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COMMITMENT WEEKEND DECEMBER 6/7

Return your 2026 Commitment Packet during worship or by mail.

Thank you for your continued support of OLLC!

PASTOR'S COLUMN

What about Good Works?

If you have been worshiping among Lutherans long enough, you may have noticed our order of service possesses three main sections: gathering, word, meal, and sending. There is more to the dismissal after receiving the benediction and singing joyful music than carrying the blessings of the gospel and the eucharist with us until we meet again next time. The Christian disciple is sent in mission into the world, that is, the communities to which we belong, to testify to the good news through action and to use words if necessary – the part related to doing more than speaking, allegedly belonging to Francis of Assisi. I digress, however. The important thing is that there's more to what we do between Sundays or Saturdays than the Christian of Lutheran perspective may give credit for.

If you are following from last month, Ephesians 2:8-9 flows into verse 10 in this way: ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.” Verses 8-9 send us to the 10th chapter of Romans, verses 9-10: ⁹because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For one believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation.” That you have it, faith alone in what God accomplishes through Christ redeems us and makes us righteous by grace.

Nonetheless, God's hope for us remains. Ephesians 2:10 takes us to 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verses 17 to 21: ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” This means, beloved of God, that our loving Parent, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, still hopes that our new self, recreated in Christ in the waters of baptism, will rise and become a witness to better things. However, the old self, full of the sin of Adam, always dies a hard death. That is why we gather again in worship, have our faith nourished and our sins forgiven by Word and Sacrament, and return to the world we live in to do it all over again. The journey will be different for each of us, but we can say that God still expects the arrow to somewhat point up.

(Pastor's Column is continued on page 4)



**OUR LORD'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

✠ Coming Together ✠ Growing in Faith ✠
✠ Serving the Lord ✠

THE SPIRIT OF OUR LORD'S NEWS

December, 2025 | Volume 59, No. 12

A PUBLICATION OF OUR LORD'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.ourlords.org

2nd Weekend of Advent

December 6 & 7

Isiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

3rd Weekend of Advent

December 13 & 14

Isiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Advent Service: Prayer around the Cross
December 17th

4th Weekend of Advent

December 20 & 21

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Eve

December 24

Isiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-15[15-20]

Christmas Day

December 25

Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7]8-20

1st Weekend after Christmas

December 27 & 28

Isiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23



Listen to services using your phone or tablet!
Scan the QR code or download AudioFetch on
Google Play or iTunes.

Wednesday at 2 pm & 6:30 pm
Saturdays at 5 pm
Sundays at 9 am

Saturday and Sunday services
will be livestreamed.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES & EVENTS

GREENING THE CHURCH - DECEMBER 6, 8 AM

CHILDREN'S ADVENT PROGRAM W/ ST. LUCIA FESTIVAL OF LIGHT - DECEMBER 13

(see page 3 for additional information)

FAIR TRADE CHRISTMAS STORE - DECEMBER 13/14 & 20/21

ADVENT SERVICE: PRAYER AROUND THE CROSS - DECEMBER 17, 2:00 PM & 6:30 PM

OLLC HOLIDAY CONCERT - DECEMBER 20, 7:00 PM

(see page 4 for additional information)

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES - DECEMBER 24

Scriptures and Songs with Communion and Candle-lighting
Traditional Services at 3:00 & 5:00 pm; Praise Band Led Service at 7:30 pm

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE - DECEMBER 25

Christmas Service will be prerecorded and available at 9 am





People in a Pickle is a ministry of Our Lord's which helps individuals, couples or families who find themselves in a proverbial pickle. Through the church Carol and Rod Orr and Carol and Dave Gocken provides assistance by meeting short term help with food, clothing, gas, stays at motels or anything else the person(s) need. This is funded through donations from church members who support the ministry through financial gifts. Those we assist are usually temporarily homeless. Though homeless, our brothers and sisters tend to be invisible to the public eye as they are not panhandling or in large groups you might see. So far in 2025 we have used approximately \$10,000 in this ministry.

The most recent person who we helped was a 25 year old woman who was pregnant and was squatting in an abandoned house. She had a young dog who had been abandoned and turned down our offer of a couple of nights at a motel. She said her primary need was warm clothing and food as she felt comfortable and safe in the abandoned house where she was squatting. In this instance, Carol Gocken took the young woman to Good Will in Granite City to pick out clothes she wanted and then to a grocery store to purchase food for she and her dog. It was determined she was receiving pre-natal care. The Orrs and Gockens have provided numerous services like this throughout 2025. This ministry would not be possible without your generosity.

Contributions can be made by check (please note "People In a Pickle" in the memo line), or by using your smart phone and following the QR code which takes you to the OLLC giving page, select "Monthly Giving Emphasis" to make a donation.

Thank you for your generosity and support!



OLLC ADVENT CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



ADVENT CHILDREN'S PROGRAM & *Saint Lucia Festival of Lights*

SATURDAY - DECEMBER 13 - 5:00 PM (DURING WORSHIP SERVICE)
FELLOWSHIP FEATURING SWEDISH FOODS, TREATS, & SWEETS FOLLOWING WORSHIP SERVICE.

This notion is recorded in the Lutheran Confessions. The Smalcald Articles: III, art. xiii, par. 1–3 state that ‘“through faith” (as St. Peter says) we receive a different, new, clean heart and that, for the sake of Christ our mediator, God will and does regard us as completely righteous and holy ... Good works follow such faith, renewal, and forgiveness of sin ... [We] cannot boast about the great merit of our works, where they are viewed apart from grace and mercy. Rather, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” [1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17]. That is, if one has a gracious God, then everything is good. Furthermore, we also say that if good works do not follow, then faith is false and not true.’

Our faith, siblings in Christ, transforms us and sends us towards our neighbor. In his preface to Romans, Luther wrote: “Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times. This knowledge of and confidence in God’s grace makes [a person] glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and with all creatures. And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God who has shown [them] this grace.”¹ Furthermore, in the Freedom of a Christian, the reformer wrote: “[Believers] should be guided in all [their] works by this thought and contemplate this one thing alone, that [they] may serve and benefit others in all that [they do], considering nothing except the need and the advantage of [their] neighbor ... This is a truly Christian life. Here faith is truly active through love [Gal. 5:6], that is, it finds expression in works of the freest service, cheerfully and lovingly done, with which a [person] willingly serves another without hope of reward; and for [themselves, they are] satisfied with the fullness and wealth of [their] faith.”²

Are we there yet? I am certainly not. Therefore, I keep returning to the lavish grace poured over me, carried by the tune of the famous gospel song: “Here I am to worship; here I am to bow down; here I am to say that you are my God...”

God’s blessings, everyone! *Pastor Mauricio*

¹ Martin Luther, Luther’s Works, Vol. 35: Word and Sacrament I. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999. pg 370–371.

² Luther, Martin. Luther’s Works, Vol. 31: Career of the Reformer I. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999. pg 364–365.

Here is a link for those wishing to schedule an appointment with Pastor Mauricio: <https://doodle.com/bp/pastormauricio/meetings-with-pastor-mauricio>

This link is to schedule a lunch meeting with Pastor: <https://doodle.com/bp/pastormauricio/lunch-with-pastor>

THE CALL PROCESS: DISCOVER & INVITE

The Discover & Invite Committee has completed 3 of 7 steps of the Discover & Invite process. Previously we compiled the responses to the question, “What is our Purpose?” Responses were reviewed and organized; our summary is displayed in the hallway leading to the commons. We are asking church members to review the information and give the team feedback. During our last meeting we reviewed the demographics of the surrounding communities. The next step includes sharing progress made so far, this sharing experience will be scheduled for a weekend in December and will follow the worship services. Future plans include having the 4th step of the process completed by the end of the year.

As you think of questions about the Discover and Invite process or you have additional comments you would like to share about OLLC, take time to meet with one of the Discover and Invite Team members. The team appreciates feedback and encourages input from congregation members as they compile the Ministry Site Profile. Team members include: Deb Ackerman, Nate & Mo Johnson, Erick Larson, Jodie Nehrt, Karen Schneider, and Pastor Mauricio.

MEET CHELSIE STEVENS – OLLC ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Chelsie was born and raised in Michigan. Her interests include photography, lakes, lighthouses, reading, music, movies, history, and librarianship. Her favorite season is winter with fall coming in second place. The colder the better. She has three college degrees: an associate’s in general studies, a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and a Master of Organizational Leadership in Nonprofit Management. She will also be getting ready to apply for a Master of Library and Information Science program. She loves to learn!

She and her Husband moved to Southern Illinois in late 2019 to be closer to her parents who retired to the area. They have been married for almost 12 years and met at church when she was 11 years old. They recently moved to Highland about a year ago.

Having worked in the administrative field for some time now it is something she truly enjoys and something she feels she is very skilled at. She looks forward to meeting everyone. If there is anything anyone needs help with, please don’t hesitate to let her know and she will do her best to help.

GREENING THE CHURCH

DECEMBER 6

8:00 am - all ages welcome

Help decorate the church! Make this event a part of your holiday preparations!

FAIR TRADE "SHARE THE JOY" CHRISTMAS STORE



Saturday & Sunday, December 13/14 & 21/22

Help OLLC Fair Trade Ministry support craftsman, woodworkers, metalsmiths, & farmers worldwide.
Lot's of **GOODIES & REAL DEALS!**

OLLC CHRISTMAS CONCERT

THAT TIME OF YEAR

A night filled with Christmas Classics

December 20, 7:00 pm

OLLC Fellowship Hall

Praise Worship @ 5:00,

Fellowship @ 6:15, with Concert @ 7:00

All are welcome!

Featured musicians include: Patrick Dent, Olivia Cross, Brian Gunderson, Addie Mays, Benji Maynard, & other special guests.

SERVING OUR LORD'S



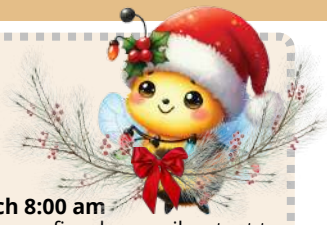
OLLC serves SOS December 30th

Assistance with preparation and serving the meal will be needed in December. Signup sheets will be available in the narthex.

Donations to support OLLC S.O.S. can be given via check, cash, or note "S.O.S." in the memo line. If you have any questions contact Gail Jorgenson or Julie Preston.

Worker Bees Saturday, December 6 Greening the Church

Breakfast 7:00 am,
Red Apple Restaurant; Church 8:00 am
If you plan on attending, please confirm by email or text to Chuck Pugh.



MUSIC AT OUR LORD'S

Chancel Choir & Handbell CHOIR

Chancel Choir, Thursdays, 5:00 pm

Chancel Choir members needed!

Handbell Choir, Thursday, 6:00 pm

Contact Addie Mays for additional information at
love2haveu@ourlords.org

Praise BAND

REHEARSALS: Saturdays 3:30 pm

PERFORMANCES: Saturdays 5:00 pm

Contact Olivia Cross for additional information.
oecross@gmail.com



OLLC FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Congregation Game Afternoon Fellowship Hall

3:00 PM-
5:00 PM

December 14
last Game Day
gathering of 2025!

Bring your favorite
game, bring a
friend, and bring a
snack to share!

OUR LORD'S CRAFTERS

Crafters will next meet **December 3, noon-3:00 pm**, for a combined November/December gathering. Contact Kathy Nehrt with questions.

SERENDIPITY BOOK CLUB

Book Club will not meet in December. Our next meeting will be **January 26 at 11:30 am** in the LC Conference Room. We will be discussing *Handle With Care*, by Jodi Picoult. This is a very informal group that enjoys reading and discussion and having fun together. Would love to have you join us.

MORNING GLORIES

December 11 @ 10:00 am. Holiday Gathering & Cookie Project
Join us for brunch! Bring 4 dozen homemade cookies (or individually wrapped candies) to include in the cookie boxes for OLLC homebound members

EDUCATION AT OLLC

Birthday Party for Jesus! December 14, during pre-K-5 Sunday School Hour

- **Pre-School--Kindergarten Sunday School** - Sundays in the Life Center in Room 2 at 10:15 am!
- **Elementary Sunday School (grades 1-5)** - Sundays in the Life Center in Room 4 at 10:15 am!
- **Confirmation Class (grade 6-8)** - We welcome both returning and new students to our class this fall. We will have classes on every other Sunday and we will continue with the curriculum from Faith Inkubators. Each session we will cover two lessons and break for a meal between the lessons. We will meet in the Worship Center. Confirmation meets December 14.
- **Adult Bible Study** - Sundays at 10:15 am in the Worship Center Conference Room. Join us as we take a closer look at the Gospel of Luke.
- **Questions Bible Study** - Mondays at 10:00 am in the Life Center Conference Room. Questions Bible Study is studying the book of Genesis. Everyone is welcome!
- **Feeding the Soul** - Wednesdays at 3:00 pm in the Worship Center Fellowship Hall. The group is currently reading and discussing *"Hiding God" In Our Heart* - an in-depth study of popular Bible passages including the Twenty-Third Psalm. Additional topics include The Lord's Prayer, The Roman's Road, The Whole Armor of God, and individual studies that relate to timely topics.
- **Morning Glories Bible Study** - 2nd and 4th Thursday each month at 10:00 am in the Worship Center Fellowship Hall. Morning Glories is currently studying the book of Acts. The book we are studying from is *"Life Lessons from Acts"* by Max Lucado. All ladies are welcome! Due to the busy holiday season, the only meeting this month will be **December 11 @ 10:00 am** for a Christmas Brunch in the Fellowship Hall. Afterwards, we will fill cookie boxes for OLLC homebound and other senior members. Please bring 4 dozen homemade cookies or individually wrapped candies to include in the cookie boxes. If you have any questions, contact Karen Cummings-Larson.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES WILL NOT MEET DECEMBER 21 & 28

(EXCEPT QUESTIONS BIBLE STUDY)

ALL CLASSES RESUME JANUARY 4, 2026.

LOOKING AHEAD

JANUARY

- January 1 - New Year's Day
- January 6 - Epiphany
- January 10 - Undecorating the church
- January 19 - MLK Jr. Day
- January 25 - Annual Meeting

January Giving Emphasis:
*Souper Bowl of Caring:
Cougar Cupboard*

FEBRUARY

- February - Spaghetti Dinner & Concert
Date TBD
- February 14 - Valentines Day
- February 16 - Presidents Day
- February 17 - Shrove Tuesday
- February 18 - Ash Wednesday
- February 25 - Holden Evening Prayer Service

February Giving Emphasis:
*Souper Bowl of Caring:
Cougar Cupboard*

MARCH

- March 4, 11, 18, 25 - Holden Evening Prayer Services
- March 8 - Daylight Savings Time Ends
- March 29 - Palm Sunday

March Giving Emphasis:
*Lutheran Social Services
of Illinois*

CENTRAL-SOUTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD NEWS



Adult Faith Formation: New Testament

Learn about the history, theology, and significance of the books of the New Testament with the Rev. Dr. Mark Allen Powell. Classes will take place via Zoom from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Saturdays Jan. 24 and 31; Feb. 7, 21, and 28; and March 7. The cost is \$25 for general learners and \$50 for Synod-Authorized Ministry students.

This course will provide an overview of the New Testament as taught by the author of the world's best-selling textbook on that topic. The content of the course will be comparable to what graduate students learn when they engage the scriptures in a seminary classroom. We will profile the two most important figures of the New Testament — Jesus and the Apostle Paul — noting their enduring significance for the church and for the world at large. We will look at all four of the Gospels with an interest in the distinct contributions that each has to offer. We will also look at the sensational book of Acts and the mysterious book of Revelation, and we will examine a few representative epistles.

Register Here!

[https://onrealm.org/CentralSouthern/PublicRegistrations/Event?
linkString=NzRiMzVjYzctM2FhZS00MzRILWI1YWltYjM5ODAxNDE2YzMO](https://onrealm.org/CentralSouthern/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NzRiMzVjYzctM2FhZS00MzRILWI1YWltYjM5ODAxNDE2YzMO)

Our Adult Faith Formation courses use Realm Connect, a church management and communication platform, for class communications. If you don't have an account, we will send you an invitation to create an account shortly after receiving your registration; if you already have an account, we will add you to the group. You will be able to find class information, such as reading materials and the Zoom link, in the class' Realm group as we get closer to the start of the class.

Cyclone Relief for Madagascar

Over the summer, our companion synods in the Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar were hit by a devastating cyclone, damaging many of their churches and homes. In response and thanks to your ongoing generosity, our synod's Global Missions Committee sent \$3,000 to assist with cyclone relief, over and above the annual financial support we share. A recent **letter from President Soloson** of the Faradofay Synod shares that our gift was able to provide 330 tin roofs for which our siblings in Christ in Madagascar are most grateful.

COLLINSVILLE FAITH IN ACTION



Collinsville Faith in Action thanks congregations across our community for continuing to send volunteers, refer local seniors for our services, and for your continued prayers and financial support. CFiA serves people 60 and older by partnering with local congregations and training volunteers. If you're someone interested in volunteering but with limited time, contact CFiA's Karen Saravia to learn how you can be a "Neighbor helping neighbors" at 618-344-8080.

Elder Connection, a monthly luncheon and activity, will be held on Monday, December 15 with a special performance by the Collinsville Middle School Choir. Come celebrate Christmas with us! To reserve your lunch and spot at the concert, please call Collinsville Faith in Action at 618-344-8080. There is no charge for this program, but spots fill up quickly, so call today!

PRAYER CONCERNS

Everyone listed here is important to a person of the congregation. Please include them in your praying throughout the week so that they know and feel God's power and presence. We will usually keep names on this list for three to four weeks. Please let us know if an individual should be removed before then or if there is a change in their condition that requires ongoing prayer. Member names may be listed for much longer periods of time

CONGREGATION MEMBERS



Dan Homes	JoAnn Hartke
Linda Spencer	Nicole Williams
Brian Kassing	Keith Jensen
Don Klingsick	Robin Wellener
Rod Orr	Lisa White
Joyce Tatjenhorst	Jackie Schlonat
Dave Chaffee	Andy Nehrt
Mike Williams	Sara Davidson
Emily Callahan	Jim Trucano
Vicki Lottes	Loretta Williams
Cindy Pugh	

FAMILY & FRIENDS

Ken Bunetic	Joe
Shelley Bruntjen	Janet Borowitz
Bob Dunn	Dan & Martha
Tate Buckaus	Jim & Mary Barker
Marilyn Wolfe	Brie Jenkins
Nancy Easton	Pearl
Elaine Kendall	Ted F.
Doris Gocken	Michelle Simms
Mary Thiesen	Jan Orr
Jack Sykut	Marguerite Tilashalski
Joan Truckenbrod	Joanne Johnson
Terri	Teri Peters
Glen Roth	Aaron Travis
Sherry Echo Hawk Talac	Allen Dietz
Donna & Harry Schlechte	Mariella Smity
Peg Meldi	Sandy Halama
Ken Kirkman	Stuart Stickse
Ethan Baczewski	

PRAY FOR THOSE THAT HAVE DIED & FAMILIES THAT ARE GRIEVING

The family and friends of Jim Zupanci (friend of Linda Eakin).
 The family and friends of John Purcelli (member of Our Lords Lutheran).
 The family and friends of Jim Fitz (friend of Rod & Carol Orr).

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Lance Cpl. Clayton Campbell	Staff Sgt. Skipper Smith	Erica Webb, US Private E-3	Amador Ochoa
Major James Carmichael	Sgt. Matthew Spencer (Ret.)	SrA Paul Kampwerth	Capt. Blake Crosby
Airborne Ranger Keegan Crosby	MSgt. Stephan Spencer	John Meyer	Josh Pace
Staff Sgt. Tyson Crosby	Zach Huff	Zachary Neubauer	Scott Prengel
SPC Bill Homes	Jake Randall		

CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

December

Birthdays

Abigail Tiemann	Dean Lackey	Caitlyn Williams Baczewski
Erick Larson	Joel Gerhard Kampwerth	Kaitlyn Blotevogel
Carol Gocken	Crichton Reed Williams	Irene VanHooser
Brian Kelly Hartke	Matt Gross	Kendyll Leigh Orr
Anna Rimar	Sophia Christine Helms	Susanne Richter
Carol Hancock	Jack Rimar	Linda Spencer
Terri Schickel	Sue Green	Loretta Williams
Lila Nehrt		

December

Anniversaries

Jeff & Penny Waterman
Brian & Jaime Henderson
Don Simonson & Jan Vinson
Bruce & Mary Ann Fritz
Randy & Erin Helms
Brian & Doug Lotz-Manns

REMINDERS

PRAYER LIST

Please let the office know if you would like to add a new person, remove a current person, or change the status of anyone on our prayer list. OLLC practice includes removing individuals from the prayer lists **after 3-4 weeks** unless an update is received.

PRAYER VENTURES

Two pages of monthly prayer support for ELCA ministries are available at: www.elca.org/Resources/Prayer-Ventures

WHEN YOU HAVE CHANGES

Please let the church office know of changes to e-mail address, mail/resident addresses, telephone numbers, job, college, graduations etc.

OTHER INFORMATION

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America -- <http://www.elca.org/>
 Central Southern Illinois Synod -- <http://www.csis-elca.org/>

PASTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

(abbreviated version of report presented to Council during 11/17 meeting))

- **Worship** - Presided and preached on October 11, 12, 18, 19 and November 1, 2, 8, 9, 16, & 17.
- **Pastoral Care** - Made 2 hospital visits, 5 shut-in visits, 4 Holy Communion. Made one Pastoral Care Phone Call. Conducted baptism of Paul Robert Hancock.
- **Christian Education** - attended Questions Bible Study, Feeding the Soul, and Adult Bible study sessions each week and led confirmation on November 2.
- **Ministry with congregation** - Attended the Maryville Ministry Alliance Meeting on October 22 and participated in the Scouts for Food drive alongside members of Our Lords on November 15.
- **Leadership Ministry** - attended OLLC Council Meeting, October 20, participated in the Discover and Invite session on October 28, attended the Giving Emphasis Meeting on October 23 and attended the Ministry Support Team Meeting on November 10.
- **Ministry with the Wider Church** - attended the ELCA Region 5 Boundaries workshop at Prince of Peace Mount Vernon on November 6, attended the Central-Southern Illinois Synod Bishop's Colloquy at Christ Monticello on November 12, convened the Central-Southern Illinois Synod Bridges to Belonging Working Group meeting on October 30 via Zoom
- **Self-Care Ministry** - Observed personal Sabbath on October 24, 31, 7, and 14, and took personal time off from October 21 to 27.
- **Immediate Plans** - Planning for Advent and Christmas with the Worship Staff, reassess the Confirmation Instruction for the rest of the year, attend lay-led adult faith formation studies, continue facilitating the Discover and Invite process, prepare newsletter article for the December Newsletter, gather Mutual Ministry Resources for Council, write and submit C/S-IS Social Justice Grant, and work with music staff on recordings for Christmas Day Service.

OLLC MINISTRY TEAM

OLLC STAFF

Pastor Mauricio Vieira

Interim Pastor

Chelsie Stevens

Administrative Assistant

Addie Mays

Director of Worship Music for
Sundays & Special Services

Olivia Cross

Leader of Non-Traditional
Worship Music

Dr. Rhonda Comrie

Organist

Benjamin Maynard

Worship Tech
Livestreaming Specialist
ProPresenter Slide Designer

CHURCH COUNCIL

Dr. Karen Cummings-Larson
President

Dr. Emily Truckenbrod
Vice President

Dr. Terry Ackerman
Secretary

Dr. Laura Schoenecker
Treasurer

Vacant
Member At-Large

Pastor Mauricio Vieira
Interim Pastor

MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAM

Kathy Nehrt: Education

Cindy Pugh: Fellowship

Ed Foppe: IT

Carol Orr: Service

Jan Vinson: Worship

Sunday School:

Lisa White

Fair Trade Store:

Mike Williams
vablu2@aol.com

Newsletter Editor:

K. Cummings-Larson

Facebook:

Maureen "Mo" Johnson

COUNCIL BRIEFS

One morning last week, I received an email with a devotion on grace by Darrel Delaney. I often hold myself to high standards that are difficult to meet. I strive for perfection, always want to be right, and struggle with delegation - qualities I am not proud of and am working to change. I believe we all have aspects of ourselves we want to improve. Delaney reminded me to recognize even the smallest progress we make. He shared a story of a pastor who said, "God's grace covers our imperfections," encouraging us to see ourselves through the lens of grace.

The scripture from 2 Peter 3:18 urges us to "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." This verse emphasizes accepting our flaws, learning from our mistakes, and appreciating our growth. It serves as a reminder that God's grace is present in every step of our journey. We should release unrealistic expectations and understand that maturity develops over time and through experience.

Each month discussions include OLLC events and concerns of church life; when making decisions we strive to celebrate our accomplishments and to stay focused on our mission. During the November council meeting actions were taken to keep church life moving forward:

- *discussed and approved the Monthly Giving Emphasis areas for 2026;*
- *received updates from the Ministry Support Team, the Discover & Invite Team, and Nominating Committee;*
- *approved date for the OLLC Christmas Concert;*
- *and received the first draft of the 2026 budget to discuss during our next meeting.*

"Every step forward, no matter how small, is still progress." Growth is not always visible but is always happening.

Lord, help us to grow in grace, learning from mistakes and trusting in your ongoing work in us. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Karen Cummings-Larson

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Summary taken from report provided by OLLC Treasurer Laura Schoenecker
If you have any questions, please contact Laura at lswanso@siue.edu.

General Benevolence Income

October 2025..... \$16,067

General Benevolence Expenses

October 2025 \$23,424

Cash - Unrestricted \$39,586

Cash - Designated \$95,336

Total Cash \$134,922

Solar project loan balance \$90,000, to be paid upon receipt of tax credits.

During October:

- The balance of the Monthly Emphasis Fund at the end of October 2025 was \$3,677.47 (\$49.17 - School Supplies, \$2,639.05 - African Vision of Hope, & \$989.25 - SOS Soup Kitchen).
- A check for \$1446.00 will be sent to CS/IS for Synod Benevolence. Local Benevolence for the Fourth Quarter (October \$161, November, December)
- \$417 was collected from the OLLC Crafters' Raffle. The funds will be used to purchase supplies for hygiene kits. Carol Gocken won the quilt raffle.
- \$179 was collected during the "Meet Katie Luther" presentation. Proceeds were sent to S.O.S.

Thank you for sharing your financial resources with this congregation in support of the mission we share.

To give, simply scan this QR code with your smart phone. The QR code takes you directly to the OLLC giving page. On the giving page you have the opportunity to identify if your contribution is for Benevolence (church expenditures) or for one of the designated funds. Of course, cash or checks are always welcomed. No matter which method you choose when giving to OLLC, all donations received will help us sustain our ministries throughout the year.



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How many small stars can you find?



Answer: 12

JOY TO THE WORLD

BIBLE QUIZ!

What city was Jesus born in?

- a) Jerusalem b) Bethlehem c) Nazareth

What did the wise men follow to find Jesus?

- a) a rainbow b) a dove c) a star

Where did Jesus sleep when he was born?

- a) in a manger b) in a basket c) in a cradle

Who came to visit baby Jesus first?

- a) The king b) the shepherds c) the wise men

b 'a 'c 'b 'a 'c 'b 'a 'c 'b

Help the wise men follow the star to baby Jesus:

Fill in the blanks! What gifts did the wise men bring Jesus?

Are you as wise as the wise men that visited Jesus? Unscramble the words!

GLANE

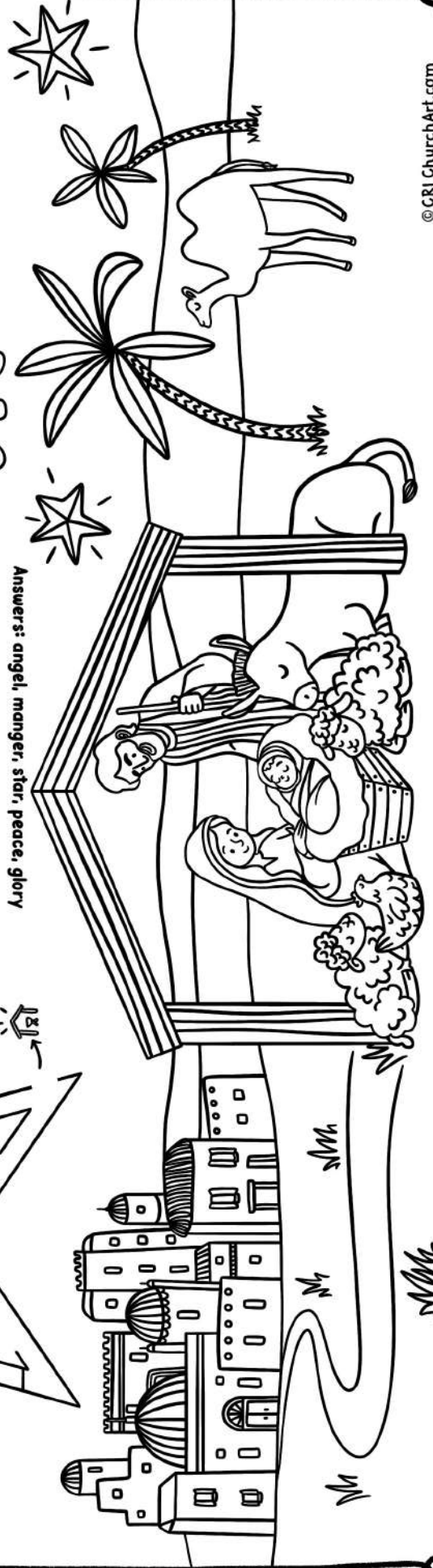
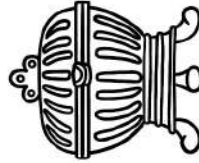
RNAGEM

TASR

ECEAP

LROYG

Answers: angel, manger, star, peace, glory



DECEMBER 2025 CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1 10:00 AM Questions Bible Study	2 Pastor Works from home 7:00 PM NAR-ANON - LC Conference Room 7:00 PM NA Recovery - LC Basement	3 12:00 PM OLLC Crafters - FH 3:00 PM Feeding the Soul - WC Fellowship Hall	4 5:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal	5 Pastor's Day of Rest	6 COMMITMENT WEEKEND Children's Program Rehearsal (TBD) 7:00 AM Worker Bees breakfast 8:00 AM Greening the Church 3:30 PM Praise Band Practice 5:00 PM Worship: Praise Service 6:15 PM Hospitality
7 Advent 2 COMMITMENT WEEKEND 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Hospitality 10:15 AM Pre-K - Adult Education	8 10:00 AM Questions Bible Study 6:00 PM Girl Scouts - LC 6:30 PM - Ministry Support Team Meeting - ZOOM	9 Pastor Works from home 7:00 PM NAR-ANON - LC Conference Room 7:00 PM NA Recovery - LC Basement	10 3:00 PM Feeding the Soul - WC Fellowship Hall 4:00 PM Lakeview Garden Club Meeting	11 10:00 AM Morning Glories Christmas Brunch & Cookie Project - FH 5:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal	12 Pastor's Day of Rest	13 3:30 PM Praise Band Practice 5:00 PM Worship: Praise Service w/ Children's Christmas Program 6:15 PM Hospitality 
14 Advent 3 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Hospitality 10:15 AM Pre-K - 5 Birthday Party for Jesus 10:15 AM - Adult Education 10:30 AM Confirmation 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Congregational Game Day - FH 	15 December Newsletter Deadline 10:00 AM Questions Bible Study - LC Conference Room 6:30 PM - Church Council - LC Conference Room	16 Pastor Works from home 7:00 PM NAR-ANON - LC Conference Room 7:00 PM NA Recovery - LC Basement	17 2:00 PM - Advent Service: Prayer Around the Cross 3:00 PM Feeding the Soul - WC Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM - Advent Service: Prayer Around the Cross	18 5:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal	19 Pastor's Day of Rest	20 10:00 AM La Leche League - WC 3:30 PM Praise Band Practice 5:00 PM Worship: Praise Service 6:15 PM Hospitality 7:00 PM OLLC Christmas Concert 
21 Advent 4 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Hospitality 	22 10:00 AM Questions Bible Study 12:30 PM Newsletter Assembly 6:00 PM Girl Scouts - LC	23 Pastor Works from home 7:00 PM NAR-ANON - LC Conference Room 7:00 PM NA Recovery - LC Basement	24 Christmas Eve 3:00 PM Traditional Worship Service 5:00 PM Traditional Worship Service 7:30 PM Praise Band Led Worship Service Christmas Eve Services include Scriptures and Songs with Holy Communion and Candle lighting	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed 9:00 AM Prerecorded Christmas Service	26 Pastor's Day of Rest	27 3:30 PM Praise Band Practice 5:00 PM Worship: Praise Service
28 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Hospitality	29 10:00 AM Questions Bible Study	30 Pastor Works from home 7:00 PM NAR-ANON - LC Conference Room 7:00 PM NA Recovery - LC Basement OLLC Serves SOS	31 New Year's Eve			

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Greening the Church

December 6, 8 am

+

Children's Advent Program & St. Lucia Festival of Light

December 13

+

Fair Trade Christmas store

December 13/14 & 20/21

+

Advent Service: Prayer Around the Cross

December 17, 2:00 pm & 6:30 pm

+

"That Time of Year" OLLC Holiday Concert

December 20, 7:00 pm

+

Christmas Eve Services - December 24

Scriptures and Songs with Holy Communion and Candle lighting

Traditional Services at 3:00 & 5:00 pm;

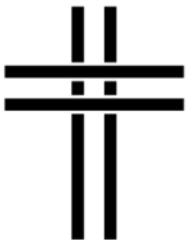
Praise Band Led Service at 7:30 pm

+

Christmas Day Service - December 25

Christmas Service will be prerecorded and

available at 9 am



December 2025 Newsletter

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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