

# THE WINDOW

Windsor Heights Lutheran Church ~ 1240 66th St. Windsor Heights, IA 50324

## WHLC Staff:

### Rev. Chris Olkiewicz

Lead Pastor

### Rev. Robin Coughenower

Associate Pastor

### Zach Meyer

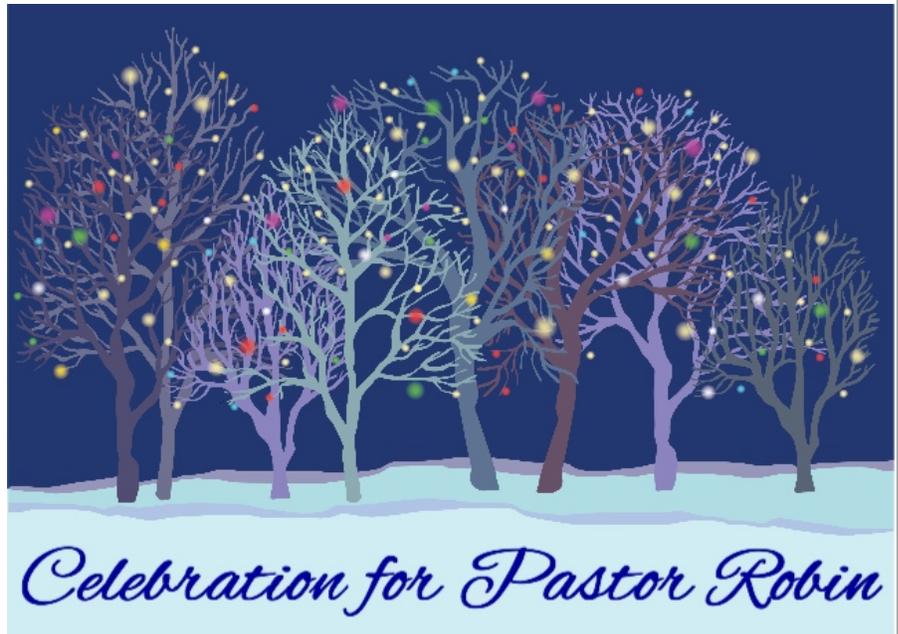
Director of Youth and Family  
Ministry/Congregational Life  
Coordinator

### Heidi Hennig

Office Manager

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*Celebration of Pastor Robin's Ministry  
Sunday, December 11,  
following the 10:45 service*

After 16 years of ministry at WHLC, Pastor Robin has taken a call to serve as Interim Pastor at Augustana Lutheran Church in Boone. We are thrilled for her new opportunity and very sad that she is leaving WHLC. Come join in a celebration of her ministry following the second service on December 11, her last Sunday at WHLC.

The meal will be potluck, so please bring a dish to share. We will provide cake for dessert, along with a basket for cards for your well wishes. There will be a short program honoring Pastor Robin, but mostly we want this to be a time for you to thank her for her service here and to wish her well in her new call. Please join us!



# Advent & Christmas SCHEDULE

## **A CHAOSTic Christmastime**

Saturday, December 10 from 5:30 - 8 p.m. in the Youth Room

## **Lessons & Carols**

Sunday, December 18 at 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Worship Services

## **Sing-along with Windsor Brass**

Sunday, December 18 at 9:30 a.m. in Crabtree Parish Hall

## **Winter Wonderland**

Wednesday, December 21 at 5:30 p.m. in Crabtree Parish Hall  
(More info on page 8)

## **Christmas Eve Worship Services**

Saturday, December 24  
4 p.m. - Worship for all with a children's focus  
7 p.m. - Candlelight Service  
10 p.m. - Candlelight Service

## **Christmas Day Worship Service**

Sunday, December 25  
10 a.m.



# The Season of Presence

## Zach Meyer

Merry Christmas WHLC! I hope this season finds all of you in good health, good spirits, and in the midst of exciting times. As most of you know, it's my favorite time on the calendar, and each year, I like to write an Advent reflection for the December Window. This year, as I ponder what awaits in store for our church in 2022, I am struck by one particular word: *Presence*.

If we're being honest, 2022 has seemed like a bit of a rushed year, hasn't it? Given how much had slowed down over the past few years, the rapid return of so many different events, committees, meetings, gatherings and travel has really sped things up all around us. It seems like our schedules are busier than ever, and everyone has a million things on their plate that they are trying to tackle ever approaching deadlines.

I think this rapid rush to the rest of the world is why, for so many, myself included, this season offers the perfect escape. It's a time when people seem friendlier, when we lose ourselves in the old tv specials we remembered as kids, or spend time putting up decorations. It's why we love to hear classic carols we've heard many times, and sit back with a warm mug of cocoa or coffee as we gaze upon winter wonderlands.

This year however, the word "*escape*," doesn't appeal to me. No instead, I find the word "*presence*" striking me much deeper in this Advent season. To be present somewhere usually means we simply mark off something as attended or visited; a very straightforward thing. "*Presence*," however, seems to strike a deeper spiritual meaning...almost an idea of acknowledging a moment in time, and reflecting on all that is, and the ramifications behind it.

At the heart of the Advent story, escaping reality seems like the furthest idea from the narrative. Jesus' entry to Earth doesn't cast Mary & Joseph to a picturesque Eden, a world without trouble. Rather, it plunges them into a forgotten town, before seeing them fleeing as refugees from the wrath of Herod. The shepherds are not risen to a prominent position of society to bear the good news of God; rather, the power of the message is found in God choosing these humble people to be the first to bear the hope God longs to give.



The magi arrive to a tiny nowhere town not seek grandeur, but rather to simply honor a blessed moment of God's love. Creatures of the barn are the first roommates Jesus will ever have, and the angels sing not just in the realm of glory, but over open fields where stillness fills the night. It's true all these characters were present at the first Noel, but more-so, they all exemplify the "*presence*" found at the heart of this season.

This presence is a powerful thing, and I believe it comes from the loving heart of God. In this special moment, where heaven and earth are joined in this Son of God...Son of Man, the world witnesses God's presence. Here, between two realms, love breaks the gap of years of pain and stills the hectic, crazy world around them, even if only for one night. And to be sure, these characters probably aren't even grasping all this implies in this moment. Indeed, like Mary, they'll likely ponder this moment in their hearts long after the sun rises the next day.

Presence indeed steps this season, and it's one thing I find myself wanting to take more time to appreciate. Things can move by so fast without us even realizing it, and this holiday season, maybe its a great chance for us to really dwell in this presence, taking in every moment for how special, life-filled, and blessed it is.

Doing this won't suddenly clear our hectic schedules, or slow down this speedy season. What I do believe it will do is give us wonderful perspective through it.

Maybe it will cause us to notice the little things that bring us joy in Advent, or to appreciate small everyday meetings we have with others. Maybe it will cause us to see who in our community needs a helping hand, or some cheering up. Maybe it will cause us to see God, even in the places and people we prefer to avoid. Maybe it will cause our hearts to grow, our love to deepen, and our gaze to expand. The horizons are endless aren't they? Surely, they shine as bright as a lone star in the sky.

That perspective has caused me to see with joy, over and over again, how grateful I am for all of you and this church we share. Some could point to growing numbers, or new events as things to lift up in thanks. And to be sure, we should and we do! But more than that, what this perspective causes me to see is the same love, joy and hope present in that tiny child in the manger in all of you.

As followers of Christ, we are called to reflect Him, sharing God's love with the entire creation around us. Truth is, you all display that in so many unique and creative ways every day. You invite your friends and families to join us for fun and fellowship. You welcome in new faces to church with a smile and an invitation. You take time from your busy schedules to serve those in our community. You reach out to our bothers and sisters in faith when they are hurting or lonely. You continue to give, even when times are tough. You continue to sing praises, dig into Scripture, and persist in prayer even when things are falling apart around us. In you, yes, all of you WHLC, I see that hope and love personified. I guess what I'm saying is, I see Jesus reflected in each of you.

So in this season, may we all dwell in this wondrous presence, as we potentially wait, like those so long before us, for the blessed gift of Noel. May we know that, even in the hectic rush of the season, there is still so much to love, appreciate and experience. We pray this season finds your family filled with blessings, and always reassured of God's amazing love. Have an amazing holiday season WHLC!

Zach Meyer, Director of Youth and Family Ministry/Congregational Life



# TREASURER'S REPORT

Attached please find the financial reports October 2022.

Below is a summary of the results for the General Fund followed by Special Offerings:

	October 2022		Year-to-Date		2021 YTD
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
General Offering	43,309	41,666	397,124	416,660	391,355
Other General Fund Income	725	407	9,059	4,070	5,997
General Fund Income	44,034	42,073	406,183	420,730	397,352
General Fund Expense	41,634	42,037	436,182	420,370	400,695
General Fund Net Income	2,400	36	(29,999)	360	(3,343)
Special Offering Income	449		2,830		5,790
Special Offering Expense	351		2,146		3,660
Special Offering Net Income	98		684		2,130
Total Net Income	2,498	36	(29,315)	324	(1,213)

Mortgage Balance

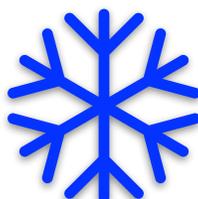
719,931.40

General Offerings were up in October, thanks in part to having 5 Sundays in the month, and for the year are now \$19,536 below budget. Year-to-date General Offerings have moved above the level of General Offerings year-to-date in 2021.

October 2022 Expenses are slightly below budget, which is the second month in a row, although year-to-date General Fund Expenses are \$35,487 higher than in 2021, and they are running \$15,812 higher than budget. The line items contributing to the increased expenses from 2021 have remained consistent all year. Research and work are being done to find alternate vendors where possible, or adjust budget amounts going forward into 2023.

WHLC has made tremendous progress in reducing our mortgage by over \$215,000 in the last 12 months. This has come from a combination of scheduled monthly payments from the Capital Appeal Fund, additional principal payments through the monthly budget, and additional principal payments (\$100,000 in December 2021 and \$50,000 in August 2022) made possible due to our strong cash and overall financial position.

Please contact me if you have any questions.  
Barb Waymire



# WHLC NEWS & NOTES



You are invited to join Pastor Chris on Wednesdays in Advent for conversation on the devotional "The Season of Waiting (And Waiting . . . And Waiting . . .)" by Kate Bowler. The devotional is available free online at [https://](https://katebowler.com/)

[katebowler.com/](https://katebowler.com/). You can bookmark the page and return there each day of Advent or download the PDF and print or save it to your device.

A couple of years ago our Book Club read Bowler's book, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved*, in which she discusses her journey through a stage four cancer diagnosis as a spouse, young mother, and theologian early in her academic career. It's a powerful, realistic, hopeful book, and her Advent devotional promises to be all those things too. There is scripture, a reflection, and prayer for each day of the season, beginning on the First Sunday of Advent.

Pastor Chris will meet in the Koinonia Room on Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m. (beginning November 30) for conversation about the week's material and your own experiences of Advent. If it works better for you to join online, we will set up a computer in the room running Google Meet. Use this link and wait for the host to let you into the meeting: <https://meet.google.com/uba-adxo-vpe>

## ELDERBERRIES

Elderberries had a wonderful time at the sing-a-long on Tuesday, December 6. Thank you Jan Carlson and Wendy Prigge for your beautiful piano playing!

There will not be Elderberries in January.

Elderberries will meet in February for a Valentine's celebration.



**Hi everyone! One of our obligations as a congregation is to handle, process, and count the giving we receive during service. We are in need of more counters for the 2023 calendar year. This would require about an hour of your time 5-6 times after second service annually. If you're willing to offer your time please contact Brian Ryherd at [baryherd@gmail.com](mailto:baryherd@gmail.com).**

# MORE NEWS & NOTES



As we look forward to celebrating Christ's birth, we are excited to support the Urbandale Food Pantry this year with donations to

our poinsettia display. Please send your donation to the church office by emailing [office@whlc.org](mailto:office@whlc.org) or calling 515-277-6277, and include anyone you would like to honor or in memory. Names will be published similar to past years. Checks can be written out to WHLC with poinsettias in the memo line. A suggested donation is \$25; however, any amount is greatly appreciated. **Donations are due Sunday, December 18.**

Windsor Bells is still looking for a couple more bell ringers. A musical background is preferred but

handbell experience is not required. If you are interested in joining, please contact Shelly Siemer at 208-521-1288 or [windsorbells@whlc.org](mailto:windsorbells@whlc.org).



### Dianne Bernabe

6300 School St, Apt 307  
Windsor Heights, IA 50324

### Quent & Inez Boyken

3404 159th St.  
Urbandale, IA 50323

### Mel Nielsen

4699 53rd Ave #303  
Bettendorf, IA 52722

### Marge Seegers

1650 Holiday Crest Cir, Apt 104  
Waukee, IA 50263

### Tom Shanley

Cedar Ridge Village  
8950 Coachlight Dr., Apt. 231  
West Des Moines IA 50266



**Join us for Winter Wonderland @ WHLC!**

Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm  
Dinner is provided & served at 5:30pm. Activities begin @ 6pm!  
Decorations, Games, Christmas Songs, Cookie Decorating & more! Family fun for everyone!

@ Windsor Heights Lutheran Church  
1240 66<sup>th</sup> Street, 50322 Windsor Heights IA

We're happy to announce a special new event for families this December! Usually, on the last Wednesday of the semester, we host a Christmas party for the students, in lieu of our usual activities. In a sense, we're still doing that this year, but on a bit bigger scale!

All families are invited to join us on Wednesday, December 21 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. for our first Winter Wonderland! Winter Wonderland is our take on a Christmas evening of food & activities, similar to the Boo Bash. Like the Boo Bash, we'll set up fun activities and games for kids to partake in throughout parish hall. Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m., and we'll start doing games and activities at 6 p.m.! There will be ornament making, a "indoor" snowball toss, snowman bowling, hot chocolate bar, a tree to decorate and much more. It'll be fun for the whole family!

Everyone is welcome to come, and to bring along friends! We're looking for anywhere around 10-15 volunteers to be stationed at some of the activities, mostly just to encourage the kids and help them if they need it. Similarly, in lieu of confirmation that final Wednesday, we're asking confirmation students to join us for the activities and help run some of the stations! If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer, contact Zach! Hope you can join us for a holly jolly time of games, community and fun!



## A CHAOStic Christmastime

Our annual Christmas party returns this month for our Junior High Night and CHAOS students. Students in 6th - 12th grade are invited to join us on Saturday, December 10 from 5:30-8 p.m. for a night of awesome holiday festivities. As in years past, students get to decorate the youth room however they like, and choose from plenty of Christmas treats. Students will partake in the annual santa scavenger hunt, and we'll cap the night with our white elephant gift exchange!

There is no sign up sheet for the event; to RSVP, simply contact Zach and let us know how many you plan on bringing, so we know how much food to get. For the White Elephant Gift Exchange, we're asking everyone to bring a different present, wrapped up! We're setting a \$5 cap to each gift, so no need to go out and get anything crazy! The whole idea is to find fun and silly things that someone may enjoy opening up. Students are welcome to bring friends, so spread the word and join us for an awesome Christmas Party!

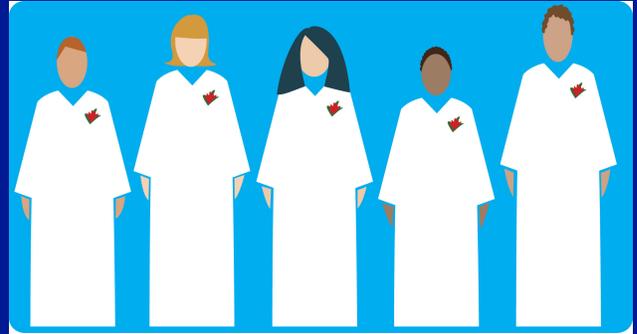
## Wednesday Nights

Our last regular Wednesday evening of activities will be on December 14 this year. After Winter Wonderland, there'll be no Wednesday activities on the 28th. Regular activities will resume on January 4!



# Baptism IN THE CHURCH FAMILY

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was celebrated for Frederick Dean Lubben in November. Parents are Eric and Amanda Lubben. Baptismal sponsors are Paige Slowik and Josh & Amy Murray. Welcome to our church family!



## Kudos to Our Confirmands

Congratulations to our confirmands, **Henry Fergus, Michael McNamara and Ryenn Seifert!** They celebrated the affirmation of baptism. Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate! And thank you to the Dodgers for capturing so many great photos!



GO INTO ALL THE WORLDS...

# BAPTIZING

...IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,  
AND OF THE SON,  
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

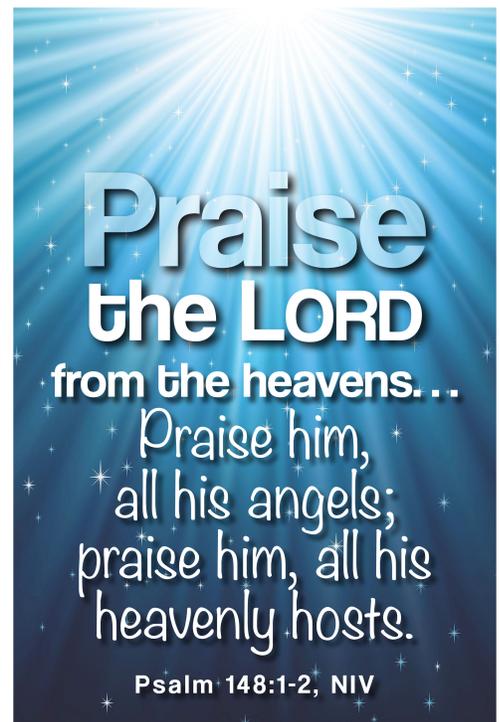
# Confirmation





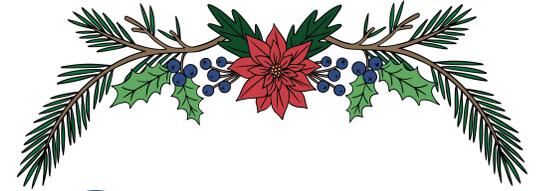
In our Thoughts &  
*Prayers*

Sympathy to  
Sandee Myers on  
the death of her  
mother, Dorothy  
Myers, of Arizona.



# THANK YOU!

Thank you to Dick and Joni for organizing and labeling the offering envelopes! Offering envelopes can be picked up anytime in the narthex. Thank you, Dick and Joni!



*Thank You!*



Thanks so much to my WHLC family for prayers, words, and cards to ease the sadness when my brother died. All of the ways you showed you care helped a lot. ~Bill Lewis

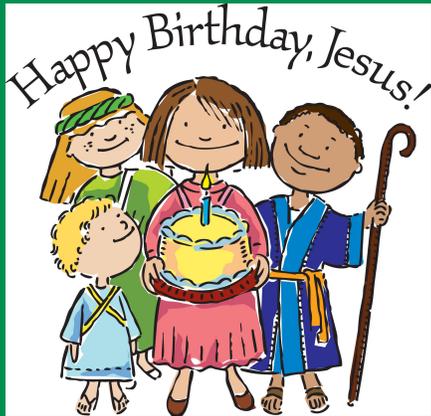
# THANK YOU



I want to thank all of you who remembered me with telephone calls, greeting cards and your prayers during my recent head surgery. They were all greatly appreciated. I am so glad to be a part of this congregation. Blessings to each one of you. ~Vivien Wells.



# Happy Birthday to You!



## December BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Sarah Willett
- 4 Cheryl Wheeler
- 6 Sheila Schneckloth
- 8 Brian Rye, Vivien Wells
- 11 Tracey Hirst
- 12 Sue Devine
- 16 Tony Russell
- 19 Sonja Barrett
- 20 Adelaide Brennan, Janet Johnson,  
Harper Seifert, Sandra Willett
- 21 Peg Armstrong-Gustafson
- 22 Bobbie Riddle
- 23 Zach Meyer, Kayla Hunefeld,  
Hannah Toresdahl
- 26 Stephanie McNamara
- 28 Kelly Cox
- 29 Emma Swanson
- 31 Janice DuBois, Kent Thieman



# O Come Let Us Adore Him

*She gave birth to her **firstborn**, a son.  
She wrapped him in strips of cloth  
and placed him in a manger ...*

*Luke 2:7*

