

Service of Holy Communion

3rd Sunday of Advent

December 14th, 2025



INTRODUCTION

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The Congregation stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**

P. Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Congregation kneels or sits. Silence is kept for reflection.

P. Long-expected God, **we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.**

P. Hear the good news: God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. ✠ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**

Congregation stands

GATHERING HYMN Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn ELW 242

THE GREETING

P. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C. And also with you.**

KYRIE

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

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C. Amen

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,
light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Congregation is seated

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH *(read responsively)*

Luedtke Family

When I look around, I see shadows of sadness, families who have lost loved ones, people in prison, people who are isolated and feel on their own...

When I look around, I see shadows of grief, people dreading the holidays because of painful memories, or because they don't want to spend another Christmas alone...

In the face of sadness, we light a candle of joy...

In the face of grief, in the face of loss, we light a candle of joy...

(Light the third candle in the Advent wreath.)

May the light from this candle overwhelm the world...

May the light from this candle say to all that God's joy is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Friends, be not afraid, God's joy is at hand!

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,

and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55 (*read responsively*)

^{46b} My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ **for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

⁴⁹ you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.

⁵⁰ **You have mercy on those who fear you,
from generation to generation.**

⁵¹ You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

⁵² **casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.**

⁵³ You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ **You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,**

⁵⁵ the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL

Children & Youth are invited forward for a special sermon time with Pastor Peggy.

What's in the Box?!? 1st clue: It is a living thing.

2nd clue: It's a symbol of peace and protection.

Congregation stands

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. *Repeat alleluia*

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

P. The holy gospel according to Matthew. C. Glory to you, O Lord.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those

who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

P. The gospel of the Lord. **C. Praise to you, O Christ.**

Congregation is seated

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Mary — Carsen Luedtke

Joseph — Christopher Gonzalez

Sheep — Sadie Ludlow & Laurel Gonzalez

Angels — Juliet Gonzalez & Stella Jackson

Shepherds — Logan Garnett & Odell Luedtke

Wise People — Lincoln Luedtke, Landon DeGregorio & Lana DeGregorio

Star — Drew Potzer

Baby Jesus — Sawyer Ludlow

Narrator — Mark Rossi

PART I: MARY AND JOSEPH

Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem 279 vs 1

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

PART II: THE ANIMALS

Carol: Away in a Manger 277 vs 1

*Away in a Manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

PART III: ANGELS

Carol: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing 270 vs 1

*Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king!”*

PART IV: SHEPHERD

Carol: Go Tell It on the Mountain 290 vs 1

*Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!
While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shown a holy light.
Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!*

PART V: WISE PERSONS AND STAR

Carol: Silent Night, Holy Night 281 vs 1

*Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*

PART VI: CONCLUSION

Carol: O Come All Ye Faithful 283 vs 1

*O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him, born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

HYMN OF THE DAY

Joy to the World

ELW 267 (remain seated)

PRAYER STATIONS

There are 5 prayer stations throughout the sanctuary that you can move to during this time. The 6th option is to stay seated while meditating, praying, and listening to the background music. The prayer stations are the same each week, with the exception of the poem and the image changing weekly. The intention is that you take in 1 or 2 stations each week, visiting each station at least once by the end of Advent. We will spend about 5 minutes at the prayer stations.

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

A. In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. *A brief silence.*

A. God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A. When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A. When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A. When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. We pray especially for... those we name aloud... and those we hold in our hearts....In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A. When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A. As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith, especially Mary, mother of Jesus and John of the Cross. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P. Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P. The Peace of Christ be with you always.

C. And also with you.

P. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

Congregation is seated

CHOIR ANTHEM

Bethlehem

Dennis Allen & Nan Allen

MEAL

OFFERTORY INVITATION

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Thank you for your generous gifts!

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Congregation stands

OFFERTORY SONG



1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
still guides us on to the end of our days.
God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray... Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE & PREFACE OF THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

P. Lift up your hearts.

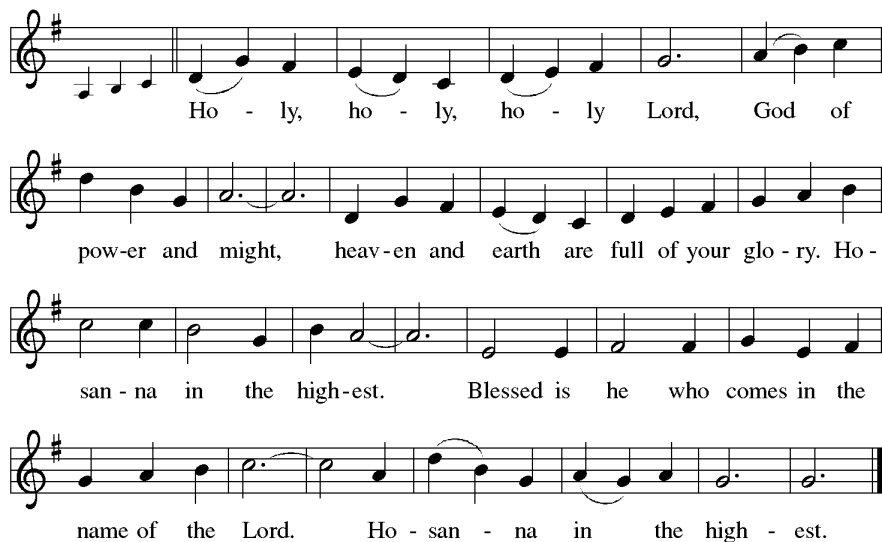
C. We lift them to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P. It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all

places offer thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so with all the choirs of angels, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Congregation kneels or sits

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P. Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.

When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.

At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

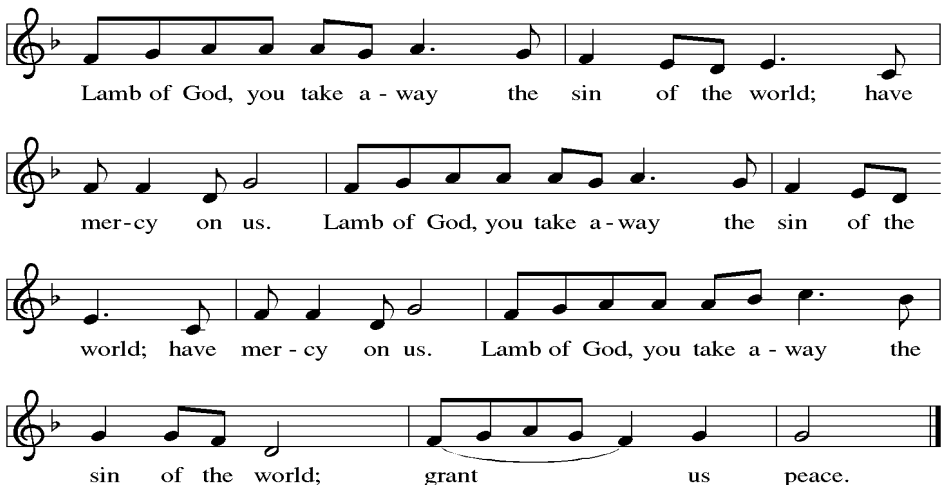
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Please come forward, guided by the Ushers, to receive the bread and wine. Children are invited to the table for a blessing.

Gluten free and traditional wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come up. The bread is dairy and egg free. Grape juice is available in the second communion plate. As you return to your seat via the side aisles you can place your empty cup in the baskets on either side.

P. Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

COMMUNION SONG



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

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

After all have received Communion the congregation stands.

TABLE BLESSING

P. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.

Refrain



Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray... God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

SENDING

BENEDICTION

P. May God who comes among us, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Savior of the Nations, Come

ELW 263

DISMISSAL

A. Go in peace. Keep awake. **C. Thanks be to God.**

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Announcements for December 14th, 2025

***Welcome** to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God’s presence in our worship!*

*If today is your **first time** worshipping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the “Guest Book” on the table in the narthex and take a welcome bag.*

*Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning. **Large print bulletins are available.***

***Worship is live streamed** to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All.*

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***Thank you to our Sunday School kids for leading worship today with the Christmas Pageant!***

***Thank you, Schoenagel Family, for this morning’s refreshments!***

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Volunteers for Today’s Worship

Lay Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Ushers	Diane Rossi
Comm. Asst.	Debbie Lennon
Tech	John Heeren
Tellers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Refreshments	Schoenagel Family

Volunteers for Next Sunday, Dec. 21st

Lay Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Ushers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Comm. Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tech	Fred Schoenagel
Tellers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Refreshments	Gale MacPeck

******* Join us for refreshments after worship*******

Christmas Eve Worship: Christmas Eve candlelight worship is **NEXT Wednesday, December 24th at 5pm.** We hope you and your families will join us! Invite your friends to join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

Sunday, Dec 14: Sunday School Pageant Rehearsal, 8:45-9:15am

Worship w/Communion & Christmas Pageant, 3rd Sunday of Advent, 9:30am

Spending Plan Q&A Meeting following worship

Choir Practice following Spending Plan Meeting

Tuesday, Dec 16: Pastor's Comm. Office Hrs., Café e Dolci, Franklin, 12-2pm

Wednesday, Dec 17: Adult Ed, Advent Study, Zoom, 10am & 7pm

Saturday, Dec 20: Sisters in Prayer, Zoom, 8:30am

Sunday, Dec 21: Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

Worship w/Communion, 4th Sunday of Advent, 9:30am

Choir Practice following worship

Spending Plan Q&A: TODAY Following worship we will have our spending plan Q&A. This is the time to ask questions about the proposed spending plan for 2026. This allows us to have a smooth annual meeting in January. Please plan to attend.

Food Items & Christmas Gifts: All donations need to be returned to the back fellowship room TODAY Sunday, December 14th. Thank you for your care and love for those in need this holiday season!!

Angels & Stars: Would you like to add a Christmas Angel or Star to our beautiful Christmas tree? **Please fill out the form in the narthex and return to the office TODAY.** The Angels and Stars are added to our decorations to celebrate and remember anyone you would like this holiday season.

Pastor's Community Office Hours: Pastor Peggy will be at Café e Dolci, Franklin, THIS Tuesday, December 16th from 12-2pm for Community Office Hours. All are welcome to drop in for a visit as she is present in the community.

2026 Calendars for Sale: The calendars are here! They are **\$20 each**. They make great gifts in addition to beautifying your own home! All calendar sales go directly to support the church.

Paper Drive: We are running low on toilet paper and paper towels. **Please contribute** to our "Paper Drive" in the months of December and January. All **donations can be placed** in the fellowship room against the left wall by the chairs.

Youth Council Representative: For 2026 we will **need a new youth representative on church council**. If you are a youth interested in this service position please contact Pastor Peggy or Diane Rossi. Thank you to Kevin, who has been our youth rep and will be heading off to college next year.

White Elephant Gift Exchange: Sunday, January 4th we will be hosting a **white elephant gift exchange!** This is purposefully held after Christmas so you can bring a gift you received that you'd like to pass on! **Here's a little church trivia:** It is still Christmas season in the church calendar until January 6, and in some countries, Christmas is celebrated on that day with Little Christmas or La Befana, **so bring what you have and no longer want (no shopping needed!)** and we will have fun celebrating the end of the Christmas season together!

Food Pantry: Thank you for the recent generous food drives, we are still in **need of:** canned chicken noodle soup, canned stew, instant pudding, jello, children's juice boxes or pouches, 4-pack toilet paper & toothpaste. You can always bring donations of canned goods, paper goods, and hygiene products. All donations can be **placed in the blue bin** by the sanctuary doors. Thank you!

THE HOLIDAYS AT HOLY COUNSELOR



Advent Worship


11/30, 12/7,
12/14 (Pageant), 12/21
@9:30am

Christmas Eve Worship

Wed 12/24 @ 5pm
Candlelight & Communion

Lessons & Carols Worship

12/28 @9:30am



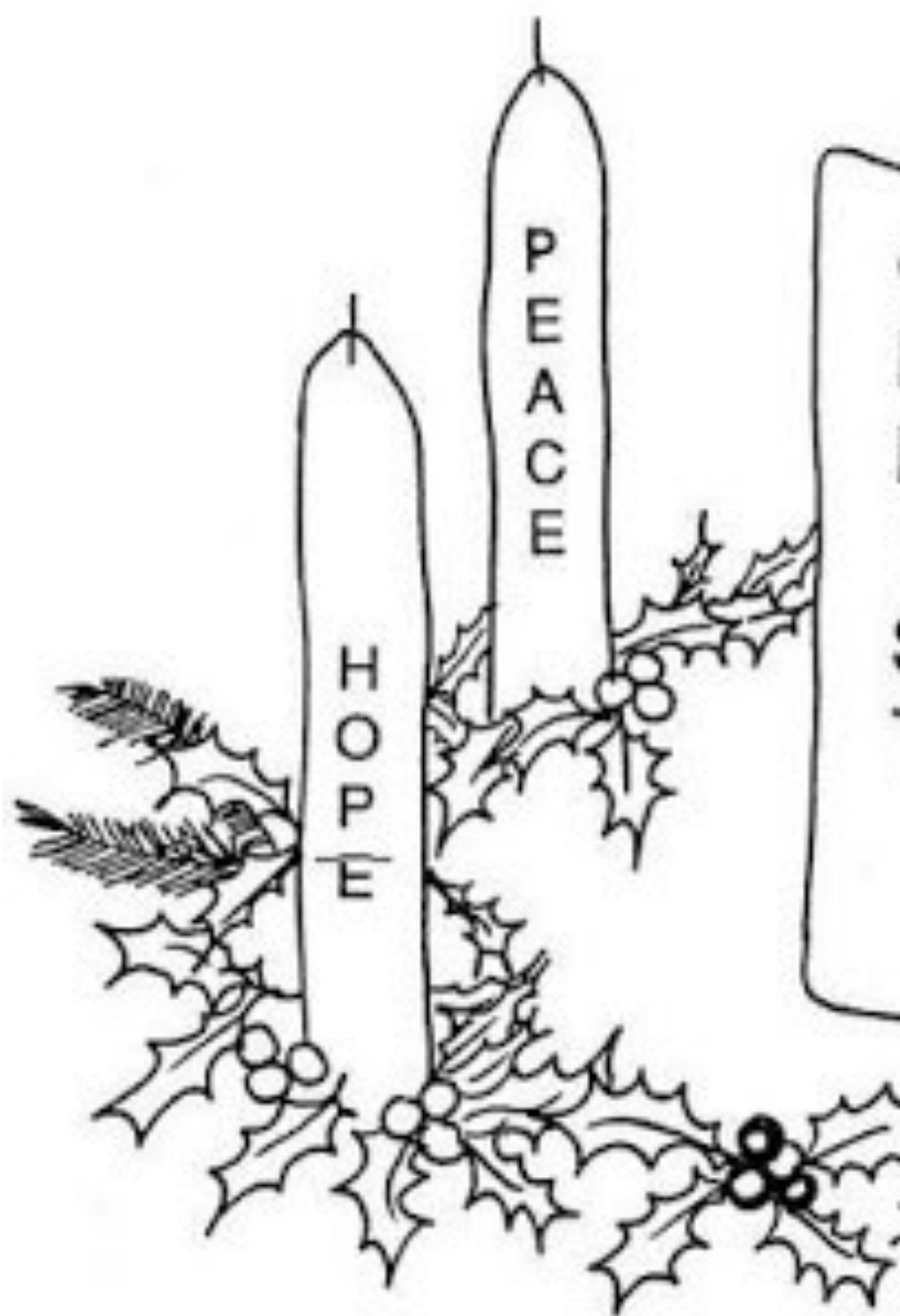
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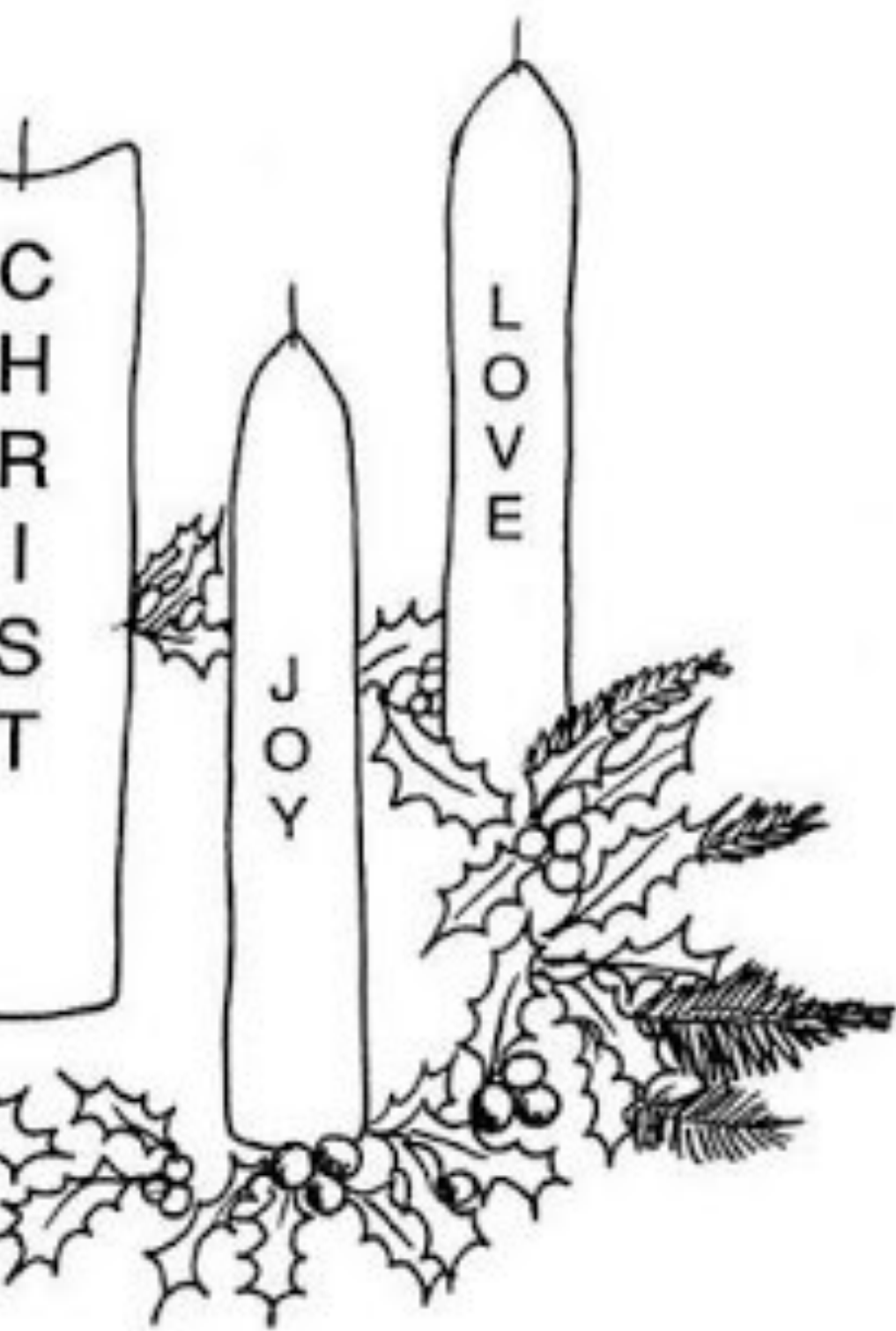
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CHRIST

JOY

LOVE





Contact Information

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Director of Music: June Tarantino: music@hc-lutheranchurch.org

Office Administrator: Cathy Nemecek: office@hc-lutheranchurch.org

Bookkeeper: Wynn White: accounts@hc-lutheranchurch.org

MISSION STATEMENT

*As Children of God,
we are called to share and serve
Christ's love and bring God's word to all.*

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor Rev. Peggy Ludlow

President Nancy Knecht

Vice President Frank Urbaniak

Treasurer Claire Speroni

Recording Secretary Dawn McCormick

Financial Secretary John Heeren

Outreach Coordinator Francine Vince

Nurture Coordinator Fred Schoenagel

Administration Coordinator Diane Rossi

Youth Representative Kevin Drache

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Kristina Heeren

Pam Kucks

Matt Moller

Aileen Donovan

Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

