

# St. John Lutheran Church

*December 2024 Newsletter*

As a community of believers in Jesus Christ, inspired by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, the mission of St. John Lutheran Church is to:  
**WORSHIP, WITNESS, LEARN, SERVE and SUPPORT.**

## *Teri Talk – December 2024*

### *What Happened to the Baby Jesus?*

We often feel as if the true meaning of Christmas has been “stolen” by the consumerism and secular or worldly celebrations that seem to have taken the center stage or spotlight. There isn’t a line to see Jesus, like there is to see Santa Claus. Perhaps we need to recapture a childlike awe about the gift of our Savior’s birth.

In the late 1970’s a newspaper in Los Angeles California reported on a “larceny” that had occurred at a church. On a certain Christmas Day, a priest entered the sanctuary of his church, walked down the aisle through the nave, and came up onto the chancel where the evening before, Christmas Eve, the children of the parish had re-enacted the birth of the baby Jesus. They had used a very valuable and very old, imported nativity scene which included Mary, Joseph, wise men, shepherds, and of course, the baby Jesus nestled in the manger. To his shock, the priest found that the baby Jesus was missing! Someone had stolen the child out of the manger!

The priest frantically searched the sanctuary and building, and he could not find the missing baby Jesus. Because of its value and because its disappearance was somewhat of a mystery, the priest felt he had to report the loss to law enforcement. So, he put in a call and the officers came out and investigated. But they could find absolutely no clue whatsoever as to what had happened to the baby Jesus. He was simply missing from the manger.

The police went on about their business, filing their reports. The priest went on about his business. But later in the day, the priest called law enforcement again to inform them he had recovered the missing baby Jesus.

Later that day, as the priest prepared for Christmas Day services, up the sidewalk, in the front door, and down the aisle, came a little boy pulling a bright and shiny red wagon, in which lay the baby Jesus. The child explained that throughout the Christmas season, he had come to church, knelt before the baby Jesus in His manger and prayed that he might receive for Christmas a red wagon. So, in his childlike way, that morning he had simply come into the church before anyone else was there, picked up the baby Jesus and taken him for the ride he had promised him.

May you experience the promise and wonder of the Christmas season.

Have a blessed Christmas,

Pastor Teri

## ***The Advent Wreath***

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting in the midst of growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.

A candle is lit each week representing Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. The center candle is the Christ Candle, and it is lit on Christmas Eve as we celebrate the long-awaited birth of Jesus.

This Advent season, the Acolytes or Altar Guild Members will be lighting the Advent Wreath before the worship service begins. The Lector Reader for the service will read the Advent Wreath Litany as well as the scripture readings.

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Pastor Teri will be out of the office following shoulder replacement surgery, December 2 through 13, 2024. **John Dumler, PMA** will be covering pastoral care needs during this time and leading worship on December 7 & 8. John can be contacted at **785-483-1382**.

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## ***Church Directory Review/Update***

We have been working on updating an accurate membership roll including current contact information: address, phone number, email addresses. We continue to have returned mail due to incorrect addresses and cannot reach people by phone due to “no longer in service” phone numbers. We are trying to get a current membership directory completed for your use, but we need everyone’s help.

We need current contact information from all of you: mailing address, physical address (pastor can’t visit a post office box), preferred email address, phone number – do you have a land line or a cell phone and what is the primary number that should be called? Do you have multiple phone numbers and who do they belong to?

We also need family member information: names of family members – there have been a lot of changes since this information was last updated. Date of Birth, Marriage/Anniversary Date, if your child was baptized between the years of 2017 and August 2021 we are missing that information. We are also missing Confirmation Dates and First Communion Dates for the same time period.

If you do not want this information made public it will not be “published” in the Church Directory, but your Pastor still needs this information to be able to contact you, visit you, and send cards.

We really need everyone to complete in full a Data Update form found in this newsletter – NO phone calls will be accepted to update or confirm information. Completed forms may be dropped in the offering plate at any service, placed in the dropbox on the office door, or delivered to the church office.

# 2024 DECEMBER

# Pastor Teri's Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
01 First Sunday of Advent, 8:15 am & 10:30 am Communion	02 Pastor's Day Off-day of rest & renewal	03 Pastor having shoulder replacement Surgery	04 Pastor on leave	05 Pastor on leave	06 Pastor on leave. Trinity United Methodist Advent Prayer Vigil 6:00 am-10:00 pm	07 Trinity United Methodist Advent Prayer Vigil 6:00 am-5:00 pm. Advent Two Worship, 6:00 PM, John Dumler,
08 Advent 2 Worship Service 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM, John Dumler, PMA	09 Pastor's Day Off-day of rest & renewal	10 Pastor on leave. Exec Council Meeting 5:30 PM	11 Pastor on leave	12 Pastor on leave, Sign Pay roll	13 Pastor's Sermon Writing Day. Post OP Appt 2:00 PM, Pay Day	14 Advent Three Worship Service 6:00 PM, Communion
15 Advent Three Worship Service 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM, Children's Program 10:30 service, Communion	16 Pastor's Day Off - day of rest & renewal	17 Pastor will be having PT appts starting this week - times and dates TBA	18	19 Church Council Meeting 6:30 PM	20 Pastor's Sermon Writing Day. Pay Day	21 Blue Christmas/ Longest Night Service, 5:00 PM, Pastor Teri. Advent Four Worship Service 6:00 PM, John Dumler, PMA
22 Worship Service 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM, Bell Choir and Agape Choir 10:30 am service	23 Pastor's Day Off-day of rest & renewal	24 Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 PM, Communion, Choir, Bells and 7:00 PM, Communion	25 Christmas Day, Office Closed.	26	27 Pastor's Sermon Writing Day.	28 No 6:00 PM Worship Service, We Gather As One Sunday 29th
29 We Gather As One Worship Service, 1st Sunday of Christmas Hymn Sing Service 8:15 AM, No Comm. No 10:30 am service.	30 Pastor's Day Off-day of rest & renewal. Sign Payroll	31	01 New Year's Eve Day, Office Closed	02	03 Pastor's Sermon Writing Day. Last day to submit reports for 2024 Annual Report	04 2nd Sunday of Christmas Worship Service 8:15 AM & 10:30 AM, Communion

## ***St. John Children and Youth***

### **425 Youth Live Drive-Thru Nativity**

The 425 Youth will present a Live Drive-Thru Nativity on Saturday, December 7 at 211 S. Front Street starting at 7:30 pm (following the Lighted Christmas Parade). There is no admission fee; a free-will offering will be accepted. The 425 Youth are excited to share the greatest story ever told and believe it will bring the spirit of hope, peace and light to all who attend.

### **St. John Children's Program – Sunday, December 15 ~ 10:30 am**

A Milk and Cookie Reception will follow the 10:30 service. Susy Krug is coordinating the Milk and Cookie Reception – please contact her at 785-324-2445 if you would like to lend a hand.

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### ***Blessings and Celebrations***

***Tillie Rose Volkel***, daughter of Audrey and Darren Volkel  
Was baptized at the 6:00 pm service on Saturday, November 2.  
Blessings to Tillie and her family.



Congratulations to Luke and Samantha Louder on the arrival of their son **Emmett Dean Scott Louder**. Emmett is the grandson of Kathy and Michael Louder and the great-grandson of Ruth Keil.

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### ***St. John Seeks Philanthropic Fund Nominations***

Nominations will be accepted for local and non-local non-profit ministries through December 18. Two finalists will be selected by the Council at the December meeting and presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting in January. Funds will be distributed based on results of the congregational vote. The Council welcomes nominations from any St. John member. A Philanthropic Fund Nomination Form may be found in this newsletter.

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### ***Holiday Hours***

St. John Offices will close at noon Tuesday, December 24  
Regular office hours will resume Thursday, December 26.

St. John Offices will close at 1:30 pm Tuesday, December 31.  
Regular office hours will resume Thursday, January 2, 2025.



## ***Honor Loved Ones with Poinsettias and Candles***

You are invited to remember or honor loved ones during the Christmas season by donating a poinsettia plant or sponsoring a candle to be used to decorate the Sanctuary and Chapel. Poinsettias and candles may also be presented to the Glory of God.

Completed forms must be submitted to the office – no poinsettia or candle information will be accepted over the phone. Forms are available in this newsletter, and on the bulletin board in the main hall. There are TWO forms – one for poinsettias and one for candles. To be included in the Christmas Eve bulletins, forms (and payment, where appropriate) must be received no later than Friday, December 20.

Poinsettias may be picked up Friday, December 27 from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm. Poinsettias remaining after Friday will be used to decorate the Sanctuary for the Hymn Sing Service at 8:15 am Sunday, December 29. Poinsettias will be available to pick up starting Monday, December 30 from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm. Any poinsettias remaining after 1:30 pm Tuesday, December 30 will be disposed of.

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### ***Ideas for Year End Giving – Contribution Notes***

- Instead of purchasing to more stuff to add to all the stuff we already have, consider providing a gift that helps others or promotes the ministry of Christ. The end of year giving for St. John and other ministries and organizations often makes a major difference in the vitality and strength of a program or project. Giving to the Russell County Food Pantry, the Russell County Area Community Foundation, ELCA World Hunger, campus ministries, or any of the ministries at St. John Lutheran are just a few of the ways to proclaim the Gospel. You may give directly, or through the church.
- Please take time to write separate checks to the different funds you generously support through St. John. This helps to properly record and deposit your offerings.
- St. John Lutheran Church will print 2024 Contribution Statements in early January 2025. Statements will be ready to pick up Friday, January 17, 2025.

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### ***Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service***

While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss are magnified. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas time. A Longest Night/Blue Christmas service may provide a time and place of solace during the often frenetic days surrounding the celebration of Christmas. We come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays.

December 21 is the longest night and shortest day of the year, the winter solstice, and the official start of winter. On this darkest day of the year, we come with our honest yearnings seeking the return of light and hope. This service will be Saturday, December 21, 2024, at 5:00 PM in the Chapel led by Pastor Teri. It will include a healing liturgy and anointing with oil for anyone who would like to participate.

# ODDS AND ENDS

- **If you were receiving the monthly newsletter electronically by email and have NOT been receiving it, please contact the office for your email to be added back to the list of receivers and verify your email address.**
- Special thanks to the Council Property Committee who moved the bell tables and replaced them during the recent work in the Sanctuary. Your wonderful respect and care for the bell choir instruments is greatly appreciated.
- Bible Study with Pastor will be on hiatus through December. Bible Study with Pastor will resume in January – watch weekly bulletins for more information.
- The Executive Committee of the Church Council will meet Tuesday, December 10 at 5:30 pm. The Church Council will meet Thursday, December 19 at 6:30 pm.
- The Cemetery Committee of the Church Council will meet Wednesday, December 11 at 7:00 pm.
- St. John Women’s Bible Study will be held Thursday, December 12 at 10:00 am. Large print materials are available upon request.
- Due to the Congregational Annual Report in January 2025, the January newsletter will be very streamlined.
- St. John offices will be closed Wednesday, December 25 and Wednesday, January 1, 2025.
- A copy of the 2024 Annual Report is to be made available to the congregation two weeks before the Annual Meeting. To meet this deadline, reports must be electronically submitted to stjoh@ruraltel.net no later than January 3, 2025. Reports that do not meet this cut off will not be included in the Annual Report.
- The Altar Guild and Property Committee will meet at 9:00 am Saturday, January 11, 2025 to take down Christmas décor in the Sanctuary and Chapel.
- The 2025 Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 26, 2025 following the 10:30 am service. The alternate date in case of inclement weather is Sunday, February 2, 2025. The 2024 Annual Reports will be made available by Sunday, January 12, 2025.

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## OUR CHURCH RECORDS

### Worship Attendance

Date	Sat	Early	Late	Total
Nov 3.....	32.....	23.....	54.....	109
Nov 10.....	17.....	25.....	44.....	86
Nov 17.....	20.....	24.....	85.....	129
Nov 24.....	25.....	25.....	55.....	105

### Offering

Nov 3.....	\$4,467.00
Nov 10.....	2,085.00
Nov 17.....	3,548.00
Nov 24.....	3,249.00

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**The St. John Council is searching for additional volunteers to serve as Offering Counters. For more information, please contact the office.**

## ***We Gather As One for a Christmas Hymn Sing Sunday, December 29 ~ 8:15 am***

There will be NO 6:00 pm Saturday service on December 28 and  
NO 10:30 am service on Sunday, December 29.

### ***St. John Ringers Bell Choir and Agape Choir Schedules***

#### **Practices**

<b>Date</b>	<b>St. John Ringers</b>	<b>Agape Choir</b>
December 4 .....	6:30 pm .....	7:30 pm
December 11.....	6:30 pm .....	7:30 pm
December 18.....	6:30 pm .....	7:30 pm



#### **Performances**

<b>Agape Choir</b> .....	10:30 am, December 22.....	Meet in Sanctuary at 10:00 am
<b>St. John Ringers</b> .....	10:30 am, December 22.....	Meet in Sanctuary at 10:00 am

The **St. John Ringers Bell Choir** and **Agape Choir** will also perform at the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service.

### ***December PMA Notes***

Wow! It is Advent! Christmas is Coming! These are some of the words I hear every Advent season. I came home to ponder and write the words for my newsletter article today. I had plenty of time at church to do it and I was remaining until I noticed my sound was not working on the computer- It was a simple fix- per Cory our IT person. I think it was "Gods" hand. I came home and I sat and pondered this season of advent that is coming. I thought about the world today and how it is so different now. But I asked myself is it really?

In the time before Jesus and the time just before his birth the world was amid war, hunger, disease, Slavery, and the times were dark and the future was looking bleak.

In some ways we have some of the same things occurring today as well. Maybe not the magnitude but for me there is an uneasiness today.

Where is the light? What is it we should be looking to? Today we could go off on tangents, get angry, sad and we have the feeling of being lost in a world of chaos. Not different than where the Hebrews were at that time. After all Rome was in control- Hebrews were oppressed, also the rules came about for people to go back to where they were born. Not the best time for "Good News" in the form of a baby being born! I was looking at that and then thinking of this "Advent" season. Just like the Hebrews- we need "Good" news!

So, today with me I would like to look at "Advent" period! Advent- the meaning is simply a time of preparation of something of importance coming! In our church we see the Tree and decorations go up the Advent wreath and thus starts a time of anticipation of what is coming! In the end it will be Christmas! I am not talking about the Santa Claus Christmas everyone is anticipating! Although that is fun- We need to prepare for the Greatest gift our God will give us!

Pretty soon we will be singing Christmas Carols and the rest of the celebration will take over! There will be the excitement and the Joy of what we see in this simple birth! With it brings Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace! We are on a journey today during the advent season to prepare our Hearts for the Love God will send! With that gift of a "Savior" that is to come and save us for all eternity! So, as we "Prepare" for the birth of Christ- Let us remember what this season is! For me it is to remember that God will give us a savior that will show us a path that will lead us to our Next journey! Our Journey to God! Our Father! The King of Creation! He is getting ready to send us Jesus Christ- He will show us a road that we can take to Salvation and Life after Death! This advent I will understand as we light each candle the importance of each that will lead us to a new life in Christ- So remember- Light the first candle the candle of Hope, the second candle of Hope, the third candle of Joy, the fourth candle of Love. This advent let us remember that God has given us all of those things in the baby that will save the world! Blessings – John Dumler, PMA

## ***Advent and Christmas Schedule (subject to change)***

### **Saturday, November 30**

- Week One Advent Worship – 6:00 pm

### **Sunday, December 1**

- Week One Advent Worship with Communion – 8:15 am
- Sunday School – 9:15 am
- Week One Advent Worship with Communion – 10:30 am

### **Tuesday, December 3**

- Pastor's Surgery

### **Saturday, December 7**

- Week Two Advent Worship – 6:00 pm
- 425 Youth Live Drive-Thru Nativity at 211 S. Front Street starting at 7:30 pm

### **Sunday, December 8**

- Week Two Advent Worship – 8:15 am
- Sunday School – 9:15 am
- Week Two Advent Worship; Agape Choir – 10:30 am

### **Thursday, December 12**

- St. John Women's Bible Study – 10:00 am

### **Saturday, December 14**

- Week Three Advent Worship with Communion – 6:00 pm

### **Sunday, December 15**

- Week Three Advent Worship with Communion – 8:15 am
- Sunday School – 9:15 am
- Week Three Advent Worship with Communion; Children's Christmas program, St. John children and youth lead service – 10:30 am
- Milk & Cookie Reception – following 10:30 service

### **Friday, December 20**

- Deadline to submit poinsettia donation forms and candle sponsorship forms and payment

### **Saturday, December 21**

- Blue Christmas/Longest Night Worship Service – 5:00 pm (led by Pastor Teri)
- Week Four Advent Worship – 6:00 pm (led by John Dumler, PMA)

### **Sunday, December 22**

- Week Four Advent Worship – 8:15 am
- NO Sunday School
- Week Four Advent Worship – 10:30 am

### **Tuesday, December 24**

- Christmas Eve Worship with Communion; St. John Ringers Bell Choir, Agape Choir – 4:00 pm
- Christmas Eve Worship with Communion – 7:00 pm

### **Wednesday, December 25**

- NO Christmas Day service
- Offices closed

### **Saturday, December 28**

- NO 6:00 pm service

### **Sunday, December 29**

- We Gather As One to celebrate the First Sunday of Christmas with a Christmas Hymn Sing Worship – 8:15 am
- NO Sunday School
- NO 10:30 service

### **Wednesday, January 1, 2025**

- Offices closed



## December 2024 Worship Assistants

6:00 Sat	Greeter/Usher	Reader	Musician
Dec 7 .....	Brad & Cheryl Prester .....	Jeremy Ulrich .....	Pat David
Dec 14 .....	Bob & Elaine Voos .....	Elaine Voos .....	Pat David
Dec 21 .....	Brenda Yoder .....	Susy Krug .....	Curtis Sander
Dec 28 .....	NO SERVICE		
Jan 4, 2025...	Allen & Betty Funk .....	Galen Niedenthal.....	



8:15 Sun	Greeter/Usher	Lector	Musician
Dec 1 .....	Connie Schinkus .....	Connie Schinkus .....	Juanita Flegler
Dec 8 .....	Kurt & Lois DeWald.....	Lois DeWald .....	
Dec 15 .....	Katrin Kolder .....	Katrin Kolder.....	
Dec 22 .....	Gordon & Cheryl Kraich .....	Cheryl Kraich.....	
Dec 29 .....	Dick & Georganna McCrary .....	Georganna McCrary .....	
Jan 5, 2025...	Connie Schinkus .....	Connie Schinkus .....	



10:30 Sun	Greeter	Usher	Lector
Dec 1 .....	Gerald & Mary Mai (N); Eck Family (S).....	Gerald & Mary Mai .....	_____
Dec 8 .....	Brad & Sherri Stoppel (N); Carol Fritz (S).....	Brad & Sherri Stoppel.....	Carol Fritz
Dec 15 .....	YOUTH .....	YOUTH.....	YOUTH
Dec 22 .....	Mike & Diane Waymaster (N); Don F. Krug (S).....	Mike & Diane Waymaster.....	Diane Waymaster
Dec 29 .....	NO SERVICE		
Jan 5, 2025...	Susy Krug (N); Deloris Janne (S).....	Susy Krug.....	Cindy Ross

10:30 Sun	Acolytes	Musician
Dec 1 .....	Marshall & Morgan Olson .....	Juanita Flegler
Dec 8 .....	Layken Eck, Wesley Johnson .....	
Dec 15 .....	Bryson Feil, Alex Krug .....	
Dec 22 .....	Kollins & Rogan Dumler .....	
Dec 29 .....	NO SERVICE	
Jan 5, 2025.....	Hadlee Brown, Evanlee Rainey .....	



4:00 pm December 24

Greeters: \_\_\_\_\_ (N); \_\_\_\_\_ (S)  
 Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lector: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Acolytes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Musician: \_\_\_\_\_

7:00 pm December 24

Greeters: \_\_\_\_\_ (N); \_\_\_\_\_ (S)  
 Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lector: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Acolytes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Musician: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bulletin Delivery**    Dec 6: Frank Peirano  
                                  Dec 13: Bob Albrecht  
                                  Dec 20: John Boxberger  
                                  Dec 27: Eck Family

**Altar Guild**  
 Deb Karst – Chair  
 Lois DeWald, Connie Dumler, Danielle Ewers,  
 Gina Langhofer, Tammy Nuss, Alison Ryan





**December 2024  
Newsletter**



**ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH  
425 N MAIN ST  
RUSSELL KS 67665**

**St. John Lutheran Church  
Pastor Teri Sutherlin**

785-483-5358  
stjohn@ruraltel.net  
stjohnrussell.com

**Worship Services**

6:00 pm Saturday  
8:15 and 10:30 am Sunday  
Sunday School 9:15 (meet in Chapel)

**Office Hours**

Monday through Friday  
8:30 am to 1:30 pm



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

**St. John Lutheran Church**

***Clergy and Staff***

Pastor Teri Sutherlin (pastor@ruraltel.net)  
John Dumler, PMA (pma@ruraltel.net)  
Shayla Peck, Bookkeeper  
Sheryl Krug, Administrative Assistant  
Debora Kreutzer, Custodian  
John Kreutzer, Custodian

***Church Council***

President: Lee Keffer  
Vice President: Gaylon Walter  
Secretary: Carol Fritz  
Treasurer: Kylie Stoppel  
Members: Afton Brown, Judy Holmes, D.J. Klema,  
Melinda Olson, Heather Pohlman, Kelvie  
Reeves, Pastor Teri Sutherlin