

**THE MONTH OF
DECEMBER**

2025

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH NEDERLAND, TEXAS

Staff:

Joshua Knippa
Pastor
409-722-1609

Sandra Erickson
Secretary
409-722-1609

Veronica Ochoa
ECE Director
409-722-2177

Anna Shuford
Technology
Coordinator
5th-7th Confirmation
ECE Chapel
Assistant
409-718-0336

Message from Pastor

Advent

Every December the world rushes headlong into the holidays, but Lutherans do something strange by the world's standards: we decline to sing Christmas carols... yet. Instead, we light a blue candle (or sometimes purple) and start singing the ancient, minor-key plea: "O come, O come, Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel." We call these four weeks Advent, from the Latin *adventus*— "*coming*." *It is not a warm-up for Christmas; it is its own season with its own voice. And that voice is urgent.*

Advent is the season when the Church remembers two things at once: Christ has come, and Christ is coming again. We live between the times.

The First Coming

The first candle reminds us that the Lord once came in humility. He came to a people who had waited centuries for the Messiah, yet when He arrived He was not recognized by most. A teenage girl in Nazareth, a feed-trough in Bethlehem, a sojourn to Egypt- this is how the King entered His world. The Lutheran Confessions speak of the *humilitas Christi*, the lowliness of Christ. *In Advent we do not rush past the manger to the angels and shepherds; we linger in the night, because the world is still dark and the Church is still waiting.*

The Coming Again

Yet Advent is never only backward-looking. We frequently confess, "From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead." The second, third, and fourth candles point us forward to the day when the same Jesus, now hidden in lowliness, will be revealed in glory. The Reformation kept the church's ancient hope of the visible return of Christ burning brightly. We do not spiritualize the Second Coming into a vague feeling of "Jesus in my heart." We expect a day, a trumpet, a sky cracked open, a Judge on the throne, and a renewed creation where "the wolf shall lie down with the lamb" (Isaiah 11).

The Present Coming

Between these two advents—Bethlehem and the Last Day—there is a third coming Lutherans cherish: Christ comes to us now, hidden, yet revealed in humble means. He comes in water that drowns the Old Adam and raises a saint. He comes in words preached by a sinner. He comes in bread and wine that are his body and blood. The same Lord who once lay in a manger now gives us the forgiveness of sins. Advent, therefore, is not only waiting for a future event; it is learning to recognize Jesus is already present where He has promised to be.



Then why the somber blue and the minor hymn keys? Because the world is still under the curse. Because 2,000 years after the first Christmas, there are still wars and rumors of wars, marriages still fracture, cancer wards are still full, and we ourselves still sin every day. Advent refuses to let us fabricate false refuge with plastic smiles and premature "Jingle Bells." It forces us to say, "Yes, Christ has come- and still 'O Lord, how long?'"

Yet Advent is not despair. The very name *Immanuel* means "God with us"—not "God who will someday be with us," but God who is with us even in the dark. The Lutheran chorales of the season are full of this defiant joy: "Rejoice, rejoice! Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel." We know the end of the story.

How then shall we keep Advent?

- Come to the midweek services. The hymns, the prayers, the preaching are crafted to form you for watchful, hopeful waiting.
- Use an Advent wreath at home. Light one more candle each week and read the appointed Scriptures. Let your household see that Christmas joy is something we are prepared to receive, not something we manufacture.
- Expect Christ where He promises to be found: in the Word read, the absolution spoken, the Sacrament received.

Soon enough the paraments will turn white, the Gloria will thunder out, and we will sing "Joy to the World" with abandon. But not yet. For now we watch. For now we pray, "Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come."

The Lord is coming—He who once came as a baby, who now comes in Word and Sacrament, and who will come again as King. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

God's peace and all the best,
Pastor Joshua Knippa

UBM's "Share a Toy" program is in full swing to help provide Christmas gifts to local underprivileged children. Take a tag from the bulletin board in the Narthex and be a blessing to others. Please return unwrapped donations back to the church to box in Narthex or the church office before **December 5th**.

Cash or checks are also accepted.

Please contact: Pam Vincent, Lori Halbert, or Carolyn Barras with any questions.

IT'S THAT TIME:

Lutheran Witness annual renewal If you wish to renew your subscription or start a new one the cost is **\$24.75** for the yearly subscription which includes the Texas Messenger, please call the church office at 409-722-1609 or pick up envelope in the Narthex & place in box.

Also, it's time to order **Christmas Poinsettias** to decorate our Sanctuary for Advent & the coming of Christ our Savior. Poinsettias are **\$10** a plant & are offered in red, white, & pink. Please fill out the appropriate envelope & return with payment to the box in the Narthex.

ADULT FELLOWSHIP CHRISTMAS PARTY

Please join us Sunday,
December 7th, from 5pm—until, at:



**7500 N Twin City
Hwy,
Port Arthur, TX**

If you would like to participate
In the gift exchange you can
bring a \$20 man or woman gift. Please
RSVP to the church office at 409-722-
1609 or to **Marla Kieschnick** at 409-
728-1363. Also, if you need childcare
call church office. Plan on coming for
good food & fellowship.



Musical talent are invited to join the choir! **Band practices are Thursdays @ 7pm.** Call **Kay Brown @ 409-728-8180** if interested.

Join us for a
Women's Bible Study
"10 Women of the Bible"

led by **Jeannie Heider**
Sundays @ **9:15am**
in Conf. Rm. B

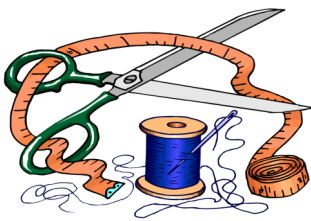


Quilting:

Join us on **Thursdays 9:30am-3pm**
for fun and fellowship.

If you know someone that needs a quilt call:
Rosemarie Herring @ 409-527-2372.

Thank you to our Quilters who have provided lap quilts on the back pew.



Fit & Fun Fellowship
will meet **December 16th**
from **1-3:30pm**
In the FLC foyer.



We have a
new name for our
PUPPET MINISTRY:
"WOW Puppet Crew".

The WOW stands for **"Worship Our Way"**.
Stay tuned for more action from the
PUPPET MINISTRY!

If you are interested in joining in the fun—

Contact **Marla Kieschnick @**
#409-728-1363 with any questions.

SUNDAYS 9:30AM

Adult Bible Class

Pastor Josh, Conf. Rm. A
9:15am Jeannie Heider,
Conf. Rm. B

Children's Sunday School
Education Building



Please contact the church office at
409-722-1609 upon the illness,
hospitalization, and/or death
of a member or loved one.

Please update us with the status of
prayer requests. We try to notify members
via FB page and text messages of
deaths & funeral arrangements.



Deadline for
December Newsletter
is Monday, December 22nd!

DECEMBER

Birthdays

- 2—Troy Ford
Holly Riemersma
- 3—Darryl Carter
Ronald Gribnau
Mark Winstead
- 4—Brianne Caswell
- 7—Monica Bresee
Greyson Elisar
Ryan Wolford
- 9—Chloe Molbert
- 10—Nancy Longlet
David Tindel
- 11—Marlee Woodruff
- 12—Heather Jones
- 13—Danielle Viator
Christopher Lovelace
- 14—Bonnie Albright
Clint Laird
Adam Longlet
Katlyn Roberts
Mia Woodruff
- 15—Raymond Rice
- 16—Victoria Wolfe
- 17—Brooklyn Borel
Carrigan McCullough
- 18—Luke Matthews
Kyle Spinks
- 19—Nolan Blackwell
Andrew Bruney
Lynne Hollomon
Dan Weber
- 20—Amy Pinnt
Radmon Rice
Whitney Broussard

- 23—Dominic Spinks
- 24—Sandy Crow
- 25—Russell West
- 26—Leah Elisar
- 28—Chase Caswell
Christopher Rash
Blakelynn Theriot
Braxton Theriot
- 29—Owen McEachern
- 30—Carlene Singleton
- 31—Taryn Dunlap
Taylor Dunlap
Lucy Molbert



Anniversaries

- 2—Amber & Adam Denn
- 9—Valarie & Dillon Ford
- 20—Elna & Ron Ermel
Anna & Todd Shuford
- 23—Yolanda & Charles
Schrader
- 28—Deborah & Glen Rose
- 29—Pam & Steve Vince
AnnMarie & Devin Landry
- 31—Brytni & Tony Borel
Janna & Brian Hall
Nancy & Jon Longlet
Megan & Donald Trahan



UBM Needs You!
United Board of Missions
is in need of Volunteers
(stocking & organizing pantries).



If you're interested, please contact either—
Pam or **Steve Vincent** @ 409-718-5767
or **Carolyn Barras** @ 409-963-7866 or
Lori Halbert @ 409-719-6235. Thanks!

UBM Pantry is in need of: pasta, rice,
canned fruit, & canned meat. A donation
box will be available in the Narthex!

See a copy of the 2024 Annual Impact Report in
our November Newsletter. Also, see additional
flyers on our bulletin Board in the Narthex of dif-
ferent opportunities & services that UBM pro-
vides. Our church has several representatives
that are members & also on the Board.

*Merry
Christmas*
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR



Fill up your mite boxes for
LWML 2025 Mission Grants.
"Spare Change Sunday"
is the last Sunday of each

ECE NEWS



Monday, December 1st we're off
Tuesday, December 9th and
Wednesday, December 10th at 9:30am is our
Christmas Programs for the 3 & 4 year old classes.

Wednesday, December 17th and Thursday,
December 18th is our Christmas Parties
with our Fundraiser Lunch.

ECE is closed from Monday, December 18th
until Tuesday, January 6th.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
**God's Blessings, Veronica Ochoa
& ECE Staff**



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Elders: Benny Elisar 409-504-5802 Altar Guild: Leah Elisar Sandra Erickson	ECE Closed	2	3 6pm Midweek Classes No Adult B.S. 7pm Advent Service	4 9:30am Quilting	5	6
7 9:15am Ladies B.S. 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship with Communion	8	9 9:30am ECE Christmas Program	10 9:30am ECE Christmas Program	11 9:30am Quilting	12	13
5pm Adult Fellowship Christmas Party Tia Juanita's Pt. Neches		6pm Nederland Christmas Parade	6pm Midweek Classes No Adult B.S. 7pm Advent Service	18 9:30am Quilting	19	20
14 9:15am Ladies B.S. 9:30am Adult Sunday School only 10:30am Christmas Program Christmas Caroling after worship & light lunch	15	16 9:30am ECE Chapel 1-3:30pm Fit & Fun Fellowship	17 9:30am ECE Chapel ECE Christmas Parties w/ fundraiser luncheon 6pm Midweek Classes No Adult B.S. 7pm Advent Service	ECE Christmas Parties w/ fundraiser luncheon		
21 9:15am Ladies B.S. 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship with Communion Movie "David" TBA	22	23	24 5 & 9pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Services	25 9am Christmas Day Service 	26	27
FLC Private Rental	29	30	31 	Lay Readers: 7—Babette Ford 14—Ronnie Vize 21—Leah Elisar 28—Dannis McCullough	Ushers: 7—Jim L., Pat S. 14—Thad K., Mike T. 21—Todd K., Daryl W. 24—Pat S., Ronnie V. 28—Charles S., David S.	Acolytes: 7—Brooklyn R., Carrigan M. 14—Landon M., Brant M. 21—Rachel S., Greer S. 28—Hugh S., Bryson M.