



*With the birth of Jesus in our hearts  
We carry light and love to the world.*

*Sunday, December 21, 2025  
Fourth Sunday of Advent*



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



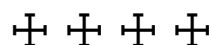
**OUR VALUES STATEMENT:** We recognize that we are not here by chance but are gathered together to be the church of God in Christ.

We recognize that God is making us, through grace, into a fellowship that embodies and expresses the spirit of Christ.

In this fellowship, there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of us are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). We, therefore, welcome equally all people, regardless of religious office, position, possessions, education, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental ability, physical ability or other distinctions. (Adopted 9/7/07)

### **VISION STATEMENT:**

Working as a supportive family of faith to extend God's gracious welcome through worship, community service, and spiritual growth opportunities.



**The Liturgy** is from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

**Are you hearing impaired?** If you are having difficulty hearing our worship service, try using our Assisted Hearing System, which is available from an usher.

**Today's worship service** is being live-streamed beginning at 9:25am and will be replayed next Sunday at 6pm on FM radio station 102.9. The service is available to view anytime on the home page of our website [www.nlcww.org](http://www.nlcww.org).

**In-person attendance for last Sunday: 165**

***PLEASE MAKE SURE CELL PHONES ARE SILENCED.***

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHIMES

### PRELUDE

*Breath of Heaven*

Amy Grant  
Soloist: Gina Fell



**THE GATHERING**  
**The Holy Spirit calls us**  
**together as the people of God.**

*Please stand as you are able and turn toward the baptismal font.*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

**I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.**

Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones.

**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before You. (Psalm 89:1-2.5.14)**

*Please look toward the cross as it processes toward the altar.*


### GATHERING HYMN

*Blessed Be the God of Israel*



250




1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free  
 2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,  
 3 My child, as proph-et of the Lord you will pre-pare the way,

and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da - vid's tree.  
 the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;  
 to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.

So have the proph-ets long de - clared that with a might - y arm  
 that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,  
 Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease




God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.  
 in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.  
 to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.



## **GATHERING BLESSING**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**

## **PASTORAL GREETING**

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

*Please be seated.*

## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Praise to You, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream of You. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised Child and our Savior. **Amen.**

## **LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES**

### **Fourth Candle – The Candle of Love**

Today we mark the fourth Sunday of Advent, and today we light the Candle of Love. We long for love, fresh and newborn, a Messiah who will tell us of God's love that will not let us go. In darkness that deepens, we wait for the coming of the Light of the world. We wait in love as we light this Candle of Love. From hope, peace, and joy, grows love.

**Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.**

**He shall bring salvation to Israel, God fulfills the promise.**

**Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.**

**He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.**

**Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.**

**Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.**

**Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.**

**He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!**

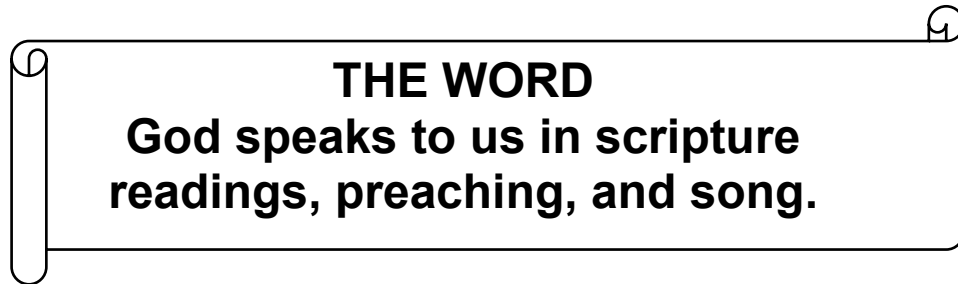
Love is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle, we celebrate the love we find in Jesus Christ.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. Lord, we bring You our sorrows and hopes, asking for your peace that heals and calms. We trust in your will and wait for your promises to be fulfilled in our lives. We thank You, Healer of hearts and Forgiver of sins, for your mercy and strength in our trials. Fill us with your love, guide us in your ways, and teach us to forgive as You forgive us. Lord Jesus, open our hearts to hear your voice each day. Shine your light in us, steady our steps in truth, and walk with us in every

season. We pray for our church and nation—protect it, grant peace to its people, and make it a fountain of your light and hope. You are our joy, our peace, and our everlasting hope. **Amen.**

*Prayer from Siraj, a young adult from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).*



## **SPECIAL MUSIC**

*Do You Have Room?* Shawna Edwards  
Soloist: Christina Roa

## **CHILDREN'S TIME**

Carlan Helgeson

## **A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH**

7:10-16

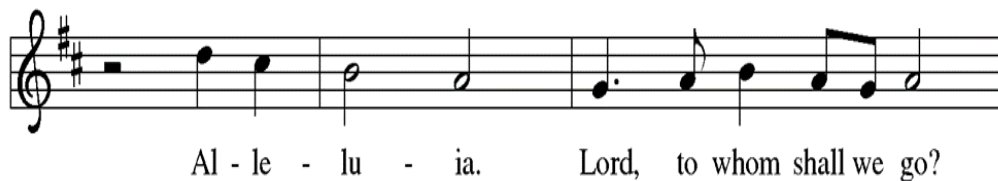
Reader: Pat Squires

<sup>10</sup> The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand as you are able.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



## THE HOLY GOSPEL

## MATTHEW 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as



the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Please be seated.*

## **SERMON**

*Please stand as you are able.*

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

*A moment of silence for reflection.*

Long-expected God, **we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only You can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope You have promised. Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. ✝ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**


*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*



1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set Thy peo - ple free;  
2. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a King;



from our fears and sins re - lease us, let us find our rest in Thee.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now Thy gracious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth Thou art;  
By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it, rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear De - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.  
by Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it, raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

*Please be seated.*

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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.

After each petition: God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

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

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

*You may offer your neighbor a sign of peace.*

*Please be seated.*

**THE MEAL**  
**God feeds us with the presence**  
**of Jesus Christ.**

## OFFERING

*You may place your offering in the offering basket by the baptismal font, or bring/mail to the office during the week. You may also donate on-line at <https://www.nlcww.org>, or on our Facebook page. You may also contribute using Venmo or Zelle if you have an account or use the QR code. For more information about these methods see today's Weekly Announcement Sheet.*



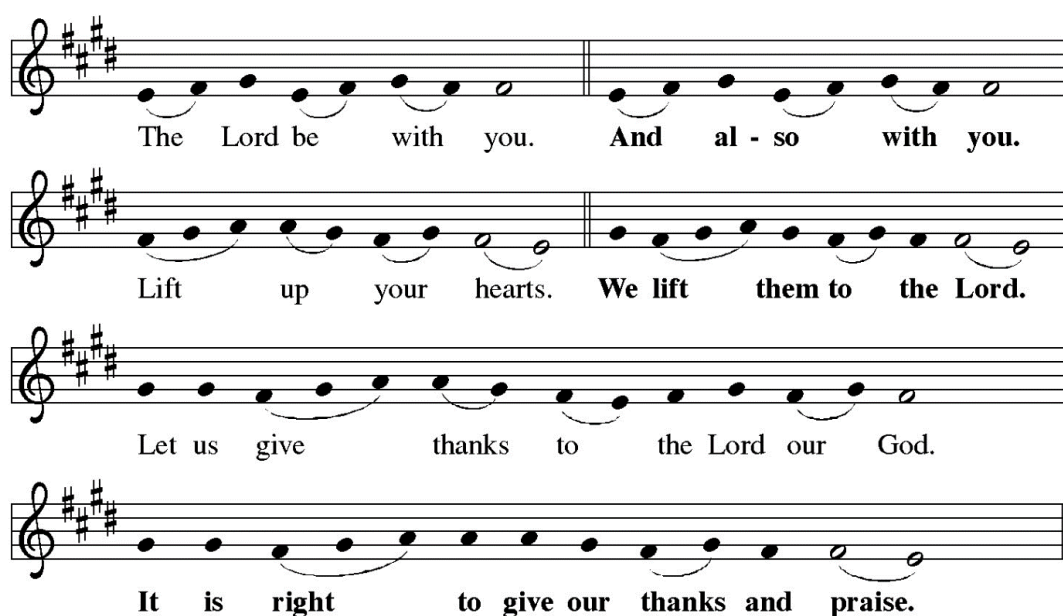
*Assisting Minister unveils the chalice and paten.*

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. 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.**

*Please stand as you are able.*

## GREAT THANKSGIVING



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

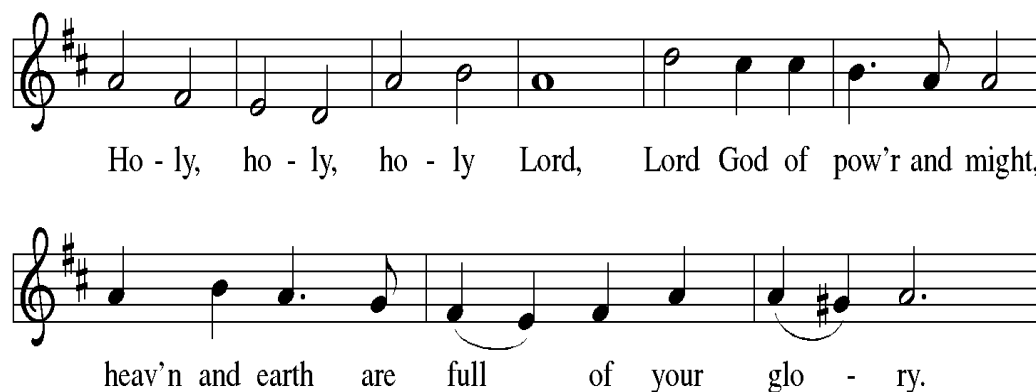
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

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 and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some half notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.

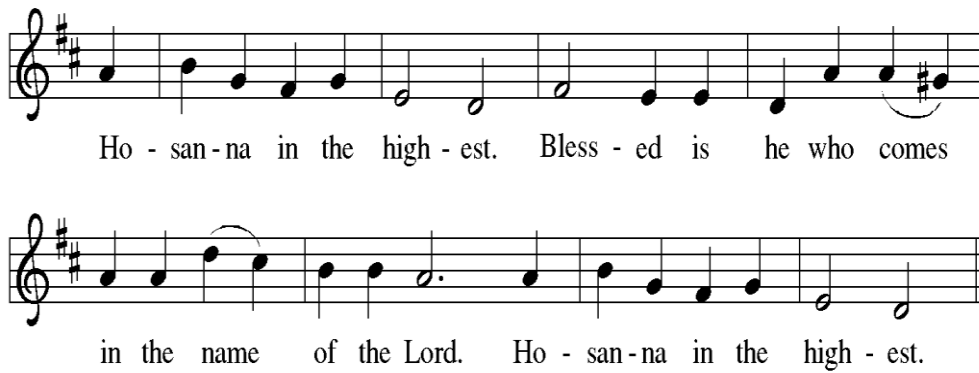
## PREFACE



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

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

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some half notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.



Holy One, the beginning and the end, the Giver of Life:

Blessed are You for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are You in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are You for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are You in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are You for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are You for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

## WORDS OF CONSECRATION

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Let us pray the prayer Christ himself taught us:

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life! God is with us! Come, receive what God has promised! Guests and friends of any age and background, take your place at the table!

*You may be seated. The ushers will invite each row to come to the altar. You may stand or kneel at the communion rail and receive bread and wine (or request a gluten free host and/or grape juice). Please let an usher know if you cannot come to the altar to receive communion. We will have communion brought to you.*

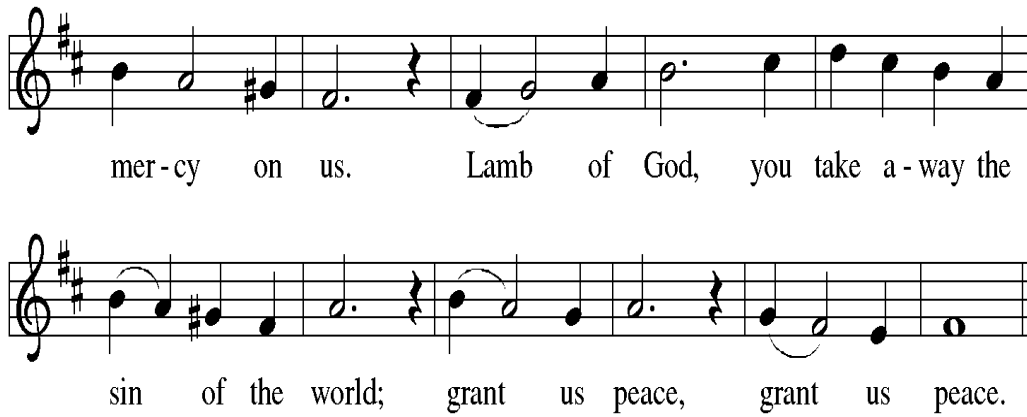
### *Lamb of God*



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



## COMMUNION MEDITATION MUSIC

*Please stand as you are able.*

## TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

**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.**



## BLESSING

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 SONG

### *People, Look East*

248

vv 1,3,4

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing  
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is  
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the  
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new

of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,  
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,  
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,  
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming

trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look  
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look  
bright as the sun and the moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look  
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look

east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.



## SENDING

People of Nativity, what is our mission?

**With the birth of Jesus in our hearts we carry light and love to the world.**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace! Keep awake!

**Thanks be to God!**

## POSTLUDE

*In Dulci Jubilo*

Gilbert M. Martin

## NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 63:7-9	Psalm: 148
Hebrews 2:10-18	Matthew 2:13-23

**COFFEE HOUR** - Please join us for fellowship in Winemiller Hall after the worship service.

## PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

***New this week:*** Marilyn Henkel, Judy Kortier

***Continue to pray for:*** Brian Albright, Killian Ash, Anne B, Carlos B, Eric Vincent Baez, Tracy Baker, Frani Barnes, Maria Baynon, Baynon family, Herb Baynon, Waltraut Bellmann, Betty Lou Bernhardt, Windy Binns, Robert Bonesteel, Ruth Brellenthin, Paul Todd Brown, Agnes Burkart, Canea family, Diane Cello, Stacy Christian, C.J. & Colleen, Karen Chipko, Beryl Clements, Patti Cotter, Denise Crawford, Charles Deon, Dominik Desormeaux, Judy Dietz, JoAnn Faulkner, Gavin, Jenna, & Ben Felder, Flower family, Vicki Goers, Patrick Gould, Donald Haig, Irma Haig, Terry Halgren, Carrie Hall-Tannenbaum, D.

Hambaugh, June Heinecke, Gary and Mary Heinecke, Glenn Heinecke, Kay Hill, Sandra Hill, Barbara Hofving, Linda Hrab, Brian Johnson, Monica Jusino, Willy K, Karen family, Finn Katona and family, Judy Kortier, Candice Kochounian, Leonore Kopitzke, Stephanie Krepshaw, Mary Krol, Maggie Kull, Debra Leinenger, Donna Lucier, Bob Maday, Germaine Major, Mallory, Elaine Malone, Raina McDannold, Bradford Allen McWilliams, Beth Morris, Mark and Wayne Musarra, Eva Mydland, Lydia Noto, Kelly Oliver, Brian Oliver, Oliver family, Michele Oliver, Zuma Perez, Lou Prettyman, Barbara Prochilo, Mary Reber, Rinehart family, Katherine Rizzo, Colleen Rocco, Rocco family, Dennis Rogers, Nancy Salzbach, John Sannuto, Carole Schaefer, Shaun, Sirmenis family, Kathy Swank, Jackie Sweet, Bob & Alice Totten, Antonio Vaznelis, Vernon, Lauren West, West family, Ginger Wielk, Howard Williams, Luke Williams, Christopher Younger, Eileen and Carol and Jason

## **PRAYERS FOR OUR LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY**

Nic Baker, Brandi Culpepper, Private Tony D'Angelo, Areil Dietz, Isaac Furr-Army, Maj. Matthew Henry, Colton Hill, Brandon Holt-Chief Warrant Officer 3, Andria T. Hook, Jonathan Hudson, Perry Langbein, Maj. USAF Will Lawlor, Cullen McDannold, Zachary McGuire, US Navy CTT2 William Pause, Brandon Pierce, Clinton Pierce, Isaac Redmond, Andrea Roache, Joel Roberts, Cpl. Timothy Spruytte, Cameron James Thompson-Airman 3rd Class, LCpl. Erich Timm, Kesley Underwood, Kyle Underwood, Maj. Chad Waldorf - Airforce.

***PRAYERS:*** *The list will be cleared every four weeks. If you wish to remain on the list for longer than four weeks, please call the office and request a long-term prayer. In case of emergency, contact the office at 352-597-1456 and leave a detailed message. Messages are checked daily.*



***Altar Flowers:*** *If you would like to order flowers in honor or in memory of someone, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex, or you can call the office at 352-597-1456. Donation is \$25.00. Flowers can be picked up after the 9:30AM Sunday service, or you can schedule a pick-up time with the office if you are not attending the service.*

## *Worship Leaders*

---

<b>Presiding Minister</b>	Reverend Giuseppe Mattei
<b>Assisting Minister</b>	Steve Miller
<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Deacon Charlotte Downing
<b>Scripture Reader</b>	Pat Squires
<b>Crucifer/Acolyte</b>	Erick Quinones
<b>Ushers</b>	Gwen Mahon & Lou Prettyman
<b>Music Director</b>	Donna Olsen
<b>Guest Organist</b>	Kathy Hackemer
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Suzanne Chelf & Gayle Howland
<b>Greeters</b>	Carol Anderson & Evelyn Galli
<b>Sanctuary</b>	Connie Chase & Beryl Clements
<b>AV Director</b>	Art Alt
<b>Audio</b>	Pat Squires
<b>Cameras</b>	Mark Major
<b>Graphics</b>	Diane Alt, Francesca Bugini, Ed Lewis & Linda Rizzo
<b>Video Production</b>	Vicki Page
<b>Head counter this week</b>	Barbara Crisanti
<b>Data Entry</b>	Diane Alt

**NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEEKI WACHEE  
A CONGREGATION OF THE FLORIDA-BAHAMAS SYNOD OF  
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

6363 Commercial Way, Weeki Wachee, FL 34613

Phone (352) 597-1456

Email: [Nativitylutheran63@gmail.com](mailto:Nativitylutheran63@gmail.com), Website: [nlcwww.org](http://nlcwww.org)

Reverend Giuseppe Mattei

Deacon Charlotte Downing

Music Director: Donna Olsen

Audio/Visual Director: Art Alt

Sunday Service at 9:30 a.m.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

