



# *The Messenger* *December 2025*

**St. Paul's  
Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church**

3295 S. Union Ave.  
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## FROM PASTOR MUSE

*"And the one who was seated on the throne said,  
'See, I am making all things new.'"* —  
*Revelation 21:5*

Advent begins with a promise: God is not finished with us yet. The world is still in God's hands, and in Christ, God declares a future that is not defined by our failures, fears, or brokenness. In Revelation 21:5, God speaks a word that echoes across Scripture and history—"I am making all things new." Not "some things." Not "just the things we manage to fix." All things.

Advent reminds us that God's newness does not depend on our perfection or progress. It begins with God stepping into our darkness with light, into our chaos with peace, into our weary world with hope. Luther often reminded the Church that God works most powerfully in unexpected places—in a manger, in a cross, in ordinary bread and wine. God's newness rarely arrives with fanfare. It comes quietly, steadily, faithfully, exactly where we need it most.

We often think of waiting as a passive act. But Advent teaches us that Christian waiting is active, hopeful, and expectant. We watch for God's movement not with idle hands but with open hearts. We wait with trust that God is already doing a new thing—even if we cannot yet see its full shape.

This is good news in a world that feels exhausted:

- exhausted by conflict,
- exhausted by political division,
- exhausted by personal burdens,
- exhausted by the weight of "never enough."

We live in a time when many people feel stuck—stuck in old habits, old wounds, old fears. Advent interrupts us with a divine reminder: "You are not stuck. God is not done. A new thing is coming."

Lutheran theology teaches that we live as both saint and sinner—broken, yet beloved; flawed, yet redeemed. The "new thing" God promises in Revelation is not only about heaven someday; it begins now. Christ is born into our real lives, not our ideal ones. He enters the messiness of our daily routines—the bills, the stress, the caregiving, the worries, the hopes we hardly dare to voice.

Where do you feel the need for newness this Advent? Where in your life do you long for God's renewing work? Perhaps the new thing God is bringing is:

- healing where you carry grief,
- courage where you feel fear,
- forgiveness where you hold regret,
- reconciliation where there is distance,
- rest where you feel worn thin.

God's promise is not that we make

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*See, I am  
making all  
things new.*

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ourselves new, but that Christ makes us new, day by day, moment by moment, breath by breath.

Revelation 21 is not spoken to an isolated believer but to a community struggling with uncertainty. God promises not just individual renewal but a renewed creation, a renewed people, a renewed hope.

In our own congregation, God continues to do a new thing. It shows up in the courage of people serving others, in ministries that grow quietly behind the scenes, in friendships newly formed, in children learning the story of Jesus, in prayers whispered for neighbors and strangers alike. It shows up in every act of love that contradicts the world's cynicism.

Advent invites us to join God's new thing by living as people of hope. Not hollow optimism, but deep trust that Christ's light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Today's world craves novelty—new products, new updates, new trends. Yet spiritual newness is different. It is not disposable. It is not temporary. God's "new thing" is restorative, healing, and rooted in Christ's unchanging love.

In a culture that runs at an relentless pace, Advent says, slow down. In a world that rewards self-reliance, Advent says, look to Christ. In an age of anxiety, Advent says, hope is still possible. In a time of division, Advent says, light still breaks in.

The new thing God brings does not erase the past; it redeems it. It does not deny our wounds; it heals them. It does not demand perfection; it offers grace.

*Soli deo Gloria, Pastor Muse*

## FROM PASTOR THOMPSON

### Does the Hero's Backstory Matter?

*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
(Isaiah 9:6)*

Pastor Tim, Kate, and I like superhero stories. We celebrate the idea that Good wins over Evil. We get invested in the stories of the heroes and the villains.

If you feel that superheroes are not worth spending time on, I recommend considering how we talk about Jesus. Jesus is a superhero story. He is a person who works for the good of all he encounters. Some people are actively seeking Jesus' failure or trying to turn the people against him. For Jesus, it was the religious leaders. For the superheroes in modern stories, it could be a Lex Luthor, Ed Nigma (The Riddler), or Dr. Octavius. The villains are coming from places of self-serving decisions or misguided use of their powers.

One of the main reasons that superheroes become popular is because they call us to a better understanding of how someone with extraordinary power can still be committed to the greater good.

Our understanding of Jesus is remarkably similar. Jesus, born human and divine, has the power to grant healing, forgiveness, and even to resurrect others. His most significant work was his self-sacrifice. Like many superhero stories, Jesus does not seem like the hero type. He was born into a family of low social status and without wealth.

Yet, he is the great bringer of hope, peace, justice, salvation, and eternal life. His power is used to love, serve, and save us all. Jesus did not need to fly, swing from spider webs, or even have wealth to build amazing gadgets. His power is in his very nature, God and Human!

As we move to Christmas, remember the most incredible superhero story of all time! The Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. The savior of the whole world.

Amen

*Peace, Pastor Diana*

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our theme for 2025-2026 School year

“Great are the works of the Lord; they are studied by all who delight in them.”

*Psalms 111:2*

Our education time continues to offer teaching for growth and the path of righteousness. We have classes for all ages, so we invite you to come out and grow in faith. If you would like to participate in the teaching team, please see Pastor Muse.

Bible Study gathers on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM. All are welcome to join.

“Christ in our home” devotional books are available on the table in Barnes Hall. If you would like to receive the Daily

Devotional email sign up through the web-site or contact the pastor for assistance.

The youth group meets every Wednesday. We gather at 5:30 for a meal and conclude at 7:00 PM. Our leaders are Pastor Muse, Pastor Thompson, Diana Cullen and Jill Mehl.

Our Library continues to grow and expand. Take the opportunity to visit our collection and see if there is something that speaks to you.

### HEALING EVENT

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16 AT 7:00 PM.**

A healing event will be held on Tuesday, December 16th at 7:00 PM. This event will include a sound bath, meditation, Reiki, Hot stones, deep heat, Light therapy, Red Light, and other avenues of healing. All are welcome to attend, and no experience is needed.

### BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Join us on Sunday, December 21st, at 7:00 PM as we gather for a service that acknowledges the pain people experience during this season. On the longest night, it is a tradition to gather with God to vocalize our pain and struggle, as the world is bustling with joy and happiness. This will be a service of song, prayer, lament, and grace.

Holy Communion will be offered, and it is open to everyone.

## MUSIC & WORSHIP

Music & Worship Committee will meet after decorating the Sanctuary on December 2.

Reminder – We are decorating the church Sanctuary on Tuesday, December 2nd at 6:00 PM. Please come to help us ready the church for the Advent and Christmas season.

We will have three services to celebrate Christmas Eve on December 24th. We hope you will be able to join us for one of our services and celebrate the birth of our Lord!

**12:00 PM – service in the chapel**

**6:00 PM – family service with candlelight**

**9:30 PM – liturgical service with candlelight**

There will be no choir practices on Thursday, December 25 or Thursday, January 1.

### Attention St. Paul's

Breakfast with Santa will be Saturday December 6th from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. If you would like to help with this event please each out to Josh or Gina Falconer. God's Blessings.

**Breakfast with Santa** will be from 9 to 11 on December 6th. This is a free breakfast for all consisting of pancakes, sausage and fruit. There will be milk, juice and coffee as well. Kids young and old can get a free picture with Santa. We are asking for non perishable food items or cash donations for the food pantry.

## Apostle Build 2025

We have been invited into the fall 2025 Apostle Build program. This is a unique opportunity for the church to partner with Habitat for Humanity to help provide a house for a family. We are blessed to be one of ten churches in this process. We invite you support in this program. There are three ways you can support this work.

1) Prayer. As you come before God in prayer, lift up this program that it will have success. 2) Volunteer. This program involved an investment of time. Either working on the site at the house or making lunch for a work day. If you are interested in this, please see Greg Brookes. 3) Financial donation. We do have a financial investment in this program and would welcome any support and participation from the community. You can make a direct donation through the offering plate, there will be a change collection container in Garnes Hall and there will be an ornament tree in the welcome center during the Holiday Season. Please consider donation, even in a small way to this incredible project.

### MITTEN TREE

This year along with the mittens, gloves, hats, etc. that have been collected in the past. The Salvation Army is asking for all sizes of coats (children and adult). They can be new or gently worn. The need is greater than ever.

**The Annual Around the Table Carol Sing will be held the first Sunday in Advent, November 30, 2025. We will gather at 5:00 PM**

Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, January 25th following worship. All annual reports due to the office by December 31st.

*The Eternal Flame is given to the glory of God  
In memory of my grandparents, Otto and  
Ruth Himmelein and Edward and Lillian  
Schuermeier and John Petro*



### Happy December Birthday to You!

May you enjoy many more and may God bless each one of you in many ways as you enjoy another year in God's grace.

1 - Averi Starkweather	7 - James Rackley	20 - Taylor Rhome	31 - Randy Cubick
2 - Michael Knapik	8 - Leigh Ann Worley	23 - Judy Saunders	31 - Jordan Miller
2 - Trudy Mehl	14 - Karen Kinser	24 - Susan Skropits	31 - Debra Garrott
2 - Ryan Edward Scott	15 - Mercedes Gorby	25 - Holly Lucy	
2 - Kathi Trainer	15 - Jeff Webb	26 - Marcy Supelak	
5- Colleen Carman	18 - Joan Ellsworth	30 - Amy Craig	
5 - Kayla Trainer	20 - Fred Schuller	30 - Paige Zeigler	



## Sunday, December 7, 2025

### Introduction

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Readings and Psalm** Isaiah 11:1-10 *From David's line, a ruler bringing justice and peace* Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19, May the righteous flourish; let there be an abundance of peace. (Ps. 72:7), Romans 15:4-13, *Live in harmony, welcoming one another*, Matthew 3:1-12 *A voice cries: Prepare the way of the Lord*

## Sunday, December 14, 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.

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord 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.**

**Readings and Psalms** Isaiah 35:1-10

*The desert blooms as God's people return from exile*

Psalm 146:5-10 The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8) Luke 1:46b-55 (alternate)

My spirit rejoices in God my Savior. (Lk. 1:47) James 5:7-10 *Patience until the coming of the Lord* Matthew 11:2-11 *The forerunner of Christ*

## Sunday, December 21, 2025

### Introduction

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this

final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Readings and Psalm** Isaiah 7:10-16 *The sign of Immanuel*

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7) Romans 1:1-7 *Paul's greeting to the church at Rome* Matthew 1:18-25 *A God near at hand*

## Wednesday, December 24, 2025

### Introduction

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Readings and Psalm** Isaiah 9:2-7 *Light shines: a child is born for us* Psalm 96 Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (Ps. 96:11) Titus 2:11-14 *The grace of God has appeared* Luke 2:1-14 [15-20] *God with us*

## Sunday, December 28, 2025

### Introduction

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Readings and Psalm** Isaiah 63:7-9 *Israel saved by God's own presence* Psalm 148 The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13) Hebrews 2:10-18 *Christ shares flesh and blood to free humankind* Matthew 2:13-23 *The slaughter of innocent children*

December 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 6:00 pm Decorate the Sanctuary 7:00 pm Committee Meetings	3 10:00 am Bible Study 12:00 pm Midweek Eucharist (in-person and online) 5:30 pm Youth Group 7:00 pm Bible Study	4 4:00 pm Catechism 6:15 pm Joy Bells 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	5 7:00 pm Euchre and Dominoes	6 9:00 am Breakfast with Santa
7 All Saints Sunday 9:30 am Worship (in-person and online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Christian Education	8 7:00 pm Grief Support Poinsettia orders due to church office	9 7:00 pm Church Council	10 10:00 am Bible Study 12:00 pm Midweek Eucharist (in-person and online) 5:30 pm Youth Group 7:00 pm Bible Study	11 4:00 pm Catechism 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	12 12:00 pm Deborah's	13
14 9:30 am Worship (in-person and online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Christian Education	15 6:00 pm Girl Scouts	16 7:00 pm Healing Event	17 10:00 am Bible Study 12:00 pm Midweek Eucharist (in-person and online) 5:30 pm Youth Group 7:00 pm Bible Study	18 4:00 pm Catechism 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	19	20 8:30 am Men's Breakfast
21 9:30 am Worship (in-person and online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Christian Education 7:00 pm Blue Christmas Newsletter items Due	22 7:00 pm Grief Support	23 5:00 PM Community Dinner	24 12:00 pm Christmas Eve Chapel Service 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Family Service 9:30 pm Candlelight Liturgical Service	25 Merry Christmas Church office closed	26 Church office closed	27
28 9:30 am Worship (in-person and online) 10:30 am Fellowship	29	30	31			

## FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

### FELLOWSHIP

Coffee Hour hosts:

Dec 7 - Richard and Cindy Miller, John and Karen Wolfe

Dec 14 - Jan Valentine and Lynette Guthrie

Dec 21 - Jeff and Norita Webb

Dec 28 - TBA

Thanks to all of you who continue to volunteer.

PLEASE NOTE: Only clear water should be used in the Bunn Coffeemaker. DO NOT pour already brewed coffee back into the coffeemaker, please use the microwave available in the kitchen to rewarm coffee.

Thanks so much.

### YOUTH GROUP

Youth group has returned. We meet every Wednesday at 5:30 PM. We have a meal, fellowship, lesson and games. All youth of the church 1st grade and up are invited to join. Contact Pastor Muse, Diana Cullen or Jill Mehl.

### ADULT EDUCATION

Bible Study Wednesday at 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM. **No bible study on December 24th or December 31st.**

### MID-WEEK EUCHARIST

Join us for a time of prayer, word and Holy Communion. The service begins at noon and lasts about twenty-five minutes. **No midweek Eucharist on December 31st.**

### DEBORAH CIRCLE

The Deborah's will meet Friday, December 12 at 12:00 PM.

### EUCHRE AND DOMINOS

Euchre, Friday, December 5, 2025 at 7:00 PM and will continue on the first Friday of each month thereafter.

### MEN'S BREAKFAST

Men's breakfast will be Saturday, December 20 at 8:30 AM. All men of the church are welcome to join this time of fellowship and growth. We conclude at 10:00AM. Please note the date change.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We will be collecting items for the Mitten Tree thru the first part of December.

As 2025 comes to a close and we're all busy with Christmas celebrations. Keep in mind when giving gifts that there are many ways to give to the less fortunate in our community. Continue to give to the Salvation Army Food Pantry. We now have 2 different ways to give toward our Habitat for Humanity project. Filling the "Spare Change Jug" located in Garnes Hall and purchasing one of the tools on the "Tool Tree" located in the Narthex. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

The "kitchen crew" will be serving the Community Dinner downtown at the Christ United Methodist Church on Tuesday, December 23. We gather at 4:30 and begin serving at 5:00. Clean up is normally finished by 6:00. It's a short amount of time but makes a big difference to those receiving a hot meal. Please consider helping with this worthwhile project.

**ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

3295 S. Union Ave  
Alliance, OH 44601

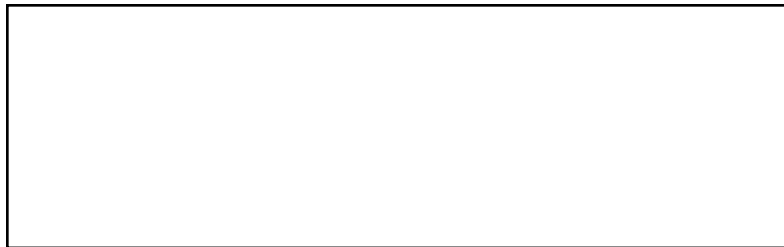
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of Jesus Christ!*



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Stay informed and sign up for *The Weekly Messenger* email on our website, Facebook page, or text 4STPAULS to 22828.

The Reverend Timothy H. Muse - Lead Pastor  
The Reverend Diana Thompson - Administrative Pastor  
Rhonda Ferrall - Secretary  
Kathy Sloan - Organist  
Gina M. Falconer - Director of Music  
Gayle B. Fiegenschuh - Communion Minister and Visitation



**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:**

**12:00 PM**

**6:00 PM**

**9:30 PM**

**ALL POINSETTIA ORDER  
FORMS NEED TO BE TURNED  
INTO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY  
DECEMBER 8, 2025**

