

Good Soil Lutheran Ministries
Growing Together in Christ to Love and Serve



Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21st, 2025
9:30 am



20300 Hilliard Blvd
Rocky River, OH 44116
(440) 331-1773 | GoodSoilLutheran.org

Pastor of Presence during Pastor M's Parental Leave
The Rev. Jim Kulma, jkulma@cox.net
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Cara Rovella, CCLC@goodsoillutheran.org

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YouTube: Good Soil Lutheran Ministries

Welcome

Reflecting the abundant welcome of the Kingdom of God as revealed by Jesus, GSLM welcomes all who seek God's love and grace. We affirm and celebrate the diversity of humanity in all its races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, social and economic circumstances, abilities, and disabilities. Together, we commit ourselves to racial equity and to justice for all, because in God's kingdom, we are all beloved children of God.

For Parents with Children

Good Soil loves kids and the "holy noise" they bring! Your children are warmly welcome in worship. Sing, pray, and respond; your children will learn by worshipping with you. There's also a "prayground" area in the back of the sanctuary and a nursery/cry room behind that on the back left side. We pray that worshipping together as a family is a meaningful experience!

For Those Needing Hearing Assistance

Ask an usher about hearing assistance devices to enhance your worship experience.

Holy Communion

Christ is truly present with us in worship and through this meal. All are welcome to participate in Holy Communion here at Good Soil. Children may commune with elements or receive a blessing depending on parent/guardian preference. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available upon request.

Bulletin Key

Bold Font – Spoken by the Congregation

Regular Font – Spoken by the Pastor or Worship Assistant

† – Please stand as you are able, in body or spirit.



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin & death.

Gathering

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

Prelude and Welcome

In the Confession and Forgiveness, we are drawn by God's mercy to prepare to assemble around the Word and Sacrament. It may be seen as a return to the gift of Baptism through repentance.

† Confession and Forgiveness

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

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

Silence is kept 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.

† **Gathering Hymn: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (ELW 254)**

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

*The Prayer of the
Day highlights
themes in
today's scripture.*

† **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Advent Wreath Hymn: O Come, O Come Emmanuel (ELW 257) v 1-4

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

3 O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe. *Refrain*

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. Composite Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

The Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

To put this reading into context:

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

Hear now the reading.

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore 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. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For 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.”

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

*Before and after
the reading of
the Gospel, we*

† Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

To put this reading into context:

give thanks and praise to Jesus Christ, who is revealed to us through the Gospel reading.

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

The holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ 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.

Good Soil Children's Christmas Pageant

The Hymn of the Day is the assembly's response to the sermon—making the sermon event a mutual faith conversation.

† Hymn of the Day: Canticle of Turning (ELW 723) v. 1, 2, 4

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring.

Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.

2 Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

4 Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat Text © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

*As the church,
we pray for
those in our
community and
around the
world. The
prayers are also
responsive,
emphasizing our
participation.
Each petition
addresses a
different topic,
often in the same
pattern:
+ The Church
+ Creation
+ Nations and
leaders*

† Prayers of the Church

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. *A brief silence.*

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir
our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as
together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace, **receive our
prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill
our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing
this holy birth. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work
for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child
we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

*+Those in need
+ This faith
community
+ The great
cloud of
witnesses/those
resting with God*

*Prayer list names
have been reset
at the start of the
new church year.
If you would like
to add anyone
back on the
worship prayer
list, please
contact the
church office at
440-331-1773.*

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. We pray especially for Dale, Diane, Mike, Steve, the Busby family, Joe, Jon, Audrey, Frank, Kay, Brendan, Kay, Ed & Verna, Sarah, Donna, Herb, Toni, Kate, Jason, Charley & Cindy, Bill, Joyce, Susan, Sally, Ruth, Kristina, Jeanette, the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, & Gaza, ...and those we name aloud or in our hearts. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace, **receive 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.**

*A practice of the
ancient church,
we share in
Christ's peace &
recognize it in
each other.*

† Passing of the Peace

The Peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people greet one another saying, "Peace" or "Peace be with you" sharing the peace of Christ with one another in a no-touch or low-touch way, such as a wave, peace sign, or elbow bump.

*God entrusts us
with everything
we have. Our
offering is one
way we give
thanks to God
and support the
ministry of the
church.*

The Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

God's ministry through Good Soil makes a difference, and your offering makes that possible. Help Good Soil keep making an impact by giving today using the QR code or at pushpay.com/g/goodsoillutheran



Aim your phone camera at the QR code, but don't take a picture. A link will appear to click on that will take you to Good Soil's support page.

The offering is brought forward to the altar to signify our gratitude for God's blessings.

† Offering Hymn: Savior of the Nations Come (ELW 263), v. 1

- 1 Savior of the nations, come;
virgin's son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth:
God has chosen such a birth.

Text: attr Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr hymnal version Text©2006 Augsburg Fortress.

† Offering Prayer

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.**

† Great Thanksgiving

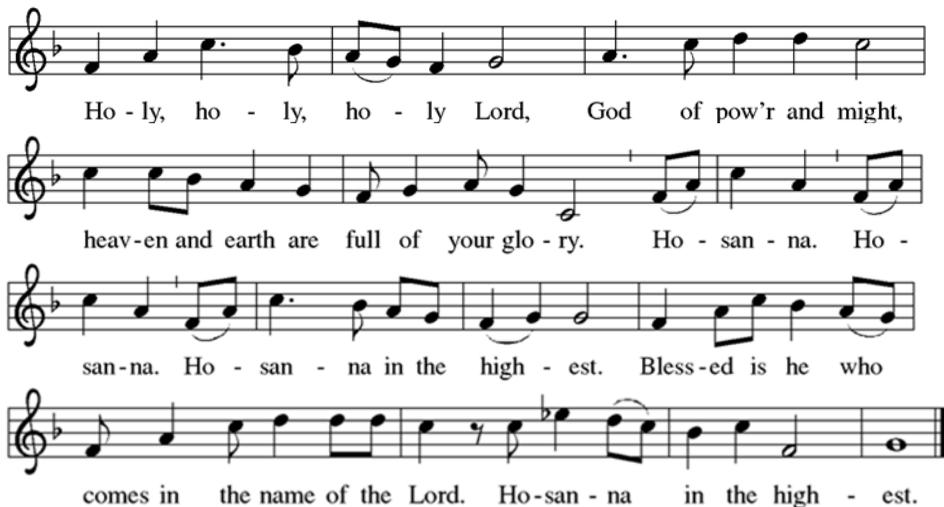
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

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.

† Preface

† Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

	<p>† Words of Institution</p>
<p><i>The Lord's Prayer is Jesus' response to his disciples when they asked him to teach them how to pray.</i></p>	<p>† Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus first taught us: 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.</p>
	<p>† Invitation to the Table</p> <p>Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.</p>
	<p>Communion</p> <p><i>Christ is with us in this meal. All who are hungry for the presence of Jesus are welcome to commune here at Good Soil.</i></p> <p><i>Children are welcome to come to the Lord's table for communion or for a blessing, depending on parent/guardian's preference.</i></p> <p><i>When you receive the elements, you are invited to respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God."</i></p> <p><i>Please wait for the usher to release your row before proceeding up front. You are invited to stand or kneel at the altar rail.</i></p> <p><i>Gluten-free bread is available on request. The wine (red) is in the outer rings of the tray, the grape juice (white) is in the center. Communion cups can be returned at the end tables on your way back to your seat.</i></p>
	<p>Communion Hymn: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (ELW 265)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came, with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame: "All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady." Gloria! 2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee; thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady." Gloria!

- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
 "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
 "My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
 Most highly favored lady, Gloria!
- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
 in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
 and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
 "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

Communion Hymn: He Came Down (ELW 253)

- 1 He came down that we may have love;
 he came down that we may have love;
 he came down that we may have love;
 hallelujah forevermore.
- 2 He came down that we may have light;
 he came down that we may have light;
 he came down that we may have light;
 hallelujah forevermore.
- 3 He came down that we may have peace;
 he came down that we may have peace;
 he came down that we may have peace;
 hallelujah forevermore.
- 4 He came down that we may have joy;
 he came down that we may have joy;
 he came down that we may have joy;
 hallelujah forevermore.

Text: Cameroon traditional

† Post-Communion Table Blessing

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

The Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

† Blessing

May God who comes among us,

	<p>Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. Amen.</p>
<p><i>Through the sending hymn we are sent out into the world to follow Jesus.</i></p>	<p>† Sending Hymn: Joy to the World (ELW 267) v. 1, 2, 4</p> <p>1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.</p> <p>2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.</p> <p>4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.</p> <p>Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748</p>
<p><i>The dismissal sends us out as Christ's Body: nourished, fed, & ready to serve. Worship has ended, and our service begins!</i></p>	<p>† Dismissal</p> <p>Go in peace. Keep awake. Thanks be to God.</p>
	<p>Postlude</p>

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Please join us after worship for post-Christmas Pageant coffee hour!

Today's Worship Servants:

Ushers: Sharon Hollowell & Stan Zeager	Livestream: Joe Lanter
Reader: Jennifer Krankowski	Acolyte: Ryan Williamson
Counters: Becky Williamson & Joe Lanter	Cantor: Kaitlyn Regan
Online Usher: Karen Sperli	Altar Care: Evan Paine
Communion Bread: Michael Mitterholzer	



Announcements from Good Soil for Sunday, December 21, 2025

Especially in our prayers: Dale Alexander, Diane Bennett, Mike Bishop, Steve Bugosh, the Busby family, Joe Cassatta, Jon Deye, Audrey Dorin, Frank Dunaway, Kay Eaton, Brendan Erchul, Kay Eaton, Ed & Verna Fink, Sarah Gresh, Donna Handy, Herb Harrison, Toni Kulma, Kate Labuda, Jason Mattson, Charley & Cindy McCabe, Bill Meyer, Joyce Miller, Susan Omerod, Sally Pate, Ruth Patrick, Kristina Seeley, Jeannette Weidlich, the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, & Gaza.

For those celebrating birthdays this week: Lucy Alusheff (12/21), Emma Sleva (12/22), Brynn Carlson (12/24), Mark Johnson (12/25), & Else Rolland (12/26).

The flowers adoring the altar today are given in the glory of God by Sharon Hollowell in memory of her parents Dorothy Wallace and Albert Petrusky and her brothers Michael and Robert "Sy" Petrusky.

Thank you for your generosity! Thank you so much for your generosity to Good Soil in this year's intent campaign. We have received 32 intent cards so far! If you would like to fill out the digital intent form, please scan the QR code to the right!



Maternity Leave FAQ- 10/19 was Pr. M's last Sunday before maternity leave. Scan the QR code to the left to see the answers to some frequently asked questions. Pr. Jim Kulma will be the Pastor of Presence while she's gone. His email is jkulma@cox.net and his cell phone number is 216-221-7333.

Socks "Plus" Giving Tree for Trials for Hope! Please join in decorating our Advent Giving Tree with gifts of comfort and joy for those served by Trials for Hope, 12/7-1/4. The tree is set up in the Lounge this year. **SUGGESTED GIFTS:** Warm Socks, USB Charging Blocks, Multi-charging Power Cords, Hats, Gloves, Individual Packets of Starkist Tuna Creations &/or Spam Single Classics. *Ongoing items requested by Trials for Hope (e.g., Diapers size 6, canned meats, personal hygiene products, etc. can be placed in the box beneath the tree.)*

Congregational Renewal Activities- The Renewal Committee reflected on the congregation's interest in meaningful activities centered on rest based on the sign-up sheets in the hallway.

Four areas emerged as priorities for Good Soil at this time:

1. Creative Rest: Hands-on *crafting* activities to inspire joy and creativity (i.e. knitting)
2. Spiritual Rest: A *Book Club* will be held to encourage deep reflection & rich discussion.
3. Physical Rest: *Hikes in Nature* with the Holy Hikes Northeast Ohio planned events (4th Saturday of every month, see Holy Hikes-Northeast Ohio Facebook Page for details).
4. Social Rest: There was interest in a *potluck*, but we need someone to plan the event. If you'd like to volunteer to organize a time of relaxation & connection over good food, music, & conversation in the coming months, contact admin@goodsoillutheran.org.

Knitting Lessons- As part of our congregational renewal activities, Anne Paine is offering knitting lessons. The group meets on Thursdays at 7 pm. If you'd like to learn or have questions, contact Anne at anne.c.paine@gmail.com, or text her at 440-670-4917.

MOW looking for Drivers- West Shore Rocky River-Lakewood Meals on Wheels works in Good Soil's kitchen M-F! They need more drivers to bring meals to recipients, especially Mon, Wed, & Fri. Contact 440-333-6298 or rrlwcoordinator@westshoremow.org for more info.



Bethesda Staff Partnership- Scan the QR code to read an update from Good Soil and Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran's call committee as they engage the call process seeking a shared Minister for Christian Formation. Please pray for our joint call committee as they journey together. Read additional info below:

Call Committee Work- The joint call committee members are Chris Webner (co-leader), Lynne Zeidler, Scott Pohlkamp, & Lisa Hanson from Bethesda, and JoAnne Wancata (co-leader), Evan Paine, Emma Sleva, & Amelia Forshey from Good Soil. Feel free to reach out to any of them. The committee has begun their work, utilizing an ELCA guide. One of the committee's primary goals is to regularly communicate with and involve congregants throughout the search. The committee will be offering updates throughout the search. Please answer the reflection questions (using the above QR code or handouts on the welcome table) and submit those responses to JoAnne Wancata jwancata@sbcglobal.net, if you haven't already.

Flower Sign-Up- Interested in adorning Christ's altar with flowers for worship? Sign up on the flower list on the hallway bulletin board or online using this QR code. Please note: The physical bulletin board list has priority. Best efforts are made to ensure the digital calendar matches the physical one. If you sign up online for a date that is taken on the physical list, we will reach out to reschedule. Each vase costs \$30. You may bring your own flowers instead of buying through Good Soil, but please still sign up. Questions about flowers? Contact Cara Rovella at cclc@goodsoillutheran.org.





Newsletter- Want to keep up with news at Good Soil or share the e-news with friends? Sign up or share our newsletter using the QR code or URL to the right: <https://tinyurl.com/bddjk7yp> Questions about the E-news? Contact Cara Rovella at cclc@goodsoillutheran.org.

Calendar of Events		
Date	Event	Time
Sun, Dec 21	In-Person & Livestream Worship- Third Sunday of Advent, <i>Children's Christmas Pageant, Post-Pageant Coffee Hour</i>	9:30 am
Sun, Dec 21	The Longest Night Service at Bay United Methodist Church	7:00 pm
Wed, Dec 24	In-Person & Livestream Worship- Candlelight Christmas Eve	6:30 pm
Sun, Dec 28	In-Person & Livestream Worship- Lessons & Carols, Coffee Fellowship	9:30 am