



# St. Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church Newsletter

Welcome to worship and life at St. Andrew's!  
Sunday Worship at 9:30 am and hear the sermon on Facebook

December 2024



## FROM YOUR PASTOR

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Advent is a season of watching and waiting, preparation and celebration. Waiting is hard, isn't it? We jump the gun with Christmas stuff in the stores before Halloween, Black Friday sales before Thanksgiving,

Christmas carols in elevators and in the mall even earlier than the year before. Some people like to get a head start, and enjoy their Christmas tree even before the Thanksgiving dishes are done.

Is it only in the church that we watch and wait? And, maybe the better question is – why wait, if we can have it today?

Waiting is more than passing the time. Waiting offers the opportunity to be filled with anticipation and expectation. Waiting gives us opportunities to sharpen our senses, pay attention to things around us, and grow more watchful of what God is doing – this year, this Advent season, as we watch and wait and anticipate what new thing God is doing to reveal God's love and grace to us.

One of my favorite Advent hymns is "All Earth is Hopeful," from the ELW.

All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!  
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:  
this, the labor of people who struggle to see  
how God's truth and justice set everybody free.

In four verses, this hymn brings me into the expectation, and heightened watchfulness of what God is doing – today. I look for new signs of God's love and grace. And that opens into looking for opportunities to share God's love and grace, being God's sign that God is with us and transforming our lives with each act of compassion, forgiveness, love and mercy.

May Advent be more than a time of shopping and baking and wrapping gifts and decorating. May Advent be more than counting down the days to Christmas. May your Advent be a season of seeing God at work in our world, ever preparing us to be the place where God resides in this world so that others can see and know the love and grace of God.

Advent Blessings!  
Pastor Karen



### Contact Information for Pastor Karen

Please add Pastor Karen's cell phone number to your cell phone contacts: 815-821-2426. That way, if she calls you it won't pop up as a potential spam! And, should you want to reach Pastor Karen, you will have her number handy. Especially during hours when the office is not open, the cell phone number is the best way to reach her.

**Our Annual Meeting will take place  
Sunday, January 26, 2025, immediately  
following worship.**

**Please save the date!**

We will be working on 2025 mission and ministry goals, voting in our new leaders, thanking our outgoing leadership, discussing and then passing the 2025 Budget.



## Pastor Karen's Thank You Notes

Thanks to Pam Nemmetz and Peg Olson for heading up the All Saints Sunday butterflies, and getting them all up on the chancel wall. Pam cut out all of the butterflies, and Peg was the one going up and down the ladder to put them on the wall. It was great team work! And thanks to the members of the Property Committee who came and set up the ladder when they put the butterflies up, and when they took them down.

Thank you to everyone who brought coats for the Coat Drive! Many children will be warmer this winter because of your generosity.

I caught Jim and Sue Zinth doing more fall clean up around the church grounds. Thanks to them for all of their work around the church grounds!

Thanks to everyone who donated to the Confirmation Class's Noisy Offering. You donated \$174.00 to provide shoes for children of moms who attend the literacy classes. The Confirmation Class went shopping and picked out shoes and socks for 18 children. We also appreciated the Thrivent Action Team that provided an additional \$250.00 that made this service project such a wonderful opportunity to serve others. We capped off our evening of shopping with a stop for ice cream – which was provided by our adult leaders.



The rugs in the Children's Area are nice and clean again – many thanks to Jim and Sue Zinth and Marcia Galica.

## Pastor's Public Service Announcement: Beware of Scams!

This past month several leaders of St. Andrew's received a scam email, purported to be from Pastor Karen, asking for discretion and assistance – saying that she was very busy and couldn't take phone calls. One of those who received the email sent an email to Pastor Karen on her personal email account – rather than responding to the email. Pastor Karen immediately asked Sandy, our secretary, to send out an email to all members to let them know that the scam email was sent and to not reply to it.

There are some things that we can all pay attention to, in order to avoid inadvertently being scammed.

1. Verify the email address that it was sent from. The way to do this is to run the cursor over the name of the person that sent the email – it will show the email address.
2. If in doubt, don't click on reply but use the person's email address to send a new email and ask if they sent you an email asking for assistance.
3. An email that says the sender is too busy to take a phone call is suspicious.
4. Being asked to do a favor is suspicious – other than being a lector, or some other church related matter – especially when discretion is requested.
5. Asking you to purchase gift cards is a red flag.
6. Never scratch off and reveal the pin on gift cards, photograph them, and email them. The request to do this is a sure indication of a scam.

Be cautious. Be suspicious. Pastor Karen would never ask anyone to get gift cards. And neither would other pastors.



## Highlights of Council Meeting

The Church Council met on Tuesday, 12 November. Those in attendance included: Chris Ziegler, Sarah Mcaninch, Matt Moore, Greg Egner, Kathy Bellaire and Pastor Karen Tews.

Chris called the meeting to order. Pastor Karen led an opening prayer. And the Council participated in Dwelling in the Word on Mark 13:28-37.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted. Expenses are down from last year, but offerings are still less than operating expenses. My Giving and special memorials are helping the church to stay current with accounts and continue God's work. Giving Tuesday is open from December 2nd through December 7th for those that would like to give. There is a \$6,000 matching fund provided by a member of the church.

Old Business included Pastor Karen's report on the Cottage Meetings, which will be shared with the congregation at the Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, 17 November. (Note: if you were unable to attend the meeting and would like a copy of the report – please see Pastor Karen.) It was also reported that the Time and Talent sheets are slow in coming in. Everyone is encouraged to complete the form and return it to the church. The Nominating Committee reported that they have made many contacts, and we still need nominees for Church Council and other positions. Pastor Karen will announce this during church announcements. Chris reported that leaders of the ELCA churches in Oshkosh have been meeting and discussing areas of collaboration for future activities. And the first draft of the 2025 budget was shared with the Council. Discussion of edits were confirmed and work will continue toward a final draft.

New Business included the joy that the Paulick family is reinstating their membership. It was decided to not renew the Zoom subscription since we are not holding Zoom meetings at this time. A liquid fuel Paschal candle was approved for purchase using Memorial Funds, as requested by the Worship and Music

Committee. This will eliminate the wax drips and be easier to light. Sarah brought a suggested draft of a new offering counting sheet which would simplify the offering counting process. Edits were requested, and it will be brought back to the December Council meeting. Pastor's vacation plan was discussed and approved. She will use one week at the end of the year, and carry the second week into next year.

Pastor Karen shared her report highlighting ministries of the past month and what is coming up. She reported on the Election Eve service, the Pop-up Adult Forums, the Oshkosh Conference Annual Meeting, the Synod's Fall Conference, and the Synod's "Boundaries" event. She shared the plans for the low-key Stewardship campaign in November, and shared copies of the Estimate of Giving sheets and plans for Commitment Sunday on 24 November – Christ the King Sunday. Looking ahead to December, she reported on plans for midweek Advent services on 4, 11, and 18 December at noon.

Committee reports were received. Worship and Music requested approval of a \$100. honorarium for the ONHS Madrigals.

The next Church Council meeting will be Tuesday, 10 December at 7:00 pm. The meeting closed with prayer led by Pastor Karen.



## A Plea for People to serve on the Church Council

Plain and simple – the church cannot function without a Church Council. We have learned to function without an Evangelism Committee. And we have learned to function without a Congregational Life Committee. The ministry of the congregation is weaker for those absences. But we cannot function without a Church Council.

Even though you may have served in the past, and thought you were done with that part of congregational life – please consider another term on the Church Council. The congregation's ability to continue its mission depends on the membership joining in the leadership roles. Thank you for giving this request your prayerful consideration. Please contact the church office or Pastor Karen if you would be willing to serve, or if you would like more information about serving on the Church Council. Thank you!



## Midweek Advent Worship Services



St. Andrew's will hold midweek Advent services on Wednesdays at noon. Services will be held on 4, 11, and 18 December. The theme of the services is: *Love Came Down*. Join us each week for scripture, prayers, a homily, and hymns as we celebrate God's love this Advent and Christmas.

## CHRISTMAS 2024

### December 24 Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve, 24 December, we will have two services.

4:00 pm – A service of hymns, lessons, a message, and Holy Communion.

6:30 pm – Carols by Request, before the 7:00 pm service.

7:00 pm – A service of hymns, lessons, a message, the choir will sing, Holy Communion, and candle lighting while singing "Silent Night."

There will be a children's message at each service.



## **Christmas Worship Schedule**

### December 25 Christmas Day

**9:30 am** Holy Communion Worship

Please come to worship the newborn Christ as you are able.

## Advent Devotional Books – "Let Your Light Shine"



Enrich your Advent with devotions written by Sandi Geis. Lights shine everywhere this time of year, bringing beauty and joy to the Advent season. Yet, looming in the shadows are all the troubles of this world that often darken our spirits. The daily Advent prayers in this booklet help us look to Jesus, the Light of the World, who overcomes all darkness with his gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. Copies of the devotional booklet are on the table in the narthex. For those who are homebound or unable to come to church, please call the church office and one will be delivered to you.

## Offering our Time and Talents to the Lord's Work

Please complete the Time and Talent Sheets that were mailed out with the quarterly financial giving statements, as soon as possible! And please return them to the church as soon as possible. There is a red box on the table in the narthex to put them in. As the Church Council looks to next year we need to know where people are willing to serve in the church. Thank you!



## Giving Tuesday 3 December

After Thanksgiving, and Black Friday, and Small Business Saturday and Sunday, and Cyber Monday, we have the opportunity to get into the spirit of both Thanksgiving and Christmas with Giving Tuesday. On Giving Tuesday we at St. Andrew's celebrate this day by receiving donations to the general operations of the church throughout the week – Monday, 2 December through Friday, 6 December. We are fortunate to have donors (personal and corporate) who will match up to \$6,000. of contributions. All offerings during that week can be done via Vanco or mailing or delivering your donation to the church office.

Thank you for your generosity!



## The Wednesday Noon Bible Study

The Wednesday Noon Bible Study has embarked on a study of the Gospel According to St. Luke. As we begin the season of Advent on 1 December, we start a new church year. And in this church year that is beginning, the majority of the gospel lessons will be from the Gospel According to St. Luke. Luke's Gospel brings us the Christmas story that is at the heart of our Christmas celebrations, as well as other stories that are not included in the other Gospels. Everyone is welcome to join in learning about Luke's contributions to our knowledge of Jesus and our faith. During December the Bible Study will meet after the noon Advent worship service – about 12:45 pm.



## Art & Soul Dec. 14 11AM – 4PM

Art and Soul is meeting December 14 from 11AM until 4PM. You do not need to come for the whole time. We are a fellowship group who share the enjoyment of arts and crafts with each other. Everyone is welcome, however youth need an adult who will be responsible for them. You do not need to create when you attend. You are welcome to come and visit. Please bring your own supplies, as we no longer have any on site. Feel free to bring a snack to share. Drinks are available to purchase in the kitchen. We usually order or make pizza for lunch, or you can bring your own.



## **We Extend our Condolences**

Carol Wokosin entered the church triumphant on Saturday, 2 November

2024. A celebration of life was held. Let us hold her family and friends in prayer as they grieve her death.

The Reverend John W. Kaplinski died on October 25, 2024 after a long battle with chronic pain. He and his wife were members of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Oshkosh for several decades. It was while at St. Andrew's that Pastor Kaplinski received the call to ordained ministry. Let us hold his family and friends in our prayers as they grieve his death.

We hope to see you in the Creation Station! Contact Brenda Francis for more information  
[brenda\\_at\\_Standrews@yahoo.com](mailto:brenda_at_Standrews@yahoo.com)

## From the Worship and Music Committee



## **The Madrigals Come to St. Andrew's**

On Sunday, 1 December, the Oshkosh North Madrigals will be at St. Andrew's to provide special music prior to the worship service. Everyone is encouraged to come at 9:00 am for this special opportunity to hear the Madrigals.



## **Pop-Up Adult Forum**

Because December is a busy month, we will not have a Pop-up Adult Forum in December. Please submit your suggestions for topics that would be of interest to you for the Pop-up Adult Forums in the future.

From the  
Christian Action  
Committee:



Winnebago Mental Health Institute's  
2024 Christmas Project

A reminder that the deadline for bringing your gifts for this Christmas project is Sunday, 1 December. Thanks to all of you who have already brought gifts!

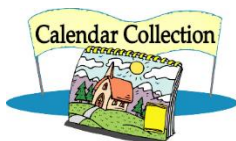


St. Andrew's is once again supporting the Winnebago Mental Health Institute's Christmas Project to provide Christmas gifts to the residents. Gifts can be brought to the church, and they are not to be wrapped. No glass bottles or bottles with pumps are accepted. Ingredients for self-care items cannot contain alcohol for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> ingredient.

Requested items include: chocolate bars (no nuts), body wash (no pumps), deodorant sticks, lotion (no pumps), shampoo (no pumps), conditioner (no pumps), journals (no wire), toothpaste and toothbrushes, winter hats and gloves (no scarves) socks (ankle socks preferred) – warm or fun ones, new underwear/boxers Men's and Women's – all sizes, women's sports bras (no wire), postage stamps, puzzles, Perler beads, playing cards, stuffed animals, gift cards to stores including Walmart, Dollar Tree, Hobby Lobby, and Target. Or you could send a check made out to WMHI Patient Events GC #20. Funds in this account can ONLY be spent on patients.

Calendars

If you have extra 2025 calendars, would you consider donating them to the Oshkosh Correctional Institution for the inmates? We will be collecting until the end of December. Thank you for considering this mission!



Youth Snow  
Tubing Day!

The ECWS is having a tubing day at Kewanee Winter Park in Kewanee on 11 January. More information will be coming out in mid-December, so let Pastor Karen know if you would be interested in going. Then, when the information comes out, she will let you know the details. Sounds like fun!

Noisy Offering



The Noisy Offering for November and December has been designated for the Christine Ann Shelter in Oshkosh. Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services operates a 37-bed emergency shelter for individuals and families needing safety and shelter for an abusive situation. Thank you for your support to this organization.



2025 Giving  
Envelopes

2025 Giving Envelopes are here! They will be available in the narthex soon. If you are unable to pick yours up, please contact us (920-235-6616 or [office@standrewsoshkosh.org](mailto:office@standrewsoshkosh.org)) and we will be glad to help get them to you!





## Mark Your Calendar!

The East Central Synod of Wisconsin is holding a Racial Justice Conference on Saturday, 5 April 2025, at Ascension Lutheran Church in Green Bay. Featured speakers include Vance Blackfox (Cherokee), the ELCA Director for Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations, and the Rev. Angela !Khabeb, the editor of *Call to Allyship: Preparing Your Congregation for Leaders of Color*.

This event is presented by the ECSW Women of the ELCA and the ECSW Racial Equity Team.

## Dementia Support Group



Miravida Living has a Dementia Support Group that is for caregivers only that provide care or support to a loved one with memory loss. The group provides support and listening with information and resources for the journey. They are affiliated with the Alzheimer Association and coordinate with the Community Outreach Coordinator for this region.

The group meets on the first Thursday of the month – though when there is a holiday the group meets on the second Thursday – from 1:30 – 2:30 pm, at the Miravida Living – Bethel Home Chapel, 225 N. Eagle Street, Oshkosh. For more information, see the brochure posted on the bulletin board or call Joan Keltesch at 920-235-3454 or email her at: [jkeldes@miravidaliving.com](mailto:jkeldes@miravidaliving.com).

## Committee Meetings

All members welcome!



JOIN US!

### **Christian Action Committee**

Monday, December 6, at 6pm

### **Council Meeting**

Tuesday, December 10, at 7pm

### **Worship and Music Committee**

Thursday, December 5, at 1pm

### **Property Committee**

Thursday, December 26, at 9 am

