

# THE WINDOW

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

## WHLC Staff:

**Rev. Chris Olkiewicz**

Lead Pastor

**Rev. Karen Cluts**

Visitation Pastor

**Zach Meyer**

Director of Youth and Family  
Ministry/Congregational Life  
Coordinator

**Heidi Hennig**

Office Manager

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## Christmas Eve Worship Services

Sunday, 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

Monday, December 25

10 a.m.





# *Advent & Christmas* SCHEDULE

## **Advent Program and Dessert Fellowship**

Sunday, December 3 ~ Table Viewing at 3 p.m., service begins at 4 p.m.

## **Children's Advent Program**

Sunday, December 10 between services in the sanctuary

## **Lessons & Carols**

Sunday, December 17 at 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Worship Services

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

Sunday, December 17 at 9:30 a.m. in Crabtree Parish Hall

## **Winter Wonderland**

Wednesday, December 20 at 5:30 p.m. in Crabtree Parish Hall  
(More info on page 8)

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10 a.m.

## **New Year's Day Worship Service**

Sunday, December 31

10 a.m.



# The Season of Home

## Zach Meyer

Happy Holidays WHLC! As several of you know, this is my absolute favorite time of the year, when we revisit favorite carols, hang up colorful decor, recall cherished traditions and feel a sense of good cheer in the air. I like to share a reflection for the Window every December, each year focusing on a theme this season reminds me of. This year in particular, I find myself drawn towards the idea of home, and what that means for us as this year draws to a close.

For most of us, the thought of homes makes us think of buildings, the places where we live, or the spot we look forward to heading back to each night after a day at school, work or a trip away. While that's certainly true, it's interesting to note that *Hām*, the original word our English word for "home" derives from, refers not to a physical building but rather a gathering of people. As I think of our church, and what the season of Advent means for all of creation, this idea of *Hām* seems not only to fit the perfect picture of the season, but even highlight what this time of year is really about.

The classic saying goes that home is where your heart is, and that rings especially true around Christmastime every year. How many songs, movies and pictures reference the idea of being "home for the holidays,"? We can't deny there's a deeply powerful aspect to this idea. All the pictures of the holidays seem to return to families gathered together, gifts, food and cheer being shared, and everyone appreciating all that is around them. We all long to spend this time of year surrounded by the people who mean the most to us, and it doesn't feel quite right when we are not able to gather together for the most wonderful time of the year.

The more I ponder it, the whole concept seems to be the perfect idea of "*Hām*" put into practice. That's not to say the physical buildings don't matter, nor the locations where we gather. There is certainly plenty of tradition and festivity attached to them. Rather, it confirms that, for all of us, the idea of "*home*" we seek each holiday season is the people we love and are grateful for, and long to spend time with.

This same longing for *Hām* is found deeply woven into the Holy Nativity we approach this holiday season. Jesus enters the world not to be born in an iconic location, draped in royalty for the whole world to see. Actually, the location seems to be far from the critical part of the narrative (though that's not to say it's not important!) Instead, the text focuses on who is surrounding Jesus as He is born. It seems to speak to the direct connection this new Messiah has to all of them; a young virgin mother, shepherds of the field, foreigners from another land, a host of heavenly glory and power, the first creatures God creates in the creation narrative.



The Scriptures make sure to mention all of them, tying them all into this powerful narrative. Because God does care about all of them, enough to long to be with them ... and the same holds true for us today. In this season we celebrate being at *Hām* with this new Messiah, who longs to be in relationship with all of creation, weaving a beautiful picture of how strong God's love is. And this love knows no stopping point or physical location-it abounds everywhere!

This season might find us all in different locations for the holidays, but wherever you and your family may be, and however you celebrate it, I hope you know the feeling of home wherever you are. That feeling won't erase struggles in our lives, or mean the road will always be easy ahead of us; what it does guarantee however, is that God is present alongside creation for every part of it. No matter where we are, home is right alongside us!

And as I ponder this feeling of home this holiday season, I think all of you, my beloved WHLC family. You all represent *home* every week; a gathering of people committed to living out God's wonderful love in this community of ours. I like to think that we each act as home to each other, and this church is just as much of a home to each of us. I am so grateful to share this special time of year with all of you, and pray that you all have a wonderful Holiday season.

Finally, to close this reflection, I'd like to leave a recommendation for a holiday song that fits this idea of *Hām*. As many of you know, I am a massive parrothead, as Jimmy Buffett has been my favorite artist for many years. His music, from my perspective at least, had a way of bringing all kinds of people together, creating a home for everyone to cast away worries and fears, and enjoy good company and good times. Sadly, Jimmy passed away this year, leaving many of us fans devastated to say goodbye to someone whose music made us feel at home wherever we were. Music never dies however, and reflecting on one of his Christmas songs, "*Merry Christmas, Alabama*," has helped remind me of how wonderful this idea of *Hām* is.

If you have a chance this season, give it a listen! Maybe it will draw to mind where you find home to be in your life, and remind us all how we can celebrate it this holiday season. And maybe we all need a reminder of that when we feel a little exhausted, stressed, upset or confused. And wherever this season finds you, may you remember:

"That we're never, far from home,"

Merry Christmas everyone!

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



# TREASURER'S REPORT

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

	October 2023		Year-to-Date		2022 YTD
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
General Offering	36,698	39,886	396,381	398,860	397,124
Other General Fund Income	607	1,298	18,006	12,980	9,059
General Fund Income	37,305	41,184	414,387	411,840	406,183
General Fund Expense	39,300	41,150	394,686	411,500	436,182
General Fund Net Income	(1,995)	34	19,701	340	(29,999)
Special Offering Income	443		3,128		2,830
Special Offering Expense	70		2,575		2,146
Special Offering Net Income	373		553		684
Total Net Income	(1,622)	34	20,254	340	(29,315)

Mortgage Balance	646,401.03
Capital Appeal Permanent Fund Balance	141,840.88

For the month of October General Offering was lower than budget and General Fund expenses were also lower than budget. While this resulted in a net loss for the month, we continue to have a strong year-to-date 2023 net income. Additionally Finance Committee monitors the patterns of income by month, vs the budget which assumes each month's income is one twelfth of the full year, and through October we are running more than 100% of what is anticipated.

Other General Fund Income consists of interest income, facility rental income and other miscellaneous income which in aggregate are coming in higher than what was budgeted.

The WHLC mortgage balance is now at \$646,401.03 vs \$705,752.36 at 12/31/2022.

Detailed financial statements are available in the Church Office. Please let me know if you have questions.

Barb Waymire



# WHLC NEWS & NOTES

## Celebrating a



**Sunday, December 17  
(between services)**

**Crabtree Parish Hall**

*Be a part of the birthday  
celebration of Vivien Wells!*

God has been blessed her  
with 99 years!

Cake will be served!

Vivien's birthday is on December 8,  
but we will celebrate on December  
17, between services, with Windsor  
Brass in Crabtree Parish Hall.

## ELDERBERRIES

Come to Elderberries for a  
sing-a-long on Thursday,  
December 7. Thank you Jan  
Carlson and Wendy Prigge for  
your beautiful piano playing! It  
will be potluck style so bring a  
dish to share!

There will  
not be  
Elderberries  
in January.



## WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS



We need worship volunteers,  
especially for our Christmas  
Eve services! Would you be  
willing to sign up as an usher,  
greeter, lector or communion  
assistant? We welcome new  
volunteers and will show you  
what to do if you would like to  
give it a try! It's fun and easy!  
Sign up to volunteer here:

[https://volunteersignup.org/  
CTRAF](https://volunteersignup.org/CTRAF)

# 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 17.**



The Prayer Shawl ministry welcomes donations of any kind of yarn. Please place in the giant Zip-loc bag that is on the shelf in the Koinonia Room's closet. Your support of this ministry is appreciated. Thank you!

Grab an Advent/Christmas devotional in the narthex or in the main entrance the next time you're at church!





In lieu of our regular Wednesday activities on December 20 (the final Wednesday evening of activities for 2023) WHLC will be hosting a special holiday event for kids and their families: Winter Wonderland! This project has been in the works here at WHLC for a while now, and will be very similar to our Boo Bash, slightly scaled down.

A pizza dinner will be served from 5:30 p.m. as usual; afterwards however, there will be various fun-filled holiday stations & activities for kids, families and all ages to partake in, set up across Crabtree Parish Hall. Activities will include a hot chocolate bar,

snowman bowling, Christmas cookie decorating, ornament making and more. There will be a Christmas tree to decorate, music to enjoy, and even a small prize for the best Christmas outfit.

The rest of our Wednesday activities will have wrapped up by the 20th, but we encourage you to join us for this fun event! We could use a few helping hands running the activity stations; similar to Boo Bash, these stations are easy to run and a ton of fun. All are welcome at this event, and we encourage kids and families to invite as many friends as they like!

Hope you can join us as we celebrate the season in this Wednesday Night sendoff to 2023!





Our annual Children's Advent Program returns on Sunday, December 10, from 10 - 10:30 a.m. The program will take place in the sanctuary, and will be live-streamed for those unable to attend in person. The students will be exploring the big ideas of Christmas

through their favorite songs and some fun dialogue. We can't wait for you to see what they have been working on!



Keep your eyes out for more information on the date of our upcoming CHAOSTic Christmastime! This annual gathering is an event for students in 6th-12th to celebrate the Christmas season! We decorate the youth room, enjoy holiday treats, and even partake in a white elephant gift exchange. Students are welcomed and encouraged to invite their friends!

## Wednesday Kid's Activities in December

**December 6** - There will be no confirmation, Grace Notes, Cherub Chimes, Faith Formation or Joyful Noise. Instead, the students will spend the time from 6-7:30pm doing a full rehearsal of the Advent program!

**December 13** - This will be our final night of the regular Wednesday schedule for 2023.

**December 20** - Winter Wonderland Event in Crabtree Parish Hall.

**December 27** - No Wednesday Night Kid's Activities.





Our loving, caring, congregational members provided a beautiful funeral luncheon in celebration of Janet Hanusa's life. It took a village to set tables, provide salads and bars, clean up, and launder tablecloths. Many thanks are extended to the following:

**KITCHEN CREW:**

Linda Anderson  
 Marc Anderson  
 Sharman Blake  
 Julie Borseth  
 Quent Boyken  
 Ellen Graham  
 Elaine Hites  
 Zach Meyer  
 Ann Rowland  
 Chuck Safris

**LAUNDERING  
 TABLECLOTHS**

Linda Anderson  
 Sharman Blake  
 Julie Borseth  
 Ellen Graham  
 Elaine Hites

**SALADS and BARS provided by:**

Colleen Armstrong  
 Julie Borseth  
 Inez Boyken  
 Jessica Chance  
 Linda Fasse  
 Ellen Graham  
 Dianne Greenfield  
 Peg Armstrong Gustafson  
 Elaine Hites  
 Jan Johnson  
 Dana Leahy  
 Kathy McCracken  
 Carol Popken  
 Cheryl Rigler  
 Sheila Schneckloth  
 Maren Steensen  
 Marilyn Warling  
 Barb Waymire

God's work, our hands- much gratitude!  
 Linda Anderson and Sharman Blake



Please pray for George Hanusa on the death of Janet.

Please pray for Mark Holloway on the death of lone Wilkens, his life partner.

Please pray for Gregg Gustafson and Peg Armstrong-Gustafson and family on the death of Gregg's mother, Wanda Baraldi. Wanda's celebration of life is on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at Edgewater Retirement Community, 9225 Cascade Avenue, West Des Moines, Iowa.

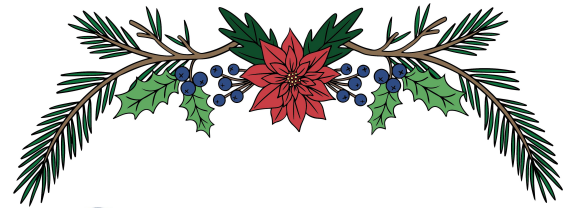
Please pray for Tracey, Ann and family on the death of Ron Stoen. Funeral arrangements are pending.

# THANK YOU!

Your donations of clothing, personal care items and cash to restock the Personal Needs Pantry at Windsor Elementary School have been delivered and are greatly appreciated by the students and their families. The generosity of WHLC members is always amazing! Thank you so very much! ~Julie Borseth



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*Thank You!*



A big thank you to Inez Boyken for all of her time organizing and planning the Advent Service and Dessert Fellowship! We appreciate you, Inez!

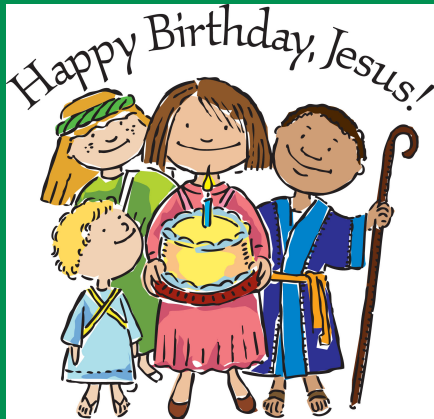
# THANK YOU



Thank you to Bonnie Hyda for her help with funerals. She finds volunteers to help with the funeral services, and also sets up the sanctuary the day prior to the funerals. WHLC is grateful for you, Bonnie!



# 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
- 23 Zach Meyer, Kayla Hunefeld,  
Hannah Toresdahl
- 26 Stephanie McNamara
- 28 Kelly Cox
- 29 Emma Swanson
- 31 Janice DuBois, Kent Thieman



Is your birthday missing? Email Heidi at [office@whlc.org](mailto:office@whlc.org) and she will get you added!

# 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*

