

## Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 21, 2025 – 10:30 a.m.

Congregational Christmas Program



ST. JOHN'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



**Welcome!** *Today our congregation tells the story of Jesus' birth through our Christmas Program. Remembering that the Lord Jesus himself was born a child of Mary, we give thanks to God for the gift of life and salvation that is ours in him. As we approach the celebration of Jesus' birth, we invite you to worship our newborn King with us in special Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. (Please see worship schedule on page 15.) Join your heart and voice in praising our Lord in today's worship service.*



### **Prayer before worship**

*Bless us, O God, with a reverent sense of your presence, that we may be at peace and may worship you with all our mind and spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Welcome**

### **Prelude**

"Ave, Ave the Angels Sang" (Robert Lau)  
Choir of St. John's

### **Ringling of the Bells**

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**OPENING SENTENCES** (*PROVERBS 9:10; ISAIAH 41:9B-10*)

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*The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their baptism*

**P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**P** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

**C** **And his gospel is peace.**

**P** You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off;

**C** **Fear not, for I am with you;**

**P** Be not dismayed, for I am your God;

**C** **I will strengthen you, I will help you,**

**P** I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

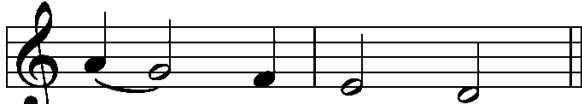
**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen. His gospel is peace!**

*Please turn and face the back of the Sanctuary.*

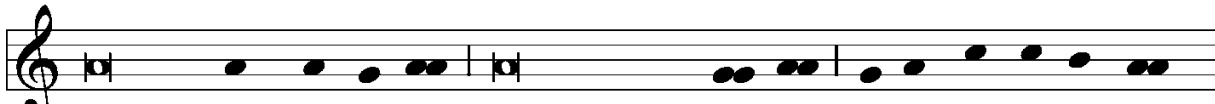
## Kyrie



**A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For the peace from a-bove and for our sal-va-tion let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



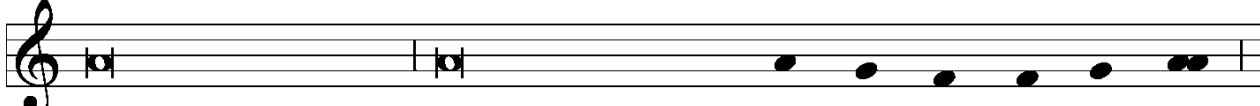
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



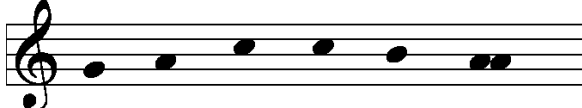
and for the uni - ty of all let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



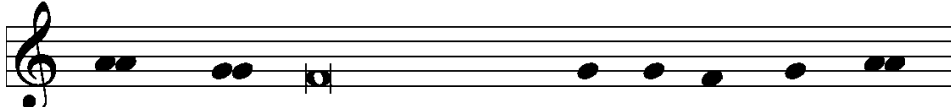
**A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



**C** A - men.

## Blessing of the Advent Wreath

*Each week we light a new candle on the Advent wreath.*

**L** Blessed are you, God of our salvation; you promised that the One of peace would come from Bethlehem to feed your flock and make us live securely. As we light these candles, kindle in us the fire of your love, infuse in us the fruit of your Word, and empower us to lift up the lowly and to fill the hungry with good things; let your face shine on us and bless us that we may be saved.

**C** Amen.

# Advent Hymn "Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn" (WOV 633)

(Advent 4)

1 A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though

an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for  
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall

soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.  
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.

Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less

geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and

lives now in - side us for ev - er.  
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.  
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

## Prayer of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Let us pray:

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

## Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 7:10–17

<sup>10</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup>“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup>And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup>The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

# Psalmody

# "The First Song of Isaiah"

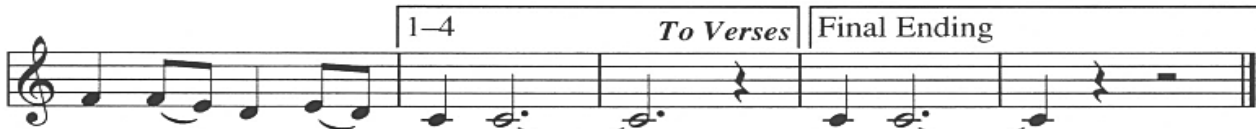
## Refrain (Repeated at end)



Sure-ly, it is God who saves me; I will trust in Him and not be a -



fraid. For the Lord is my strong-hold and my sure de-fense, and



He will be my Sa - vior, Sa - vior.

## Verses



1. There - fore you shall draw wa - ter with re - joic - ing



from the springs of sal - va - tion. And on that day you shall say, give



thanks to the Lord and call up - on his name;



2. Make his deeds known a-mong the peo - ples; see that they re-mem-ber that his



name is ex - alt - ed. Sing the prais-es of the Lord, for He has done great

*To Refrain*



things, and this is known in all the world.



3. Cry a - loud in - hab - i - tants of Zi - on,



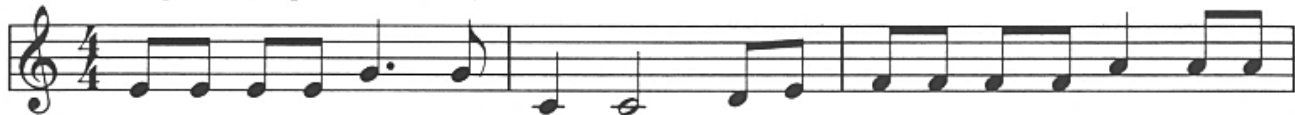
ring out your joy, for the great one in the

*To Refrain*



midst of you is the Ho - ly One of Is - rael.

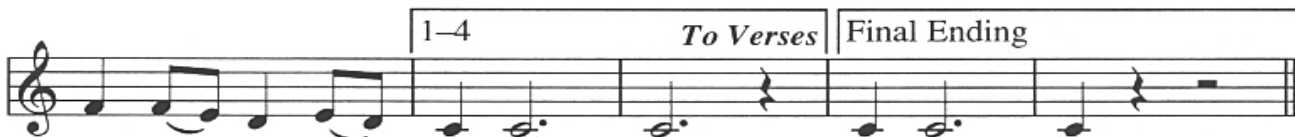
*Refrain (Repeated at end)*



Sure-ly, it is God who saves me; I will trust in Him and not be a -



fraid. For the Lord is my strong-hold and my sure de-fense, and



He will be my Sa - vior, Sa - vior.

Words: From the *Book of Common Prayer*; Music: Jack Noble White; Copyright © 1977 by Charles Mortimer Guilbert. Used by permission.

**Epistle**

Romans 1:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be the Son of God in power

according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup>including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

### Alleluia and Verse



**C** Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

### Holy Gospel

Matthew 1:18–25

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.



**C** Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

*Please join in reading aloud the **highlighted portion** of Scripture and consider committing this passage to memory in the week ahead.*

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **<sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.**" <sup>22</sup>All this took place

to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.



## Prayer of the Church

**P** Waiting for the fulfillment of our hope in Christ's promised coming, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

*Special prayer requests are announced followed by a brief silence for private prayer. During the Advent season each petition ends with the phrase: "Lord, in your mercy." Please respond by saying "Hear our prayer."*

*The prayers end with the words:*

**P** Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C** Amen.

**P** Gather us all under the promise of your Son, who taught us to pray:

**C** **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## Announcements

**Children's Christmas Anthem** "Angels We Have Heard on High" (French trad. "Gloria")

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## The Amazing Story of Christmas

### A Celebration of the Savior's Birth

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#### **Welcome**

(Narrator)


Welcome everyone to Bethlehem! One of the more amazing things about the Christmas story is that it didn't happen without the people who are in the story. God did not just swoop in and make this story happen all by God's self. Instead, there needed to be willing people to participate in the story. Mary, Joseph, shepherds, animals, and even the angels are obedient and follow through with what they are told to do. And so today, we will have an opportunity to do the same thing: By choosing to participate in the story, we will make the story happen. Hopefully, you all chose a costume when you entered worship today. As the story unfolds, we will invite characters at different times to come up front and stand in their position. There are no speaking roles, so please do not worry! All we ask is that you sing during the hymns, pay attention to the stage directions in your bulletin, and most importantly, enjoy the greatest story ever told!

Let us together open our eyes and ears, and experience the story of Christ's birth...

**Part I: Mary and Joseph** (*Those who wish to portray Mary and Joseph are invited forward*)

"Mary Had a Baby"

F Dm Bb C




1. 7 Mar - y had a ba - by, Yes, Lord! 7  
 2. 7 What\_ did she name Him? Yes, Lord! 7  
 3. She named the ba - by Je - sus, Yes, Lord! She 7  
 4. 7 Where\_ was He born?\_ Yes, Lord! 7  
 5. 7 Born\_ in a man - ger, Yes, Lord! 7

F Dm Bb C7 F F7



Mar - y had a ba - by, Yes, my Lord! 7 Mar - y had a ba - by,  
 What\_ did she name Him? Yes, my Lord! 7 What\_ did she name Him?  
 named the ba - by Je - sus, Yes, my Lord! She named the ba - by Je - sus,  
 Where\_ was He born?\_ Yes, my Lord! 7 Where\_ was He born?\_  
 Born\_ in a man - ger, Yes, my Lord! 7 Born\_ in a man - ger,

Bb F Dm Bb C7 F



Yes, Lord! The lit - tle child of Beth - le - hem was born for us.

## Part II: The Animals

(Narrator)

The animals were calm and quieter than normal. They often were noisy and never too formal. They always were eating, or else they were sleeping. The stable required continuous sweeping. But on that Christmas night, they were strangely in awe at the sight of the babe and all that they saw. It's as if they were aware that God had just hushed them, had fed and watered and carefully brushed them.

They knew, I believe, that God had been able to work a miracle there in that stable as the baby slept quietly gently in a manger.

*Those who wish to be doves, sheep, cows, or donkeys are invited to come forward.*

### "The Friendly Beasts"

- 1 Jesus, our Brother, strong and good,  
Was humbly born in a stable rude,  
And the friendly beasts around Him stood,  
Jesus, our Brother, strong and good.
  
- 2 "I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,  
"I carried His mother uphill and down,  
I carried His mother to Bethlehem town;  
I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.
  
- 3 "I," said the cow, all white and red,  
"I gave Him my manger for His bed,  
I gave Him hay to pillow His head;  
I," said the cow, all white and red.

- 4 "I, "said the sheep with curly horn,  
"I gave Him my wool for His blanket warm,  
He wore my coat on Christmas morn;  
I, "said the sheep with curly horn.
- 5 "I, "said the dove, from the rafters high,  
"I cooed Him to sleep that He should not cry,  
We cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I;  
I, "said the dove, from the rafters high.
- 6 Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,  
In the stable dark were glad to tell  
Of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,  
The gifts they gave Emmanuel.

### Part III: Angels

(Narrator)

We don't often see angels in flight. But on the first Christmas, they lit up the night.

They appeared to the shepherds and, boy, were they scared!

"Angels!" cried one.

"Will any lives be spared?"

"Are they here to destroy us? Is our time on earth up? Have we seen our last day? Have we drank our last cup?"

But "Peace on earth; goodwill to all" was the angels' sweet song; that was their call. With a light show that dazzled all who did see, the angels hallelujah'ed and sang out with glee.

"To Bethlehem, shepherds!" the angels directed. "To see Jesus the Christ, whom God has perfected." "Go worship the Lord and follow his ways.

And you'll find Christmas joy for all of your days."

*Those who wish to be angels are invited forward.*

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first four staves contain the main melody with lyrics underneath. The fifth staff is a refrain, marked with the word 'Refrain' above it. The lyrics are: '1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King; Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!" Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies; With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"' The refrain lyrics are: 'Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King!"'

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King!"  
Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, alt., Tune: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-47, Text and tune: Public domain

## Part IV: Shepards

(Narrator)

The shepherds, I told you, were scared and stunned. "Too much hard work or too much hot sun!"

That's what they thought; that's how they explained. Perplexed and afraid, they loudly complained.

But the angels' song calmed them, and then they believed. They rejoiced when they knew, and they were quite relieved. They went to the stable and worshiped the Lord.

Then they left and began to spread the Good Word.

*Those who wish to be shepherds are invited forward.*

### "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

*Refrain*

Go tell it on the moun - tain, O-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;

Go tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch - ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,

2 The shep-herds feared and trem - bled When lo, a - bove the earth

*Refrain*  
Be - hold, through - out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light.  
Rang out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.

Text (sts. 1-2): John W. Work II, 1873-1925, alt.

Text (ref) and tune: African American spiritual

Text and tune: Public domain

## Part V: Wise Persons and Star

(Narrator)

The star that shone brightly led Wise Persons at night To Bethlehem's streets by the star's strange light.

They came bearing gifts, in worship and love, praising God for God's wonders from heaven above.

The Wise Men were kings, and they knelt, and they bowed. It was the oddest of things, and Mary and Joseph were wowed!

If kings bring him treasure, then maybe you, too, can worship with pleasure the person of Jesus, who came to us all.

So worthy of praise, for he brings us God's call." "I am the way, the truth, and the life,

Come to God for healing from strife. Come unto me, all you who labor, And I' ll give you rest forever to savor."

*Those who wish to be Wise Persons are invited forward.*

"We Three Kings"

We three kings of Orient are:  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.

Oh, star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright;  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light!

## Part VI: The Gift in the Manger

(Narrator)

So what, you may ask, does all of this mean? The shepherds and kings,  
the Child whom they'd seen?

It's all about Jesus, born in a stable; God's Son who lived and died on a  
cross so we're able –

by His grace alone to sing and to say, "Jesus, my Savior, I praise You  
this day!"

He loves us and calls us each by our name; He laid down his life and so I  
exclaim:

"Today, tomorrow, and all the days through, I will love Him and  
serve Him for He's made me new."

Behind all the tinsel and garlands and beautiful lights, lies the Child in the  
manger whose love shines so bright;

This is Christmas, my friends; now, go out and tell all that God's love is  
eternal – He will not let us fall.

Sing loud Hallelujahs, shout louder Amens, to the Child born of Mary, the  
Babe of Bethlehem.

### "Away in a Manger"

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,  
The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky \_\_\_\_\_ looked down where He lay,  
The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

The musical score is written on four staves in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with a dashed line under the word 'sky' in the third line to indicate a long note or a breath mark. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Tune and text: Public domain

## Part VII: Conclusion

(Narrator)

T'was the very first Christmas and there in the manger, The Christ-child was born; it couldn't have been stranger. Shepherds saw angels, Wise Men, a star.

They came to see Jesus; they came afar.

They knew he was special - God's very own son, He came to the earth to love everyone.

He grew up in time, the Savior, the Lord,

To be worshiped each day, to be loved and adored. So now at Christmas we all take delight.

In the gift that God gave us that first Christmas night. In the gifts we receive and the ones that we give,

Let us never forget, it's in Christ that we live

### "Joy to the World"



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him  
prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture  
ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759, adapt.

Text and tune: Public domain

### Postlude "Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending" (Kenneth T. Kosche)

**We're glad you chose to worship with us at this special service.**

***Please join us for these special worship services:***

Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

Christmas Eve Children's Service – No Holy Communion at 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 25 (Christmas Day)

Worship with Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 28 (First Sunday after Christmas)

Lessons and Carols for Christmas - No Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 31 (New Year's Eve)

Worship with Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.

*Many thanks to Beth Rempe, and our Sunday Morning Children's Ministry Leaders, for teaching our children sign language.*

## **Our Ministry Of Worship**

Officiant/Preacher	Pastor Meehan
Lay Assistant	Trevor Hassett
Organist/Pianist	David Leahey, Director of Music
Acolyte	Matt Rempe
Ushers	Jim Lofgren Barbara Pate
AV Operators	Scott Budzien Andrea Godwin
Welcome Host	Debbie Haugan
Nursery	Lisa Goodell Charlotte Keppers
Advent Candle Bearers	The Varea Family





This weekend's **altar flowers** are given in donation of the flower fund.

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## Acknowledgments

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*Ave, Ave the angels sang* – Robert Lau (1994 Wayne Leupold Editions)  
*Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending* - Kenneth T. Kosche (PICARDY)  
(2004 MorningStar Music Publishers)



**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
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*A member congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*

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Director of Music	David Leahey
Office/Facilities Administrator	Michelle May
Finance Administrator	Jennifer Smith

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