



GETHSEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH

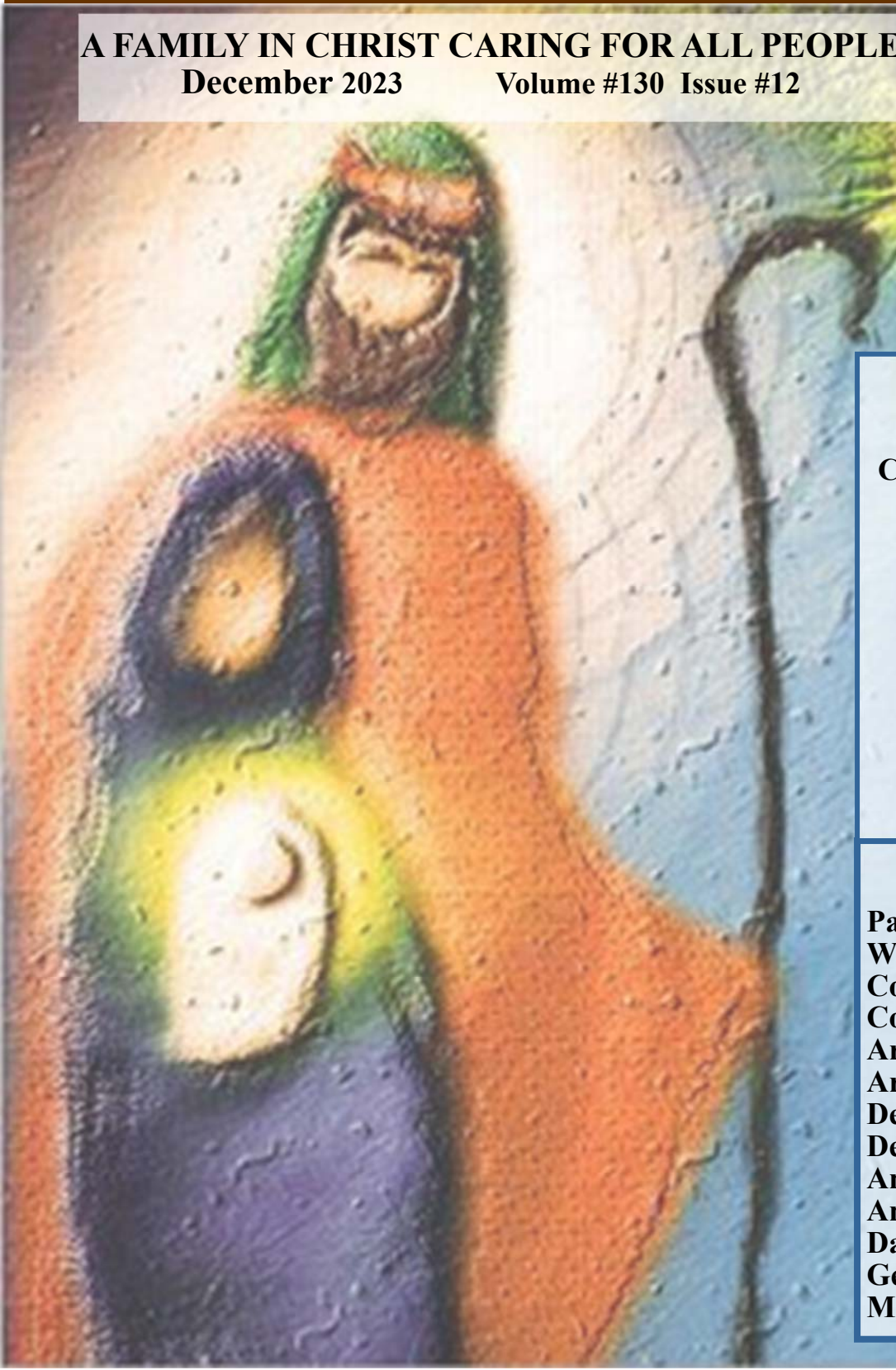


MESSENGER

A FAMILY IN CHRIST CARING FOR ALL PEOPLE

December 2023

Volume #130 Issue #12



Special Christmas Worship Services

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, 12/17 @ 11am
(will be recorded)

4th Sunday of Advent

Sunday, 12/24 @ 9:30am

Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, 12/24 @ 4:00pm

1st Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, 12/31 @ 9:30am

Messenger Contents

Pastor's Page	2
Worship in December	3
Community Life	4
Connections Corner	5
Around the Church	6
Aria's Notes	7
December Calendar	8
December Worship Leaders .	9
Announcements	10
Anniversaries	10
Dates to Remember	11
Get Connected	11
Month in Pictures	12

Pastor's Page

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”
--Jesus (Gospel of Mark 13:31)

When the Christmas carols and winter songs begin playing, we know how to interpret this sign of the times: it's holiday season, and in our culture, that means shopping and partying.

It's great for the economy, and during this time of year, retailers count on people spending extra money on gifts, treats, and food and drinks. There are some vacation days coming, students approaching a break from classes, and maybe some time for reflection on the past year and on life in general.

What story are you telling in your life? Do you dream of being known by your spending habits? Is life meant to be simply enjoyed and used up? Are you who you are because of relationships where you belong—in your neighborhood, in your family, in your career? And what's the point of all of this, anyway?

While the world prepares for a shopping and money-spending holiday, Christians are preparing for the return of Jesus. Oh, didn't you know that's what Advent is about? We're not celebrating Christmas to re-enact the first coming of Jesus Christ, but to remember the things Jesus taught about his return. Spoiler alert: it's not cute or pretty.

The stories of Advent are about God's reign, bringing harmony to relationships, making rough places smooth, healing what is broken, restoring creation. God could do this with a gentle touch, but humanity is incredibly resistant to making changes. Thus the wars and all the other scary stuff.

The story of our faith is the story of resurrection—death does not have the last word, but we worship a God of life. In the coming year, we'll read from Mark's Gospel, which scholars believe was written to be read aloud like a story.

Mark's Gospel begins with Jesus being baptized by John in the Jordan River—there's no birth story! Jesus arrives on the scene speaking like a prophet, telling the truth about the world and calling the people of God to repentance and action. Mark's Gospel ends with an empty tomb and witnesses who “said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.”

But someone did tell, because we know the story, and we're still telling it. It is God's story, and we are in it.

Pastor Cheryl Walenta Gorvie

Worship in December

Sunday, December 3, 2023

1st Sunday of Advent

8:30am In-Person and Online Worship
9:45am Sunday School & Fellowship
10:00am Adult Forum: CASA
11:00am In-Person Worship

Sunday, December 10, 2023

2nd Sunday of Advent

8:30am In-Person and Online Worship
9:45am Sunday School & Fellowship
10:00am Adult Forum: Sarah Unsicker
11:00am In-Person Worship
3-5pm Live Nativity/Fair Trade shop

Sunday, December 17, 2023

3rd Sunday of Advent

8:30am In-Person and Online Worship
9:45am Sunday School & Fellowship
10:00am Committee Meetings
11:00am In-Person Worship w/ Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

9:30am In-Person and Online Worship
No Sunday School & No Fellowship

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve

4:00pm In-Person and Online Worship

Sunday, December 31, 2023

New Year's Eve

Lessons and Carols

9:30am In-Person and Online Worship
No Sunday School & No Fellowship

Children's Christmas Program

This year's Sunday School Christmas program will be **Sunday, December 17th during the 11am worship service**. If your child will not be available to participate, please let their teacher know ASAP.

Year End Giving

As we move toward ending the year on a positive note (or at least having a less negative balance), as chair of the Finance Committee I was asked by the Council at its last meeting to provide an update on where our finances stand. The numbers for November are not in yet as the newsletter goes to press so I need to provide an update as of the end of October. Our actual giving through the end of October was \$8,501 higher than anticipated while our actual expenses were \$1,424 higher than budgeted. The congregation approved a budget that anticipated a deficit of \$30,497 for the year, which based on the projected budget, meant that we would have a deficit of \$47,899 by the end of October (due in large part to the Endowment Fund support of \$21,885 not being posted until December). In terms of net income to expense we are \$7,077 ahead so we are currently only \$40,822 behind. December giving is often twice as much as many other months so hopefully we can continue to bring down the anticipated deficit before the end of the year. Whatever support you can provide in this last month is greatly appreciated.
—Dan Flaxbart

Attention Committee Chairs:



Your budget requests for 2024 are due to Dan Flaxbart by Friday, December 1st. Committee reports are due to the church office by Friday, December 8th.

Community Life

Adopt a Family

We are so thankful and excited to announce that all seven families (40 individuals) were adopted in time for Christmas and will receive some basic home necessities along with their gifts.

Please remember that all gifts should be wrapped and bagged together with the name of the person and family number written prominently on the outside of the bag. Items are due to the church no later than Sunday, December 10th.

Blanket and Gift Card Collection

We are also collecting blankets and \$25 gift cards from local stores (Schnucks, ALDI, Walmart, Walgreens, etc.) to be divided between Isaiah 58 and St. Anthony's. Know these items are very welcome and appreciated!

Happy holidays, and thank you for helping to make Christmas brighter for our neighbors served through St. Anthony's!
—Maryn and Angie



Mittens, Hats, Gloves

Did you know that December 6th is National Mitten Tree day? The mitten tree will be up December 11th and ready to be decorated with your donated mittens, hats, and gloves. We will continue to collect these items through the end of January. All items will be donated to our friends at Isaiah 58 and St. Anthony's.

Remember, we need items in all sizes, colors, and patterns. If you like it, someone else is bound to like it too!



donate Request of the Month

December:

**Gently used coats, new socks,
non perishable foods, spices**

Please bring products to the church before the last Sunday of the month!



Red Cross Blood Drive December 4th

1:00pm - 5:00pm

We welcome all "types" of donors. A link to book your preferred time slot can be found on Gethsemane's website.

International Holiday Cookie Packages Now Available!!

Want to add something new (and delicious) to your holiday cookie spread? Welcome Neighbor STL is offering international holiday cookie packages with treats from Syria, India, Morocco, and more! 90% of the proceeds from these packages will go directly to support refugee and immigrant bakers. To order and learn more, go to: WelcomeNeighborSTL.org.

HELLO TURKEYS!



Last month we asked you to write the word "Turkey" on your attendance form for a special surprise. Only one person took the time to participate. Thank you Deb Schaller! Watch this space for future opportunities to participate and win.

Connections Corner



✉: glcstlsocialmedia@gmail.com

☎: 314-518-6978 (ok to text)

*if you send me a friend request on Facebook I will accept you!

Office hours: Mon –Thurs, 10am—2:30pm

Ways to stay connected:

Utilizing these resources can help you feel closer to Gethsemane!



Give online
(Vanco Mobile App)



Access the Church Directory
Online (Instant Church Directory)

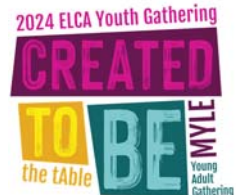


Watch Worship Services
Online (YouTube)

Youth Gathering Updates! Fundraisers!

Babysitting night on December 8th from 5-9pm and **Puppy Chow Sale on December 17** from 9:30am-12pm.

Fundraiser 1) Drop off your potty-trained children (three years old and above) at Gethsemane (3600 Hampton Ave. in the lower level Fellowship Hall) while you run errands, etc. The kids will enjoy age appropriate games, stories, and a movie. Dinner will be provided. You may drop off your kids anytime after 5pm and pick up anytime before 9pm. Registration is required. (This is a Free Will Offering but the suggested donation is \$30/child)



Fundraiser 2) Pre-order or purchase Puppy Chow on December 17. Bags will be sold for \$10 (7 cups) and \$5 (three cups). There will be a vegan option as well. If you know you want some Puppy Chow you should pre-order as quantities will be limited. Look for samples at church!

You can always donate to the Gethsemane Youth Fund directly. There is a link on Gethsemane's website under the "donate now" tab. Scroll until you find the ELCA Youth Gathering tile.

Website: www.gethsemanestl.org

YouTube: [gethsemanestl](https://www.youtube.com/gethsemanestl)

Instagram: [gethsemane_elca_stl](https://www.instagram.com/gethsemane_elca_stl)

Pinterest: [Gethsemane Lutheran Church](https://www.pinterest.com/GethsemaneLutheranChurch)

Facebook: [Gethsemane Lutheran Church - ELCA, St. Louis, MO](https://www.facebook.com/GethsemaneLutheranChurch-ELCA-St-Louis-MO)

Find Gethsemane on Social Media:



Around the Church



December GLCW Luncheon

All women are welcome to join us at our next luncheon:

Date: Monday, December 18th

Time: 11:30 AM

Place: Favazza's
5201 Southwest Ave

Hostesses: Mary Thuss

RSVP: Please call : 314.963.5108
by Monday, December 11th

Adult Forum Topics

All adults are welcome to join us in the chapel between services at 10:00am for the following discussions:

Dec. 3rd - CASA

Dec 10th - Government Involvement
with Sarah Unsicker

Dec 17th - Member Care Team

Dec 24th - No meeting

Attention...

The church office will be closed between 10am and 12pm on Wednesday, December 6th and Thursday, December 14th for staff meetings. The Staff is taking a Christmas retreat on Wednesday, December 20th from 9:30am - 1:30pm.

Family Advent Craft Event

Save the Date: Gethsemane will be hosting an Advent Family Craft Night on Friday, December 1st, at 6pm. A simple soup dinner will be served along with the activity of making Advent decorations for the church. Everyone is welcome! Watch for details and registration information. We are currently looking for blue tissue paper. A collection basket is in the fellowship hall.



We are excited for the return of Gethsemane's Living Nativity on Sunday, **December 10th.** Join us for outdoor activities starting at 3pm including live animals, hot chocolate, and cookies.

Then move inside at 4:15pm to visit the Holy Family, hear the story of the Jesus' birth, and sing some of your favorite traditional Christmas hymns. The Bridge Pop-Up shop will be available from 3pm to 5pm for fair-trade purchases.

Gethsemane Youth Group Fundraiser

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Youth Group so far! Every little bit helps and we are getting closer to our goal. If we go over our goal the money will be used to build the account back up for the next group! See page 5 for info on the next fundraisers and how to participate. In 2024 we will have two more fundraisers: one for the Super Bowl and one during Easter! Stay tuned and thanks again for your support!

Third Sunday Committee Meetings

In an effort to encourage more committee meetings and member involvement, we will now reserve the third Sunday of each month for committee meetings. We will not schedule adult forums, speakers, presentations, or events on the third Sunday. Contact the church office with any questions, to reserve your space, or to announce your meeting plans.

Aria's Notes

by Gethsemane's Music Director: Dr. Aria Thomé

Please join the choir of Gethsemane for a wonderful evening of Christmas carols, anthems, and stunning organ arrangements of well known Christmas hymns. We will also sing the freshly composed Christmas Cantata *A New and Glorious Morn*, a new work of original arrangements woven together with your favorite hymns of the season. Join us Sunday at 4pm on December 17th in the Church to help prepare our mind, hearts, and spirits to receive the joy of Christ's birth into our hearts!

GETHSEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH CHOIR PRESENTS


A NEW & GLORIOUS MORN!

CELEBRATING THE LIGHT AND LIFE OF CHRISTMAS

SUNDAY DECEMBER 17
4:00 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Gethsemane Lutheran Church
3600 Hampton Ave. 63109
GethsemaneSTL.com

December 2023 Worship Leaders

	3rd		10th		17th		24th		31st
	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late	9:30am	4:00pm	9:30am
Greeter	Betsy B.	Sue H.	Kate H.	Deb S.	Carleen R.	Keith P.	Joan W..	Anne C.	Wind Family
Usher	John S.	Denise B.	John S.	Steve W.	Bill S.	Nancy L.	Bill S.	Steve H.	Richard L.
Usher	Adam R.	Steve W.	Adam R.	Nancy L.	Cayce M.	Steve H.	Cayce M.	Gary B.	Peggy L.
Assisting Minister	Amy R.	Gary B.	Becky R.	Maryn O.	Phyllis S.	Angie F.	Megan Y.	Carolyn S.	Rick S.
Lector	Linus C.	Marilyn Mc.	John S.	Deb S.	Melissa T.	Ami B.	Cayce M.	Steve W.	Rick S.
Children’s Sermon	Pastor Cheryl		Chris Schmidt		Pastor Cheryl		Lindsay Schuessler		Chris Schmidt
Wine	Stephen Brown				Sue Hackmann		Stephen Brown		
Bread Baker	Richard Lima		Richardson Family		Wisch Family		Yemm Family		Tepe Family
Blood Pressure	Ted Yemm		N/A		Sharon Salerno		N/A		N/A
Fellowship Host	Rentchler Family		Moe Family		Wisch Family		No Fellowship		No Fellowship
Donut Driver	John Sandberg		Tepe Family		Sue Hackmann		No Fellowship		No Fellowship
Altar Flowers	Aria Thomé		Available		Salerno & Rakey		Aria Thomé		Schuessler
Altar Guild	Melissa DeVore								
Camera	Gretchen Jenson								

Announcements & Anniversaries

Condolences...

We pray for the hope and comfort of the resurrection for the family and friends of Roy Geers. Roy died on November 12th. His funeral was held on November 15th and followed by his interment at Sunset Memorial Park.

Congratulations...

to Carmen Lampkin and Tyrone Riley upon the pending birth of their first child. In celebration of the event, the Tatum family is hosting a baby shower between services, during fellowship hour, on Sunday, December 10th. Cake and juice will be provided.

SAVE the Date...

- ♦ Committee and Team budgets are due to Dan Flaxbart by Friday, December 1st
- ♦ Committee and Team yearly reports are due to the church office by Friday, December 8th
- ♦ Nominations and Church Council nominee writeups and pictures are due to the church office by Friday, December 8th

November Attendance

November 5th

112 In-Person 44 Online

November 19th

81 In-Person 32 Online

November 12th

118 In-Person 49 Online

November 26th

73 In-Person 26 Online

Don't forget to complete your weekly attendance form.
We're counting on you!



December Birthdays

- 2 Nancy Luebke
- 3 Ted Yemm
- 4 Paula Brud-Brown
Allison Sungur
- 5 Natalie Fontana
Emily Szyman
- 6 Evan Cooney
- 9 Carolyn Schainker
Ruthie Hunsinger
- 12 Lexi Tatum
Anja Walentik
- 14 Vicki Herrmann
Emma Tanner
Sue Hackmann
- 16 Susan Sommerfeld
- 17 Sam Yemm
- 18 Foster McElroy
Celeste Vossmeier
- 20 Carolyn Pirkle
- 22 Jocelyn Lampkin
- 25 Keaton Hanson
Bob Tanner
- 28 Nellie Hohnsen
- 29 Debbie Landis

December Anniversaries

- 3 Scott & Ruth Hanson 44
- 27 Bob & Peggy Lewis 31
- 28 Richard & Dawn Schuessler 49



Dates to Remember

Coming Up:

Friday, December 1	Family Advent Craft Event
Friday, December 8	Youth Babysitting Fundraiser
Sunday, December 10	Live Nativity
Sunday, December 17	Children's Program and Cantata, Puppy Chow Fundraiser
Saturday, January 27	Food Drive at Schnucks
Sunday, January 28	Congregational Annual Meeting

Don't Forget

Every Wednesday -
Bulletin Items By Noon

Second Tuesday -
Church Council Meeting

Third Friday -
Messenger Articles Due

December First -
Budget Requests Due

Committee Reports are
due Friday, December 8th.

SPECIAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Get Connected @ Gethsemane

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

3600 Hampton Ave.,
St. Louis, MO 63109
Phone: 314-352-8050
Fax: 314-352-8051
Email Address:
office@gethsemanestl.org
Church Office Hours: 8:00am-2:00pm

Pastoral Care: Rev. Cheryl Walenta
Gorvie 903-918-3992
pastor@gethsemanestl.org

Council President Barb Johnson
314-962-3501
barbjohnson47@hotmail.com

Website: www.gethsemanestl.org
YouTube: gethsemanestl
Instagram: gethsemane_elca_stl
Pinterest: Gethsemane Lutheran Church
Facebook: Gethsemane Lutheran Church -
ELCA, St. Louis, MO

eMESSENGER

Please consider helping us save a tree and save on the cost of paper and postage. This happens if you choose to receive your *Messenger* only by e-mail. Just send a message to:
messenger@gethsemanestl.org.

WEEKLY E-NEWS

If you are not receiving our weekly e-news and would like to receive it, let us know by sending us an email. Please make sure that you put our address in your address book so that your spam filters let it pass through!

MESSENGER NEWS

You can send your news and notes for the *Messenger* to **messenger@gethsemanestl.org**. There is also a *Messenger* drawer by the church office. For best results, news should be in by the third Friday of each month.



Gethsemane Lutheran Church
3600 Hampton Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63109

Return Service Requested

Month in Pictures

