



**Community of Christ Lutheran Church**  
**Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2025**  
**8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**  
**Pastor Stephen C. Bond**



**THE GATHERING**

**Welcome**

Pastor Stephen Bond

**Musical Prelude**

“Carol of the Mother” by Alfred Burt

Eric Dickey

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed are you, O God, who first called light out of darkness, who is present with us now, who promises new creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

O God in whom we hope,

**We confess that we have turned from you, and from the goodness of your reign. We resist your gentle pull that draws us close to Christ. We reject your welcome, letting old divisions fester into hostility and hate. We wander off impatiently in our own direction, rather than wait for your coming. We have refused to learn your way of peace. Forgive us, O God. Turn these hearts back to you, and gather us into your peaceable kingdom. Amen.**

God is doing a new thing, here and now. See it, and know you are forgiven.

You have been found and taken by the hand.

You have been welcomed into the family of Christ.

You are freed to belong in the people of God forever. Hear it, and know it is true.

**Amen.**

**Hymn**

“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

**ELW 242**

## Greeting

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **C** **And also with you.**

*Refrain*

Assisting minister

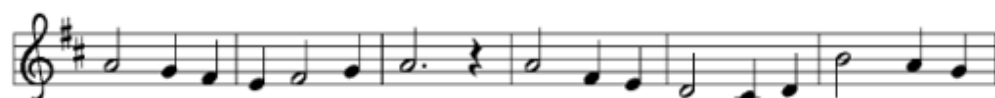


This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.



### Prayer of the Day

**P** 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.**

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath “He Came Down”



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;



he came down that we may have love;  
 he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
 he came down that we may have peace;

### Childrens Sermon

### THE READINGS

#### The First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

- <sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
 the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
 like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly  
 and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.]]

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

<sup>6</sup> then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert;

<sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God’s people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

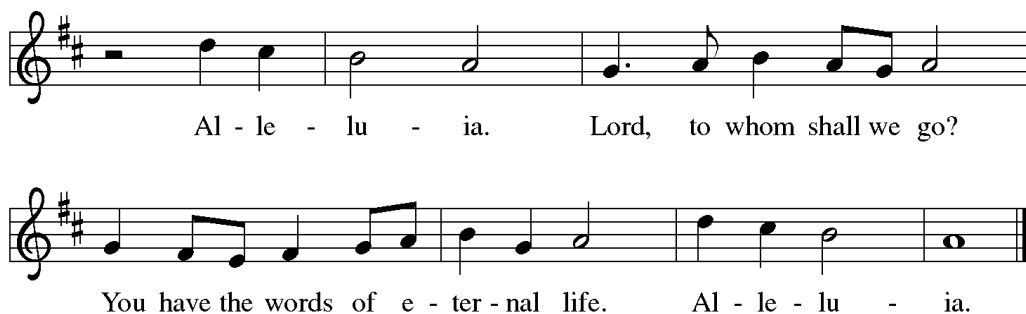
<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**L** The Word of the Lord **C** Thanks be to God!

## The Second Reading: James 5:7-10

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

**L** The Word of the Lord **C** Thanks be to God!



## The Holy Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

**P** The Holy Gospel according to.... **C** Glory to you, O Lord!

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

<sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’

<sup>11</sup> “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

**P** The Gospel of the Lord! **C** Praise to you, O Christ!

**Sermon (8:00 a.m.)**      *“What We Are Looking For”*

Pastor Stephen Bond

**Christmas Pageant (10:00 a.m.)** *“A Family Found in Bethlehem”*

**Hymn**

“Christ, Be Our Light”

**ELW 715**

*High Voices VS 3, Low Voices VS 4*

**Nicene Creed**

**C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him, all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen**

### **WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER**

**P** In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

**AM** God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

**AM** When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

**AM** When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

**AM** When bodies weaken, and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. We pray for; **Tom Jennings, Larry Battles, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O’Konski, Luke Holtz, Ron Hetherwick, Jake Cope, Virginia Dillon, Staci, Laura Reimer, Greg Urbanski, Matt Jurrus, Sally, Tom Druschel, Cindy Hartbarger, Phyllis Sturgeon, Jeff Bucher, Albert Preston, Paul Ladd, Greg Ganelli, Jessica Queen, Charles Gorniak, David Reimer, Carol Borkowski, Barb Thober, Jim Schwartz, Maurice Atkinson, Jim Freimark, Mary Beth Brothers...** and all others whom we remember in silence. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

**AM** When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

**AM** As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

**P** Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

### **THE MEAL**

*All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it.*

### **Sharing of the Peace**

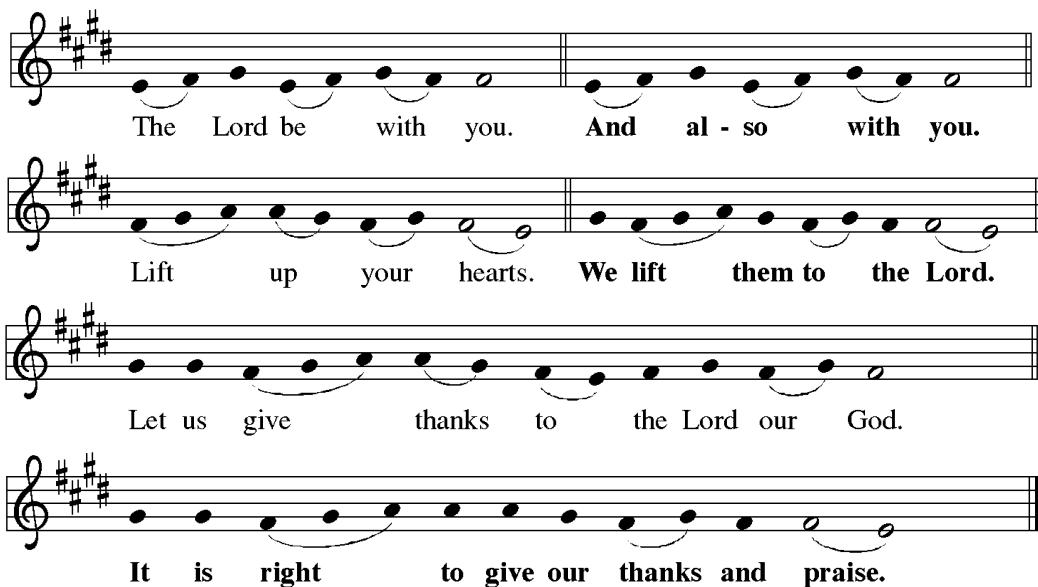
**P** The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C And also with you!**  
*Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.*

**Our Tithes and Offering** *Bring your gifts to the Altar, or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

## Offering Prayer

AM Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **Amen.**

## The Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

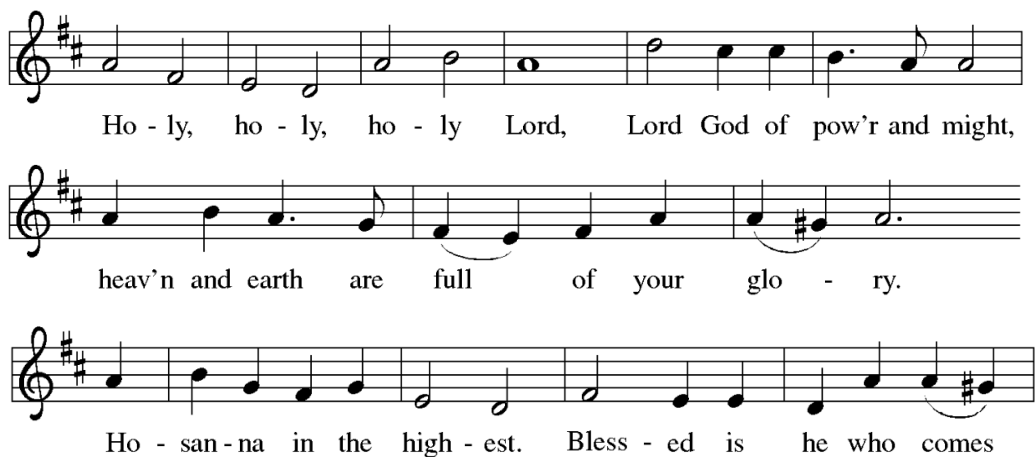
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves, each with a treble clef. The first staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff continues the melody and lyrics. The fourth staff continues the melody and lyrics.

## \*\*Eucharistic Prayer Continues



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,

heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three staves, each with a treble clef. The melody is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff continues the melody and lyrics.





in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

### The Words of Institution

*In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.*

### The Lord's Prayer

**P** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray... **C** **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### Communion Hymns

#### "Lamb of God"



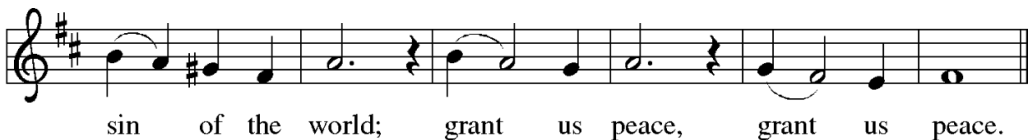
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



**Hymn**

“You Are Mine”  
“Lord, Be Glorified”

**ELW 581**

**ELW 744**

**Post Communion Blessing**

**Prayer after Communion**

**AM** God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

### **THE SENDING**

*Milestones & Announcements:*

**The Blessing**

**P** May God who comes among us, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

**Sending Hymn**

“People, Look East”

**ELW 248**

**Dismissal**

**AM** Go in peace. Keep Awake. **Thanks be to God.**

**AM** And next week, **C Bring a friend!**

**Postlude**

# Making Jesus Known”

**Welcome to Community of Christ!** We welcome YOU to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at **8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.** in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you, and as always, **BRING A FRIEND!!!!**

**Thursday Bible Study Looks at Wisdom Literature** Join us for our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study series at 1:00 p.m., as Pastor Steve and Vicar Natalie delve into the Wisdom Literature in the Bible. These are a set of writings in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament that offer perspectives for daily living and the meaning of life, community, work, and goodness. They can be as short as a fortune-cookie fortune (like the Proverbs), as expansive as a philosophical treatise and memoir (like Ecclesiastes), as dramatic as the saga of Job, and as romantic as the poetry of Song of Songs. So, think of this series like a charcuterie board—a sampling of the different flavors and textures of all these kinds of wisdom literature in your Bible, which you might be led to study and read more in depth on your own. Join us on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Bible Study/Council room, with weekly video summaries up online on our church Facebook and YouTube as well. See you around the table!

**Sunday School Advent Series** With the beginning of Advent, our Sunday School children have launched a new series following the theme of each week’s candle. On December 21, they will celebrate with a birthday party for Jesus. As a special way to help families prepare for Christ’s coming, each child will also receive a take-home Advent bag filled with crafts and conversation starters to help connect what we’re learning in church with faith at home throughout the week.

**\*\*Deadline for Newsletter\*\*** Looking ahead, due to the busyness of the holiday season and upcoming vacations, the firm deadlines for the next newsletter will be **Wednesday, December 17, for our January 2026 newsletter.** Thank you for your understanding.

## **Angel Gifts for Salem’s Children**

This year, as in past years, Community of Christ will have the opportunity to reach out and bless the children of our sister church, Salem Lutheran Church, in north Toledo. Pastor Mike from Salem will be providing us with a list of names of their children and their gift requests. We will incorporate these requests into an envelope

and have them displayed on the bulletin board in the Gathering Place. Here are some important dates for the project:

- Sunday, November 23rd, 2025, the bulletin board in the Gathering Space will be decorated with Salem Angel requests.
  - Select your “Angel” and enter your name and phone number on the pink or blue Angel slip on the board. Take the envelope behind the pink or blue slip with you. It has all the information you need regarding the gift request. **Please do not remove the pink or blue slips or relocate them on the board, as this is our inventory method.**
  - Shop for your “Angel” and leave your gift under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary.
  - **TODAY, Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, is the last day to return your gifts.** Please have them under the tree by no later than 10:00 am. Ken and I will be transferring your gifts to Salem that day!
- Thanks for helping to bless these children at Christmas time! Shelly & Ken Hayes

**Community of Christ Cookie Exchange!** Join us **TODAY, Sunday, December 14**, for a festive Cookie Exchange hosted by the Fellowship Committee! Bring **1–2 dozen cookies** to share, along with a container to take home your yummy assortment. We’ll also have a fun craft for the kids, plus hot chocolate and coffee—perfect for enjoying a few cookies right away!

**Congregational Breakfast – Dec. 21 at 9:00 a.m.** Join us for a festive congregational breakfast on Sunday, December 21, at 9:00 a.m.! We’re looking for youth families to help provide meals, and everyone is invited to come and enjoy a delicious breakfast together. A free-will offering will be collected, with all proceeds going toward updates to the youth group room. Come share food, fellowship, and fun! Scan the QR Code to sign up to help with food.



**"Peace Be Still" - Women's Retreat** Calling all ladies!! On February 21st, Community of Christ Lutheran will be hosting a women's retreat called "Peace Be Still: Rest, Release, Renew." Take some time to pause and enjoy a restful time of bible study, worship, spiritual practices, and fellowship. Doors will open at 8 a.m. for

check-in. Breakfast and coffee/tea bar will be available before the start of the retreat. The retreat will begin at 9 a.m. and will end at 5 p.m. Lunch will be included in the retreat price. The cost of attendance is \$50.00. Please feel free to invite other women in your life to attend. Reserve your spot by scanning the QR code, or by following this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/RNs14uginT?origin=lpLink>. Hurry and sign up today, there are only 50 slots available!

A portion of the retreat funds collected will be given to Salem Lutheran Church to support their food ministry. We will also be collecting for The Period Project, a drive to collect feminine hygiene products to support the needs at Salem Lutheran. We ask that each guest consider bringing at least one item to donate in support of this ministry.



### **“Prayers for the Peaceable Kingdom”-Collected Prayers for Advent**

For the past several years in Advent, we have offered an anthology of daily Scripture readings and original prayers for the season that dovetailed with the Scripture readings we are using in Sunday worship (which are also keyed into the Revised Common Lectionary). In 2023, that collection was called “Astonish Us Again,” and last year’s collection, “On the Edge of Hope,” was also available. Because these have been well-received, this year, we are pleased to offer a new compilation that will connect with our new theme for the year that begins with this Advent (November 30). *Prayers for the Peaceable Kingdom* is a new collection of original prayers and Scripture readings for each day in Advent, drawing especially on readings from the Bible we’ll hear this Advent on God’s coming reign of peace in which “swords are beaten into plowshares” and “the wolf and the lamb lie down together.” This collection is available to you this year either as a printed booklet (in the Gathering Space), as a PDF compilation you can read on your phone, computer, or tablet, or as daily posts on our church Facebook page. These are free, original, and can be shared as far and wide as you would like. Check them out this Advent, as together we pray in hope for the peaceable kingdom of Jesus, our Lord!

### **Join us on Wednesday Nights for Advent Midweek Worship with Holden**

**Evening Prayer.** We call Jesus the “Prince of Peace,” and we sing that on the night of his birth, “all is calm, all is bright.” But quite often our lives are especially hectic

and stressful in the weeks before Christmas, aren't they? From gift-buying and cookie baking to parties and concerts, from decorating our houses and family gatherings, we can feel flustered and frazzled during the "most wonderful time of the year" rather than at peace. So, we want to invite you to a weekly chance to hit the pause button on the craziness and be re-centered on the Good News of God's coming to us in Christ, with our three Advent midweek services using Holden Evening Prayer. Our last service will be on the 17th at 7:00 p.m. join us for a beautiful and contemplative sung setting of Evening Prayer and reflections on the Word that will ground us in our hope for Jesus' coming. (Choir will rehearse following these services, starting at 7:45 p.m. on these evenings.) If you've never experienced this setting for evening worship, you'll want to try it, and this is a fantastic event to invite friends and neighbors to, as well! Join us this Advent!

**Blue Christmas Service Offers Comfort and Hope—Dec. 21 at 3:00 p.m.**

The holidays can be a difficult time for people, especially if they're dealing with grief and loss. Whether still working through a recent death, feeling renewed sadness over a long-time loss, or just struggling while others seem full of Christmas-time cheer, this can be a heavy season of the year. So, we'll continue a tradition we've done for the last several years here at Community of Christ by hosting a Blue Christmas service—a time of worship that offers comfort for those who need it, particularly at this time of year, and that connects our faith in God-with-Us who came among us in Bethlehem with our lived experience of loss and grief. This year's service will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 21, with collaboration and shared leadership from our friends at Hope United Methodist Church as well. As always, it is open to any and all who would find it helpful. You are welcome to invite friends, relatives, neighbors, or community members who might need a moment this season for grief to be named and comfort to be given, together with folks from around our community.

***Community of Christ will host three worship services on Christmas***

***Eve: 4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., & 11:00 p.m.***

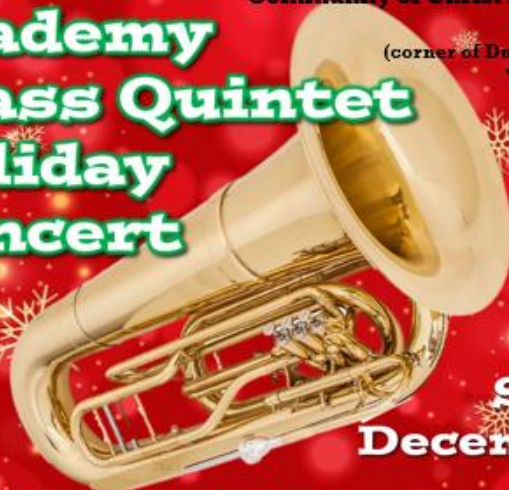
Each worship service will include Christmas carols, candlelight (battery-operated candles for the kids), and Holy Communion.

Invite a friend to worship with you this season!

***The Church Office will be closed: Wednesday, December 24, Thursday, December 25, Friday, December 26, and Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup>.***

# Academy Brass Quintet Holiday Concert

Community of Christ Lutheran Church  
6317 Finzel Road  
(corner of Dutch and Finzel Road)  
Whitehouse Ohio  
419-877-0607



**Sunday  
December 14  
3:00**

A free will offering will benefit Salem Lutheran Church  
and Community of Christ Lutheran Church



ANTHONY WAYNE AREA YOUTH

## BOWLING NIGHT

Come hang out for a night of bowling, tasty food and  
drinks, and awesome company. Bring your best game and  
see if you can snag the top score!

**DATE: JANUARY 18TH, 2026**

**TIME: 7:30 PM - 10:00 PM**

**LOCATION: INCREDIBOWL**

**5255 HEATHERDOWNS BLVD, TOLEDO, OH**

6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to RSVP with the  
QR Code or link by no later than Jan. 11  
Cost: \$15 per person due with RSVP



# THIS Week

<i>Event</i>	<i>Day and Time</i>
Academy Brass Concert	<b>Today</b> , Sunday, December 14, 3:00 p.m.
Youth Group @ Providence	<b>Tonight</b> , December 14, 7:00 a.m.
Lay Internship	Monday, December 15, 6:30 p.m.
Quilters	Tuesday, December 16, 10:00 a.m.
Advent Service	Wednesday, December 17, 7:00 p.m.
Choir Practice	Wednesday, December 17, 7:45 p.m.
Thursday Bible Study	Thursday, December 18, 1:00 p.m.
Bell Choir	Thursday, December 18, 7:00 p.m.



**Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God,  
this Christmas Season ❤️🙏**