



Dear Friends in Christ,

We often begin the new year with talk of personal improvement and the taking on of long-awaited projects that we have put off for too long. And yet, year after year, the personal improvement goals elude us, and our list of projects still awaits us. Such is life this side of glory, I suppose. While many of us have simply given up on New Year's resolutions, there is much good in taking stock of our lives periodically and committing ourselves once again to future growth and further improvement. The beginning of a new year is a good time for this.

January 1st on the Church calendar has been marked by various feasts throughout the centuries. January 1st is the Eighth Day after our celebration of the birth of Jesus. According to Jewish law male babies were circumcised on the eighth day and the mothers were purified on that day. So, this has been a day to commemorate both the Circumcision of the Child Jesus as well as a day in honor of Mary, the mother of the Lord.

In the Middle Ages, this day also came to be associated with devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. The Eighth Day of Christmas traditionally had a one-verse Gospel reading for the day from Luke 2:21 which reported both the circumcision and the giving of the divinely chosen Name, Jesus. Our Lutheran Churches have retained this medieval association of the Circumcision and the Name of Jesus because of their biblical basis and accordingly our current worship books the *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)* title the day, "The Name of Jesus".

I go in to all these historic details because I want to offer an over-arching reality in which to consider the living of our daily lives throughout the New Year. The clue is found in the church's celebration for January 1st, the Name of Jesus. The over-arching reality of our lives is Christ! Christ is the center around which all other aspects of our lives revolve. When Christ is not the center then all sorts of distortions, sins and idolatries creep into our hearts and lives.

The angel said, "You shall call His name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins." The Name of Jesus underscores our need for God to come and save us, to free us from our sins, and free us for lives of obedience and faith. As we consider our lives in the New Year, let us reflect on our need for continual forgiveness as we seek to live in the freedom of Christ. We are freed in Christ, not to do as we please, but to live God-pleasing lives in obedience to His Word and Will.

May God bless you abundantly in this New Year 2026!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ken" above "Dyke" and "Pastor".

Pastor Ken



Below are the contributions for the month of December
(thru December 22nd)

\$\$5,482.59 is needed weekly to meet our budget

Date	Weekly Offering	Received Year To Date
7&8	\$7,487.50	\$265,966.75
13&14	\$4,930.10	\$270,896.85
20&21	\$5,053.00	\$275,949.85

ANNUAL FINANCIAL MEETING will be January 25, 2026.

Remember that this
is a financial and
statistical meeting.

REGULAR AND LARGE PRINT DEVOTIONAL BOOKS
for January through March are available in the
Narthex and the church office. Pick one up soon.

MORNINGPRAYER:

Each Wednesday, *Morning Prayer* is prayed in the Noah's Ark Chapel. This mid-week service provides us with an opportunity to enter prayer and supplication. The service includes prayers for all our armed service personnel, and we pray for all members of the parish who are celebrating birthdays & anniversary's. This brief service begins at 11:30 AM and you are welcome to join us.



We had several special programs during the advent season and we would like to **thank everyone** involved in these special programs & services and all the helpers for the Angel Tree, the coat drive, the Parade, all who helped with the Christmas pageant, including making goodie bags, all who helped setting up the Christmas caroling, the Church Tour, all that helped with the Christmas Decorations in the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, the Nativity Display, and everyone who participated in these activities in any way. They made the advent season very exciting.



For Buying a Gift

Donating Money

ANGEL TREE SAYS

THANK
YOU




Having a Fund Raiser
Adopting a Family

Saying a Prayer

Whatever you did to help our 2025 Angel Tree be a success, we thank you, thank you, thank you!! We were able to help 88 families, 285 children! May you have a Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2026

Nicole Witten

BAPTISM: Jayce Allen Knop, the son of Zachary Knop and Kailyn Absher was baptized on December 14, 2025. Sponsors were Adelynn Knop and Jayden Hood.



CONFIRMATION – will begin Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 10am

2026 Flower Calendar is on the **bulletin board in the Narthex**. Let me know how you want the dedication to read, **donate \$40.00** to the church, and we will take care of the rest. Please share a special occasion and bring joy and sunshine in the worship services. Remember someone or something special or just share the joy of your life in Christ by supplying flowers for our chancel.

Remember: We do not have flowers during Lent.

