

# Alamance Lutheran Church

## January 2025 News Notes



*Our Vision: To be a beacon of Christian faith, love, and compassion where all are welcomed with open hearts.*

*Our Mission: We are called by God's spirit to:*

- *Worship and Praise God*
- *Serve in Faith*
- *Share God's story*

*"We have more ability than will power and it is often an excuse to ourselves that we imagine things are impossible."* **LA ROCHEFOUCAULD** "Maxims" (1655), tr Kenneth Pratt.

### **Words From Pastor Rooney: PRAYING WITH THE CHURCH**

In my sermon on the First Sunday of Christmas, I spoke about resolutions and putting off the old and putting on of the new, as Paul addressed in his letter to the Colossians. And so, as we begin this New Year, it seems like a good time to step back and reflect on one way we can do that, and that is by strengthening our life of prayer. Now it is often said that what we need in the Church today is not more Christians but stronger and more faithful Christians, meaning that the important factor is not size but quality and to achieve quality one of the most important things we do is to care for our spiritual lives. And in that realm, one of the most important parts is to engage in a life of prayer, especially in an age in which prayer is no longer a common or familiar activity.

Some prayer is understood as pulling a person into themselves; this is sometimes called "interior prayer." Throughout history, some members in Religious Orders have dedicated themselves to such lives of prayer, so much so that we can truly say that their work is prayer, and their prayer is their work.

And indeed, authentic prayer takes place in the deepest recesses of our being. But it is not one's own doing. Rather prayer is the work of the Spirit of God breathing within us. This breath from the outside is a constant challenge to us, inspiring us

to move and to grow, drawing us into an ever-deeper relationship with God. But it also draws us deeper into a relationship with the world around us which has been created by God.

As we pray, we listen to the voice of God within us, but we also listen to the voices and the words of holy people of past centuries who have walked this way before us. Their words, formulas and discoveries can help us on our way in our time. This accumulated wisdom is available in the traditional form known as the Daily Prayer of the Church – the prayer not just of individuals but of the community, principally in the morning and the evening.

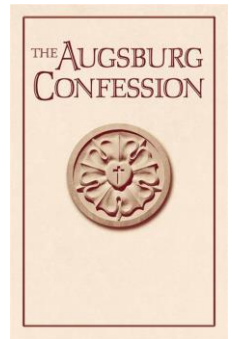
1. It is sometimes called the Liturgy of the Hours as prayer is spoken or sung at stated times throughout the day.
2. It is also called the Daily Office from the Latin officium – duty, obligation, service – for it is the daily duty or obligation of all Christians to pray to God.
3. And it is also called the Divine Office for it puts us in touch with the work of God.

Regular, ordered prayer is in praise of God offered not only through Christ but with Christ. Our prayers then become not only our own doing but God's own work (opus dei) as St. Benedict called it. Offered in union with Christ, our prayer is the work of God in which we are invited to join.

If you would like to pray more regularly and consistently, one way is to use the resource made available called "**Christ in our Home**" which can be found on the hallway table outside the library. But a deeper way is to join your voice with those of many others in the Church, as I do, who pray the **Daily Offices** morning, evening and at night. You will find these **Daily Offices of the Church** beginning on **page 295** of the **ELW**. Such a framework of prayer will bring you into that deeper relationship with God and the whole Church...and that is a resolution you cannot only make but keep.

## What Do We Profess to Believe?

It's not too late! Join us on Sundays at 9:00 in the Parlor for our continuing discussion of the Augsburg Confession. The Augsburg Confession is the primary confession of faith of the Lutheran Church and one of the most important documents of the Protestant Reformation. Join us to get a better understand of what Lutheran's believe.



## December 15<sup>th</sup> Congregation Meeting

Thank you for your attendance and support at the meeting. The proposed budget was approved, along with our revised Vision and Mission Statements. You understood our desire to delay new Council nominations and election until the Call Process is completed.

## Call Process

The Call Committee is working hard holding discernment conversations with potential candidates. Strict confidentiality must be maintained until the committee submits the name of a primary candidate to the Council for approval.

After Council approval, the primary candidate will meet with the Congregation for their approval and approval of a mutually agreed upon financial package. While a minimum of 2/3's majority is required for the call, it is common for a pastor to look for a vote over 9/10s majority from the Congregation to sense the Congregation supports the call. A simple majority is required to approve the financial package. **Please continue to pray about the call process and team so that the Holy Spirit continues to guide us.**

## From the Council

The next Council meeting will be on January 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30. Council Meetings are open to all voting members of the Congregation. There may be times when a particular topic may be closed, but for the most part, the meetings are open. If you are interested in the work of the Council, you are welcome to attend.

## Finance Team

The 2025 Budget approved by Council and the Congregation includes a salary and benefit package as if Pastor Ron continued to serve in 2025. This provides a basis for the salary and benefits package for the new Pastor when he/she is called. Another significant factor will be whether the new Pastor will use the parsonage or desire a housing allowance. We believe we are in a position to handle both alternatives. **However, revenue growth is important for us to meet future budget expenditures with a full time Pastor.**

Kay Howe, our bookkeeper, will be ending her 15 years of service to us this year. Lenise Meeks, our Parish Administrator, has been working with Kay to learn her duties and we believe Lenise will be able to take on the bookkeeper requirements with some on-going help from Kay this month.

We will be holding a luncheon thanking Kay for her service on **January 19<sup>th</sup>** immediately following the church service. The Hospitality team will be hosting the luncheon, providing pork and roasted chicken along with beverages and a sheet cake. They will provide a signup sheet for side dishes and desserts. Please plan to attend and thank Kay for her service to Alamance Lutheran Church. What she has done for us is often invisible to most of us, but of vital importance to the daily operations of our community.

## Hospitality Team

The Hospitality Team hosted a Red Cross blood drive on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Some technical issues with the Red Cross limited participation. It will be better next time!

Kathy Ritchey and the team did a great job with the Christmas Tea on December 28<sup>th</sup>. A variety of teas and snacks were provided. The tea was open to all members and friends of Alamance Lutheran Church.

## From the Worship and Music Team

Over 90 members, family, and friends attended the Christmas Eve Service. Matt did a great job with the special music that evening. Thanks too for the choir and bell ringing volunteers. What a difference!

The season of Christmas continues for the next several weeks.

We want to enhance the service of our volunteer greeters and ushers. Be on the lookout for defined expectations and instructions so all volunteers have a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

## From Evangelism/Social Ministry Team

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Christmas Cheer service project this year. What a success!

**Donors:** The wonderfully supportive, generous family and friends of Alamance Lutheran Church.

**Shoppers:** Sherry & Craven Ford, Don & Donna Eash, Kirk & Lynn Tucker, Marty & Terry Adams, Tony & Lisa Lewis, and Kathy Ritchey & Kerry Sullivan.

**Wrapping Party Dinner:** Kirk & Lynn Tucker

**Wrappers:** Far too many to name, but all the hands made for a quick, fun experience for all.

Both of our elderly recipients were very appreciative of the gifts they received, and the company provided them when the gifts were delivered. Christmas can be a very lonely time for senior citizens isolated from their families. Hopefully, we were able to brighten the season for them.

The Oliver family was overjoyed by their gifts. Kaytelynn (the mom) sent some pictures of Mekhi and Kylee (Alyssa was a little shy about getting her picture taken). She said "Merry Christmas! The kids really enjoyed their day. Thank you and whoever else contributed to making their day special. It was very appreciated and truly enjoyed." Later, she sent another note saying "And I loved my gifts! Especially that blanket. Please let everyone know me and my children were very grateful and super happy with everything you guys gave us.!"



Thanks to all of you who are donating food for both the **Blessing Box** and the **Dream Center**. Donations are especially needed for the **Blessing Box** which is continuing to be used regularly by the community. The Dream Center is always appreciative of our donations. We are collecting Dry **beans** in January. **Canned tuna** in February for the Dream Center.

We continue to help **Allied Churches** with food preparation on the first Wednesday of the month. We will not be serving in January. Lynn Tucker continues to look for volunteers and maintains a schedule.

The **Lunch Bunch** will be meeting at the Dream Center on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 (1435 North Church Street). Please plan to attend and let Katie Whitehead know you are coming. This will also provide an opportunity to see and appreciate the Dream Center's ministry to the community. BTW, they are no longer the "City Gate" Dream Center; they are the "Alamance" Dream Center, reflecting their broader ministry.

We are sending letters from Alamance Lutheran Church to new residents of **Twin Lakes Community** inviting them to experience our faith community. We have seen some new faces from Twin Lakes Community thanks in part to the letters we have been sending.

Next meeting is January 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30.

## Spotlight on Members – The Beard Family

Katie and Greg Beard met 9 years ago when they both decided to start new chapters in their lives and move away from what they knew! Greg moved away from Hickory, and Katie moved away from Wilmington. They met through mutual friends and went on their first date at Burger Spot in Greensboro! After that, the rest is history! Katie continued to teach, and Greg went back to school for Medical Billing and Coding! "We moved to Burlington 7 years ago. We welcomed our surprise baby 2 years ago, Eleanor Ruth Beard (Ellie) 6 lbs., 12 oz. It all seems like a blur, but we couldn't be more happy for the life God has blessed us with. We enjoy Braves Baseball, anything UNC, beach, and any time spent with our families. We both grew up in the church, Greg sang in the Lutheran church choir



growing up (and still plans on joining the choir today).” Katie grew up in the Methodist church, very involved in the youth program, FCA, and Young Life. “We knew church and God were going to be the center of our lives. We moved closer to the Alamance area 2 years ago and decided to try out Alamance Lutheran as we drove by one day! The way we were welcomed and treated from the moment we walked in; we knew this could be a place we call home. We have high hopes and visions as the youth program is something we hold very dear to our hearts. We can’t wait to be a part of the growth and success of Alamance Lutheran.”

## Stewardship Team

What are your passions? What do others tell you that you’re good at doing? Give thought to this...we’ll be exploring the gifts of each member! Because each of us has special gifts to offer, each congregation is unique and takes on a special character. There is nobody else in the world like each of us and there never will be! It’s amazing how God has made only one “You” - so think about your God-given gifts and share these gifts with others. We are continuing to ask you to fill out the Stewardship Forms. Sherry will give you one if you don’t have one. How will you share your gifts and talents?

We have collected information about how other churches handle Memorial Funds and will be making a recommendation to establish a **Memorial Fund** with specific guidelines.

The “**Above and Beyond**” campaign is continuing. Thanks to those of you who have already donated toward the campaign. Have you seen the new signs outside? The new printer in the office?



The new rolling cart and knife block in the kitchen? We almost have enough of the new songbooks to be able to use them during the service. All of these items, and more, are because of your donations to the Above and Beyond Campaign.

## Property Team

Lots of improvements around the facilities thanks to many, and more are coming. The place is looking a lot better and shows we care about our facilities. Can’t wait to show it off to a potential pastoral candidate.

A number of upgrades are underway for the kitchen, primarily countertops and sink to facilitate the installation of a new dishwasher (an Above and Beyond donation!). Big improvements!

Planning continues for the installation of a new lift connecting the ground floor in the Fellowship Hall to the main floor. Be patient, it's coming! Unfortunately, connecting the main floor to the Sanctuary level has become a larger problem for a short distance. The Team is continuing to explore alternatives.

Next Meeting: January 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.

## Youth/Christian Education Team

Rebecca did a great job planning and directing the "Live Nativity" with the support of many. We had singers, musicians, dancers, and actors. In spite of the great production, we had limited participation from the community and will shift our efforts inside next year. A Christmas Pageant including a live nativity is possible. Thanks again Rebecca for all the effort you put into the Live Nativity!

A Children's Baking Party on December 10<sup>th</sup> was a success.

Rebecca is holding Sunday School classes for children and youth each Sunday at 9:00 am. Pastor Rooney's class, currently on the Augsburg Confession, continues to be well attended. The Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study will begin again in January. The first session of the new year will be January 7<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 am. The Men's Breakfast and Bible study will continue meeting at 8:30 am the first Saturday of the month. Join us!

## Cemetery Team

The team has been in touch with Synod to better understand the policies around ELCA cemeteries. More work needs to be done to understand the implications for us.

## "Be the Light" Campaign

Please support this important ministry of Lutheran Services Carolina (LSC). The *Be The Light* campaign represents LSC's commitment to help overcome some of the challenges preventing some of our North Carolina neighbors from living full and abundant lives. *Be The Light* underwrites many of the LSC's programs and is a

critical fundraising source that enables them to expand services to meet the unique needs of the people they serve.

“Be The Light” Goals:

- Guide Children and Families
- Expand Services for Adults
- For the Children Endowment

If you have any questions about “Be the Light,” please reach out to Kirk Tucker.

## Some Words from the Council President

Whew! The holidays are behind us, although the Christmas Season continues. We all need to be thankful for all of our blessings. We also need to continue to care for those less fortunate than many of us. It is important for us to remember who Christ reached out to and who he asked us to care for. The weak, the lonely, the stranger. We also need to remember we are part of a community of faith. It is not about me; it is about us. Being part of the Community of Faith of Alamance Lutheran Church is important to me, and it is important to us.

## Schedule for January

- January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year’s Day. Alanon - 10:00 am
- January 4<sup>th</sup>: Men’s Breakfast and Bible Study - 8:30 am; Property Team 10:00 am.
- January 7<sup>th</sup>: Women’s Bible Study – 10:30 am
- January 8<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am
- January 9<sup>th</sup>: Lunch Bunch at the Dream Center 11:30 am (1135 North Church Street); Evangelism/Social Ministry Team – 4:30 pm
- January 12<sup>th</sup>: Church Council - 1:30 pm
- January 14<sup>th</sup>: Women’s Bible Study - 10:30 am
- January 15<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am
- January 19<sup>th</sup>: Appreciation Luncheon for Kay Howe – 11:00 am
- January 21<sup>st</sup>: Women’s Bible Study - 10:30 am
- January 22<sup>nd</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am
- January 26<sup>th</sup>: Noisy Offering Sunday
- January 28<sup>th</sup>: Women’s Bible Study - 10:30 am
- January 29<sup>th</sup>: ALANON - 10:00 am

## Serving in January

	Altar Setup	Communion Setup	Worship Assistant/ Reader	Greeters	Ushers
<b>January 5 Sanctuary</b>	Rebecca Maness	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Pastor Bob Hawkins	Kirk & Lynn Tucker	Roy Whitehead Sherry Ford
<b>January 12 Sanctuary</b>	Rebecca Maness	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Kirk & Lynn Tucker	Roy & Katie Whitehead	Jerry Combs Hugh Smith
<b>January 19 Sanctuary</b>	Rebecca Maness	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Marty & Terry Adams	Jerry Combs Donna Eash	Pastor Bob Hawkins Ted Milling
<b>January 26 Sanctuary</b>	Rebecca Maness	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Kathy Ritchey	Wanda Patterson Kerry Sullivan	Terry Adams Sherry Ford

*Please let Kirk Tucker know of any Church related events or announcements to be included in future news notes. News notes for each month will be sent to members and friends of Alamance Lutheran Church the last week of the preceding month.*