



THE SPIRIT  
MONTHLY  
NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PASTOR - DECEMBER 2023

For my first December at Holy Spirit, 2007, I wrote in the Newsletter:

*WHAT IS ADVENT?? and why do we celebrate it?*

*Advent is a season. It is a season of preparation prior to the celebration of Christ's first advent, or coming, into the world. When the church decided in the 4th century to celebrate the birth of Christ with a holiday, there was little argument about the need for a period of preparation, but little agreement on the length of that period.*

*It took another 600 years before everyone agreed that Advent - the period of preparation - would include the four Sundays prior to Christmas, beginning on the Sunday nearest November 30th. The Advent Season concludes on Christmas Eve.*

*Advent traditions around the world are as varied as Christmas traditions. One favorite tradition, though, has emerged through the years - the Advent wreath, or crown. The circle of green and the four candles marking the four Sundays of the Advent season have become a nearly universal symbol of Advent in Christian cultures.*

*Advent is rooted in ancient customs. The custom of decorating the home with evergreen boughs in December and January is much older than even our celebration of Christmas. As it did with other holidays and traditions, the church took over a tradition used by non-Christian cultures and "converted" it into a Christian tradition. The Advent wreath, or crown, is a further refinement of the tradition of hanging greens that has been infused with new meaning. Although the Christmas tree is an important symbol in our culture, the Advent wreath dates back further and carries more natural Christian symbolic meaning than the tree. (taken from "Family Advent Celebration" a book created by Don & Lorie Marsh)*

*"The (church) year begins with Advent, a season of preparation that looks toward both Bethlehem and the consummation. The preferred color for advent is blue, which has a precedent in the Swedish Church....Blue suggests hope, a primary theme of Advent....To allow Advent to have its fullest dramatic impact, congregations must be encouraged to defer Christmas music, decorations, and parties until the 12 days of Christmas (December 24-January 5). The richness of the symbols and themes of Advent must not be obscured by the Christmas preparations." (From the Lutheran Book of Worship, LBW)*

When I read those words, I thought, "They are still appropriate in 2023." We need hope now more than ever!

As we prepare for Christmas this year, may we not be so rushed as to forget how important Advent is in our Faith Lives. May we be patient for Christmas!



**NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 13**

We are collecting groceries for the Christmas Food Baskets that are distributed to families in the WB school system.

Please check the bulletin board for the most updated list of items needed!

- (9) Turkeys needed
- (See signup sheet on bulletin board!)
- (8) Stuffing needed
- (9) Gravy needed
- (9) Applesauce needed
- (10) Cake Mix
- (10) Frosting
- (10) Baked Beans needed
- (9) Canned Vegetables
- (8) Peanut Butter needed
- (4) Jelly or Jam needed
- (9) Mayo needed
- (10) Spaghetti Sauce needed
- (9) Breakfast Cereal needed
- (9) Loaves of Bread needed
- (9) Bags of Potatoes needed
- (9) Bags of Onions needed
- (10) Bags of Carrots needed
- (10) Bags of Celery needed
- (9) Dozen Eggs needed
- (9) 1-Pound Butter needed
- (9) American-Cheese Slices Packs
- (9) 6-Packs of Raisins
- (10 Packs) Candy Canes
- Cash for Gift Cards
- (5) \$5.00 Stuffed animals from Petsmart or Kohl's

Non-perishable items can be placed on the bench outside the sanctuary or in the church kitchen.

Speak with Nancy Green, Hilda Sawicki or Ruth Dziuba if you have questions.

**THE ADVENT TEA  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 AT 4 PM**



This is for all women of Holy Spirit and their guests. Consider hosting a table; you decorate your table and provide table service. Please signup on the bulletin board.



HOLY SPIRIT LUTHERAN CHURCH  
**CHRISTMAS  
CAROL SING**  
Wednesday,  
December 13 @ 7 PM  
w/ Special Guest  
Chanah Ambuter, Harpist  
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church  
4800 Orchard Lake Road  
West Bloomfield 48323  
248.682.5441  
www.spiritdrivenchurch.com

We hope you'll join us! Part of the Mary Freed Memorial Concert Series. Please sign up on the bulletin board to help provide refreshments!

**WELCA  
WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE  
(& Community Outreach Bag Assembly)  
Thursday, December 14 @ 5 PM**



We will be collecting and assembling the personal care bags. Please signup on the bulletin board and see the list of items needed for the bags. All women of Holy Spirit are invited to attend.

## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

### ADULT BASIC YOGA CLASS

Tuesdays at 9 AM

Instructor Tina Green leads us in simple basic poses with on-hand modifications available and geared toward developing a yoga practice that does not intimidate. Please bring a yoga mat for floor poses. The fee is \$5.00 per class.

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### PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Tuesdays at 10 AM

Bring a project to work on. The fellowship continues as we go out to lunch afterwards. The group maintains a supply of Prayer Shawls for members who are recovering from surgery or illness. Come and join us!

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### DINNER WITH FRIENDS

Friday, December 8 at 6:00 PM

Bistro Le Bliss  
6540 Orchard Lake Rd, WB

We hope you join us!  
Please sign-up on the bulletin board.

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### MEN'S GROUP DINNER

Tuesday, December 12 at 6:30 PM

The Library Sports Pub & Grill  
West Bloomfield

We hope you join us!  
Please sign-up on the bulletin board.

The men of Holy Spirit meet for food and fellowship once a month. Open to all men of Holy Spirit.

## PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

- ✓ When your contact information changes so we can update the church records.
  - ✓ When you or a member of your family is admitted to the hospital, so Pastor may visit if you would like.
  - ✓ When a significant event is happening in your life or in the life of someone you love.
  - ✓ When planning your wedding and especially before setting the wedding date.
  - ✓ Before making funeral arrangements.
  - ✓ When a new baby arrives in your family.
  - ✓ When you have questions about your faith.
  - ✓ When you need information about some process or happening in church life.
  - ✓ When a new family moves into your neighborhood.
  - ✓ You feel the church can assist you in any way.
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### Pastor

William J. Matlack

Office Hours: Tue, Wed, Thu 9:00-11:30 AM

### Administrative Assistant

Cheryl Brouillette

Office Hours: Tue, Wed, Thu 6:30-11:30 AM

## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS IN DECEMBER

12/3	12/10	12/17	12/24	12/31
<b>Reader/Greeter</b> TBD	<b>Reader/Greeter</b> Jennie Sweda	<b>Reader/Greeter</b> Jean Samuelsen	<b>Reader/Greeter</b> Mark Filipp	<b>Reader/Greeter</b> Doug Opthoff
<b>Ushers</b> Andy Meyer Bob Frick	<b>Ushers</b> Dennis Kunkel Doug Opthoff Tom Sweda	<b>Ushers</b> Stan Samuelsen Lukas Mattern Roy Salowich	<b>Ushers</b> Janet Martin Mary Martin Hilda Sawicki Irene Oshiyoye	<b>Ushers</b> Andy Meyer Bob Frick
<b>Counters</b> Andy Meyer Stan Samuelsen	<b>Counters</b> TBD	<b>Counters</b> Mary Martin Janet Martin	<b>Counters</b> TBD	<b>Counters</b> TBD
<b>Altar Guild</b> Ruth Dziuba				

## CELEBRATING IN DECEMBER

### Birthdays!

5	Tina Green
11	Dustin Dronsella
12	Lukas Mattern
14	Mike Julius
14	Sheperd Kern
16	Cindy Ward
21	Bill Fodor
26	Chris Chiaravalli
26	Rita Julius
29	Sue Fodor
30	Quinn Rand
30	Weston Rand

### Anniversaries!

1	Craig & Jenny Rand
3	Mark & Kim Filipp
4	Russ & Lorry Prus
27	John & Ruth Dziuba

[Prayer Ventures for December 2023]

**1** *World AIDS Day* Remember in prayer all who have been and continue to be affected by HIV and AIDS, and pray for the work we do together through the ELCA's HIV and AIDS Ministry — building awareness, serving people who live with HIV and AIDS, advocating for change, and supporting effective, affordable prevention, treatment and care globally.

**2** The United Nations estimates that 90% of wartime casualties are suffered by civilians. Pray for an end to the violence, loss of life, suffering and injustice caused by war and conflict in the world, especially in Ukraine and the Middle East.

**3** *First Sunday of Advent* Praise God, source of our hope, strength, healing and new life, and Jesus Christ, who lived among us to reveal God's grace.

**4** Approximately 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability, including about 42.5 million people in our country. Pray for the Spirit to sustain our commitment and guide our efforts to welcome, respect and fully include people with disabilities in every aspect of society and the church. Give thanks for the work and resources of ELCA Disability Ministry, the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association and the Lutheran Services in America–Disability Network.

**5** Pray that we will not lose heart when we read stories of the church in decline or hear fewer people expressing faith in Christ. Ask the Spirit to strengthen our trust in God's unwavering presence and work in the world and to help us bring the gospel to those still yearning for hope, healing and good news. "Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight" (ELW 241).

**6** Pray for ELCA missionaries serving alongside our global companions and churches around the world. Give thanks for communities of faith where our mission personnel worship and celebrate their faith with siblings in Christ.

**7** *Hanukkah* Pray for our Jewish neighbors around the world who are beginning their eight-day celebration of Hanukkah — the Festival of Lights.

**8** Remember in prayer people for whom the Christmas season stirs depression, loneliness and grieving. Promise to welcome these struggling people into our communities of faith and to connect them with new friends and siblings in Christ who will offer care and support during the holidays and throughout the year.

**9** Reflect prayerfully on the symbolism of the Advent wreath and candles, which help us anticipate and celebrate God's boundless love and the promise of eternal life fulfilled in the birth of Christ — a light that breaks through the darkness of the world and changes everything.

**10** Pray that we will be faithful and enthusiastic witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ for all people in every circumstance of life.

**11** Give thanks for our church's commitment to service, generosity, justice and ending hunger and poverty for the sake of our neighbors in need. Pray that the ELCA Good Gifts catalog and the ministries of the ELCA will help us understand the needs of our neighbors and how we can work together to make a lasting impact in the world.

**12** Praise God for the diverse Advent and Christmas traditions of the Christian church around the world, traditions that enrich our faith and understanding of how Christ has impacted communities, cultures and nations.

**13** Pause during the busyness of the holidays and pray for our neighbors in need, especially those experiencing suffering, poverty, war, recovery from disasters and displacement from their homes. Pray that they will find relief, hope and renewed strength in the certainty of God's attention and love, evidenced in the gift of Jesus Christ and reflected in our concern, response and advocacy.

**14** Give thanks for the seasons of the liturgical year and the Scripture, colors, symbols, prayers, music and rituals of faith that help us live in the rhythm of life as children of God and siblings in Christ.

**15** Ask God to help us reflect on those who are not present whenever we gather and to remember that these children of God bring unique voices, gifts and life experiences to the worship, activities and gatherings of our congregations.

**16** *Las Posadas* Give thanks for the tradition of Las Posadas, which recalls Mary and Joseph's Nativity journey and is observed in parts of Latin America and in some Latino communities in the United States.

**17** Pray that we will have the humility, honesty and boldness of John the Baptist, who did not shy away from expressing his faith in Jesus Christ even when challenged and threatened.

**18** *International Migrants Day* Pray for those who, with great risk and uncertainty, have left their home countries and familiar surroundings to seek welcoming communities where they feel safe, respected and free to reestablish their lives and raise their families.

**19** Give thanks to God for the assurance of life eternal in the kingdom of heaven and for the Spirit equipping us to embody God's compassion in the world while we await the return of Christ.

**20** What stirs joy in you today? Give thanks for the people and experiences that bring joy into your life, even if only briefly. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

**21** *Winter solstice* As the days of the Northern Hemisphere grow shorter, pray that we will be guided and reassured by the light of Christ, which illuminates God's love, mercy and truth in our lives and in every corner of the world.

**22** Praise God for this time of remembrance, anticipation and celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, a birth that changed the world and our lives in ways that exceed our imagination and comprehension.

**23** Give thanks for those who serve our communities during Christmas, including people in health care, elder care, law enforcement, the hospitality industry, emergency services and the military.

**24** *Christmas Eve* Shout "Glory to God in the highest!" The good news of the birth of the promised Messiah and Savior for all creation and humankind has been made known to us and is the foundation of our faith and life.

**25** *Christmas Day* Lift up shouts of thanksgiving and praise for all to hear! God lives among us in the birth of Jesus Christ and pours hope and joy into our lives to fill their voids and mend our brokenness.

**26** *Kwanzaa* Pray for our African-descent neighbors and siblings in Christ who celebrate Kwanzaa, a weeklong observance of African culture and traditions that emphasizes family, community and shared principles. Give thanks for the rich and enduring practices of our African-descent siblings and the global African community.

**27** Give thanks that the gift of grace found in Jesus Christ is both deeply personal and for all humankind. "Of what benefit would it be to me if Christ had been born a thousand times, and it would daily be sung into my ears in a most lovely manner, if I were never to hear that he was born for me and was to be my very own?" (Martin Luther, 1522).

**28** Christmas may have come and gone, but we carry into every day the joy of Christmas and the birth of the Christ child, the manifestation of God's love for humanity. Give praise and thanks to God!

**29** Lift up prayers of relief and thanksgiving for God's mercy, which is fair and generous and is never swayed by our actions or words, no matter how good or well-intended.

**30** Share with God your hopes, concerns, uncertainties and aspirations for the year ahead. Pray for the Spirit to strengthen our faith in God's concern for us and in God's attention to our prayers — spoken and silent.

**31** *New Year's Eve* Our baptism with water, the word of God and the blessings of our siblings in Christ marks us as children of God and followers of Jesus, loved, forgiven and made new every day of our lives. Alleluia!

**DECEMBER 2023**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Fri
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
					A.A. Meeting 8 PM	Zumba 9:30 AM
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
Choir 8:45 AM Worship 10 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM	Zumba 6:30 PM	Yoga 9 AM  Prayer Shawls 10 AM	Handbells 7 PM	Zumba 6:30 PM	Dinner with Friends 6 PM  A.A. Meeting 8 PM	Zumba 9:30 AM
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
Choir 8:45 AM Worship 10 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM	Zumba 6:30 PM	Yoga 9 AM  Prayer Shawls 10 AM  Men's Group Dinner 6:30 PM	Christmas Carol Sing 7 PM	WELCA White Elephant 5 PM  Zumba 6:30 PM	A.A. Meeting 8 PM	Zumba 9:30 AM
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
Choir 8:45 AM Worship 10 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM	Zumba 6:30 PM	Yoga 9 AM  Prayer Shawls 10 AM  Council meets 7 PM	Handbells 7 PM		A.A. Meeting 8 PM	Zumba 9:30 AM
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
Choir 8:45 AM Worship 10 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM  Christmas Eve 7 PM	Zumba 6:30 PM	Yoga 9 AM  Prayer Shawls 10 AM	Handbells 7 PM	Zumba 6:30 PM	A.A. Meeting 8 PM	Zumba 9:30 AM
<b>31</b>						
Choir 8:45 AM Worship 10 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM						

**Holy Spirit Lutheran Church**

4800 Orchard Lake Rd.  
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

248-682-5441

www.spiritdrivenchurch.com  
office@spiritdrivenchurch.com

Follow us @spiritdrivenchurch



Worship            10:00 AM  
Sunday School    10:45 AM  
(September – May)



HOLY SPIRIT LUTHERAN CHURCH  
4800 Orchard Lake Road  
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

**MISSION STATEMENT**

We are CALLED by Christ in our Baptism  
GATHERED by the Holy Spirit to celebrate  
God's grace in our midst  
SENT to share God's blessings in our  
community and beyond