy/ea817>. Reach out to Amy Borgmeyer ([amy.borgmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:amy.borgmeyer@gmail.com)) if you have any questions. Thank you for all that you are able to do!

# The Giving Christmas Tree

Take an ornament from Our Redeemer's giving tree and return the gift listed there by the due date in order to help local families this Christmas!

Gifts will distributed through Mary's Place, Broadview-Thompson K-8, and our Road to Housing guests.



Link to Mary's Place (<https://bit.ly/4i6slvi>) if you choose to shop and deliver unwrapped gifts directly to their Donation Center located at 4521 6th Ave S. Seattle, by December 9.



# *Christmas at Our Redeemer's*

## **Our Redeemer's Giving Tree**

Spread holiday cheer! Pick a tag from the tree and make a difference by gifting joy to children and families in need within our community.

**Sunday, December 8, 5 PM**

## **Luciafest: 60th Anniversary Celebration**

Step into a world of Swedish tradition with our special Luciafest! Enjoy a delightful Cookie Smorgasbord, lively dancing around the tree, and an unforgettable tribute to 60 years of cherished memories.

**Sunday, December 15, 11 AM**

## **An Our Redeemer's Pageant for Christmas**

Our in-person pageant telling the joy of the Christmas story! Kids of all ages (big and little!) are invited to participate.

**Sunday, December 15, 12:30 PM**

## **Caroling to the Homebound**

Bring joy to others by joining Karen Lee and the choir to share carols with those unable to attend church. Meet at Our Redeemer's.

**Tuesday, December 17, 7 PM**

## **Blue Christmas**

**When the Holidays are Difficult...**

While for some the holidays can be joyful, many of us struggle with grief and sadness as the days grow shorter. If this resonates with you, know you are invited to Blue Christmas. We gather just as we are to pray, and ask God for consolation, and lay our burdens down at the foot of the cross.

**Thursday, December 19, 7 PM**

## **Beer & Carols**

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a fun time of singing. Bring your favorite festive beverage, and sing along with Music Directors Karen Lee and Gian Foddai! We'll have a holly jolly good time celebrating the impending birth of Jesus.

**Tuesday, December 24**

## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

Our Advent season culminates in rejoicing at the birth of Jesus the Christ, our Prince of Peace. We will celebrate both in person and online with great joy and love.

**4 PM Family Service**

**10 PM Traditional Service**



2400 NW 85th Street  
Seattle, WA 98117

www.ourredeemers.net  
(206)783-7900

**return service requested**

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 AM Informal Worship  
11 AM Traditional Worship

Stream Online on Sundays (11 AM)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/OurRedeemers](https://www.facebook.com/OurRedeemers)  
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/822691346>

**Church office hours:**  
Monday-Thursday  
10 AM - 3PM

*God comes to be with us.*  
"Do not fear... do not let your hands grow weak."

*Zephaniah 3:16*

## *Christmas Eve Candlelight Services*

**Tuesday, December 24**

**4 PM Family Candlelight Service**

**10 PM Traditional Candlelight Service**

### **4 pm ✨ Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

People of all ages are invited to this joyful Christmas worship service! We will be singing all the traditional carols, celebrate holy communion together, and end with the blessing of Silent Night sung together in candlelight. This is a 45-minute service, aimed at allowing our youngest ones to fully enjoy the Christmas Eve church experience.

### **10 pm ✨ Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

With choir, orchestra and brass, and hand bells, we welcome the Christ Child with joyful song! Holy communion, prayer, and the telling of the Christmas story are a gift to all at this worship service. The service includes our beautiful tradition of singing of Silent Night in candlelight. We welcome the whole community to share in this message of hope and joy of Emmanuel – God with Us.



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Like Us on Facebook!



View Our YouTube Channel