



Lifetimes

November 2024

From the Pastor



Pastor Kai Nilsen

We are anxiously looking forward to welcoming Pastor Joy McDonald Coltvet into our staff and community. She will begin her ministry at Incarnation on December 2. To give you a greater sense of what drew us to Pastor Joy, here are her words:

"I feel called to practice hospitality, cultivate a joyful, learning spirit, and proclaim the good news of Jesus through word and deed.

I am a gracious and skilled worship leader and musician, working well with people of all ages and abilities.

I have a Doctor of Ministry in practical theology: Faith formation... I am especially interested in working with colleagues, congregation members, and those we touch in our daily lives to develop sustainable faith practices in daily life."

Finally, when she was asked about the setting that would make best use of her gifts, she responded, I would be energized in a place where people want to have conversations that matter; are willing to do the sometimes difficult, sometimes joyful work to build community; are hospitable and generous people looking to share their gifts with their neighbors.

The Call Team was not only convinced Pastor Joy would fit well within our "church without walls" mindset, but she will also expand our vision of what it means to follow a gracious and loving God into the world, each day.

Remember, once we let Pastor Joy settle in, we will begin the process of *Building for Our Future* with the addition of staffing for seniors (retirement and beyond) and Young Adults (20s–30s), both critical ministries for our present and future.

As we close the year, we want to continue our generous ways so that we can be ready to launch these new ministries in 2025. To that end, there are three commitments we want you to consider as we plan for 2025 and beyond.



Pastor Joy McDonald Coltvet and family

- *Building for Our Future*: If you haven't already made your commitment, there is still time. Though we have \$2.6 million in commitments we will need \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 more to complete the ministry we have planned through 2026. Commitment cards are available at the Welcome Center or you can commit online at <https://www.incarnationmn.org/give/building-for-our-future/>

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- *Operating Fund:* This supports our daily ministry and outreach, our staffing, and ongoing facility needs. This is the “bread and butter” so to speak. I’ve been so encouraged by the transformation and enthusiasm that is being experienced by many at Incarnation. With our new staffing next year, I anticipate an even more expansive work of God’s Spirit in you and through you to our larger community.

- *Mortgage Fund:* Our remaining debt on the building is currently at \$1,750,329.38. You can also make specific commitments to help us pay down the mortgage.

What a season. We celebrate the present. We prepare for the future. And all of it, guided and directed by the loving Spirit of Jesus.

Peace, Kai

Council Update



Tracy Strantz
Council President

As our kids were growing up, oftentimes at dinner we would go around the table and mention something we were grateful for. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I want to highlight a few things I’m grateful for within our Incarnation Church community. I’m grateful for the many connections I’ve

made, both over the years, and the past two years serving on the Council. From small group friends, staff members, fellow Council members, committee participants, families, and congregation members, I’m grateful to serve, worship, pray, invite, support, plan, laugh, and grow in our faith together.

I’m grateful for the resiliency we’ve demonstrated this year as we’ve experienced staff transitions, prepared for and started much-needed facility improvements, and continued to support those in need, both close-to-home and globally.

I’m grateful to welcome new members joining our community and interact with visitors who are joining us for the first time. I’m grateful for all of the programs that help our children and young adults grow in their faith. I’m grateful for the expansion of programs we aspire to in our Three-Year Plan and the generosity of our congregation in committing to our Building for Our Future campaign to make those aspirations a reality.

I’m grateful for the tremendous team effort that makes our Incarnation community what it is. This month, I will close with an added ‘thank you’ to one of the many groups that work diligently behind the scenes.

Recently our Incarnation Woodworkers Group completed the “Welcome to Incarnation” sign you now see in the Atrium next to the Mobile Welcome Kiosk (which they also made). In connecting with Dick Trapp and Ken Grosch, both members of the group, I learned the group has been together for many years with various participants over that tenure. Their monthly email update is distributed to approximately 50 woodworkers and any given month, up to a dozen or so members may be engaged on projects.

The group initially came together to learn more about woodworking from one another. As awareness of their talents increased, they were asked to consider various projects for the church. Their handiwork is on display throughout our facility. They’ve completed approximately 40 projects over the years, including several in the Library, Chapel, youth rooms and nursery, and many throughout the Sanctuary and Atrium. Several years ago, they also provided 300+ crosses for congregation members (the picture below is the one I received at that time).

“The Incarnation Woodworkers continue to learn from each other, to ‘show and tell’ their projects, to consume refreshments, and provide resources for Incarnation.” — Ken Grosch

If anyone is interested in learning more, please contact Dick Trapp at trapp.dick@gmail.com (the group meets at 7:00 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month at Dick’s garage at 1045 Lake Oaks Drive in Shoreview).

On the following page are pictures of a few of their many projects. Thank you very much to our Incarnation Woodworkers Group!



Projects created by the Incarnation Woodworkers Group. From top down, left to right:

1. The Incarnation Welcome Kiosk and sign. Council Members are available at the Kiosk following Sunday worship services.
2. The cart to transport the St. John's Bible (located in the Chapel)
3. The ushers stand in the Sanctuary.
4. The Prayer Wall is next to the digital display in the Atrium.
5. One of the 300+ crosses that were gifts to the congregation a few years ago.
6. The Atrium display case outside the Incarnation office.



Council Discussion Forum

Sunday, November 3 at 10:15 a.m.

Your Congregation Council invites you to our next Discussion Forum, which will be held on Sunday, November 3, in the Fireside Room from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. We look forward to sharing updates and providing a time for Q&A and interactive discussion.

On the agenda:

- Project updates
- Build for the Future Campaign
- Year-in-Review
- Recognition & Appreciation



Kairos sessions will be held at 10:15 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

November 3:

**4th Quarter Congregation Discussion Forum
ILC Council**



Council members will lead discussion of:

- Project updates
- Build for the Future Campaign
- Year-in-Review
- Recognition & Appreciation

2024 Council members: Tracy Strantz (President), Greta Grosch (Vice President), Kevin Roloff (Secretary), Mike Vant (Treasure), Katy Gibbs, Amy Johnson, Gil Hartley, Jim Meinen, and Bev Ogren.

November 10:

Christianity and Social Reform
Jennifer Hornyak Wojciechowski, Assistant Professor of Church History, Luther Seminary and associate editor of Word and World

Throughout the history of Christianity there has been an

intertwining of faith and action. The presentation will provide background on the history of Christian charitable works, and then we will focus more specifically on Christianity and social reform efforts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially within the United States.



Wojciechowski’s publications reflect her wide-ranging scholarship; She is the author of *Women and the Christian Story: A Global History* (2022); her upcoming book is *Tending the Garden: A History of Christian Mysticism* (February 2025).

November 17:

What Does It Mean to be a Part of the St. Paul Area Synod and the ELCA

Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer Assistant to the Bishop for Lay Leadership and Equity

Knowing that we are not alone, that we are connected to many others through a larger church body is incredibly powerful. We are part of the Body of Christ. Understanding

how each congregation is part of a synod and a denominational body is important as we strive to engage more fully in God’s Mission together,



A graduate of Luther Seminary (M.A. ’0m 7) and a lay leader,) his background is in the areas of ending homelessness, spiritual listening, relationship building, and neighborhood engagement. In his role with the synod, he equips, connects, and supports lay leaders as they seek to engage in God’s mission in their respective contexts and cultures, including support for the Advocates for Racial Equity(ARE) work group.

November 24:

**Church Without Walls Ministry Fair
(no separate Kairos)**

Share the Joy of Baking this Holiday Season
HOLIDAY BAKING BAG DRIVE

Join us in spreading warmth and joy this holiday season by creating a Holiday Baking Bag for a family in need. Your simple act of kindness can make someone's holiday season a little sweeter!

SUGGESTED ITEMS:

- FLOUR
- WHITE SUGAR
- BROWN SUGAR
- OIL
- CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- VANILLA
- BAKING POWDER
- BAKING SODA
- OPTIONAL – SPRINKLES

COOKIE CUTTER, MEASURING CUPS, ETC.

Add a personal touch by including your favorite cookie recipe

Please return your baking bags to the church no later than December 9, 2024



First, you can provide any number of complete “Holiday Baking Bags” by collecting each item in the “Holiday Baking Bag Drive” list (see below) into a shopping or gift bag; then drop them off at Incarnation or RRFS.

Second, you can purchase any items from the “Holiday Baking Bag Drive” list and drop them off at Incarnation or RRFS:

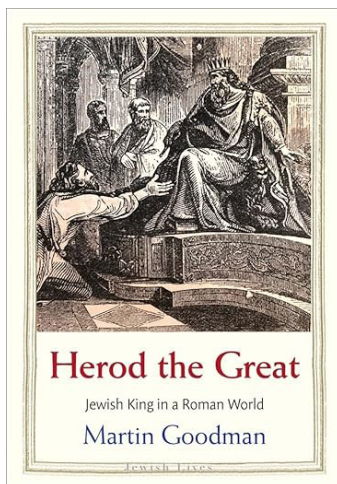
- Flour
- White Sugar
- Brown Sugar
- Oil
- Chocolate Chips
- Vanilla
- Baking powder
- Baking Soda
- Optional examples – sprinkles, cookie cutter, measuring cups, favorite cookie recipe

Third, you can make a financial donation which is always welcome. Donate online (<https://onrealm.org/IncarnationLuth/-/give/now>) or make checks out to Incarnation — with “Ralph Reeder Food Shelf” as the Fund or in the memo.

Note that non-perishable donations should be dropped off at Incarnation or RRFS no later than December 9. Thank you for making the holidays merry and bright for our neighbors in need!

The Ralph Reeder Food Shelf (RRFS) has a Holiday project underway! We want to help RRFS meet its goal of providing all of its clients with a bag of goodies for holiday baking. You can help to provide this baking opportunity to our neighbors with food insecurities in a number of ways.

Men's History Book Group



The Men's History Group meets the first and third Tuesdays at 9 am in Bethany Lounge to discuss a non-fiction history book selected by one of the members. Anyone interested in the subject is invited to attend any session even if you have not read that month's book. Here are the next books:

NOVEMBER — “April 1865: The Month that Saved America” by Jay Winik. This book reintroduces us to the thirty most momentous days in the American calendar.

DECEMBER — “Herod the Great: Jewish King in a Roman World” by Martin Goodman. An astonishing record of public adventures and successes, and private melodramas and disasters.



Sean Turner

Minister of Worship,
Music & the Arts

Greetings from the Music Department!

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

— 1 Peter 4:10

It is wonderful to see so many people in our community coming together to share their musical gifts with each other! Our ensembles are in full swing and we are looking forward to the coming weeks as everyone prepares to play a role in supporting the overall worship experience!

As you may have heard, our Senior Choir was extended an invitation to take part in a mass choir concert as part of the Octavo Series at Carnegie Hall in New York City! We will be part of a 250-voice

mass choir under the direction of Jennaya Robison who is currently the Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir. We will be preparing seven pieces of music for this performance in June 2025.

This opportunity is also open to members of our greater community who love to sing, can read music, and would like to join us on this great adventure! To sing on the stage at Carnegie Hall is certainly an experience I'm sure none of us will forget! Registration for this trip will close on November 15th.

If you or anyone you might know would be interested in joining us, please contact me and we can go over the pertinent details. (sturner@incarnationmn.org)

See you in worship!

—Sean

Visit Feed My Starving Children at the Church Without Walls Ministry Fair

Date: November 24 at Incarnation

Incarnation is hosting the Church Without Walls Ministry Fair on Sunday, November 24, 2024. There will be representatives from members of the Incarnation community who work with Incarnation's ministry partners. It's a chance during this season of Thanksgiving to explore outreach opportunities and ways to participate.

Members from the FMSC Action Group will be present, providing information including:

- Monthly packing shifts at the FMSC permanent site in Coon Rapids.
- Participating in the next 2025 All Hands on Hope MobilePack™, held at Incarnation from April 30 to May 4, 2025.
- Purchase items from the FMSC MarketPlace. These items make meaningful gifts to those who receive



them, as they support artisans around the world and financially support the All Hands on Hope MobilePack™ at Incarnation.

- Explore opportunities for joining the FMSC Action Group and continuing this important work of feeding God's hungry children throughout the world, until all are fed!

For more information, contact [Mike Vant](#).

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Does this term have much meaning for today? Do we make things "from scratch" in our kitchens now or do we pop a ready-made in the oven, open a box mix for brownies, or order in/eat out? Remember when meals were made "from scratch?" Didn't the food shared then taste better and wasn't it healthier?

Several of us from Incarnation had the joy of sharing "From Scratch" food at the annual gathering and fundraiser for Shobi's Table. We enjoyed tasty food like lemon roasted chicken, seasonal roasted vegetables, garlic focaccia bread sticks, and sticky toffee date cake - the same kinds of food made from scratch and served by the big blue mobile food truck four days per week on a "Pay as you can" basis at four sites in St. Paul.

We learned that the number of weekly meals increased in the past year from 4,600 to 9,000! At the same time, the cost of a single meal has decreased from \$1.66 to \$1.55, even including the cost of compostable dishes. We heard these amazing statistics and even more amazing stories from those who benefit from the opportunity to have a "place at the table".

You, too, can share in making love edible and sharing a taste of "the feast to come". Join others from Incarnation who volunteer (food preparation, serving, etc.), who come to purchase/share lunch (the closest site is Lexington and Larpenteur on Wednesdays), who help spread the story of Shobi's Table, who hire Shobi's to cater a meal for an event, or who generously contribute financially in support. Be involved to join in celebrating a just and merciful world where all have access to good food and a vibrant community.

Curious? Check out www.shobistable.org.

— Vernita Kennen

Thank-You for Solid Ground Winter Coat Drive

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our Incarnation community for generously supplying much-needed winter coats, hats, boots, gloves, snow pants, and scarves to families at Solid Ground. Additionally, your financial donations are very much appreciated as they will enable the purchase of winter gear for those needing sizes that were unavailable. Thanks to your contributions and big heart, Solid Ground families will stay warm and enjoy the winter season ahead.

We extend our gratitude to the amazing Arden Hills Shoreview Rotary Club for partnering with Incarnation once again this year. They not only donated many, many items but also spent an afternoon



organizing and sorting. Finally, our awesome volunteers... none of this could have been accomplished without the many people who helped organize, sort, and select items for families.

Your support and care truly make

a difference! Your generosity also extends to others who are in great need of warm clothing this winter. Unused coat drive donations will help The Alley Shoppe at Arlington Hills Lutheran Church in St. Paul provide much-needed warmth for their community. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

Today's topic:

Creation Care Projects at Incarnation

As the newly formed Creation Care Action Group works to get organized, it seems appropriate to share the good work many people have already been doing. One of the larger projects has been working on a proposal for solar panels at Incarnation. The solar committee has worked to research the best types of installation for our facility, to interview solar vendors for the best possible materials, investment, and protections, and worked with the council on incorporating such a project into our long-range strategic plan.

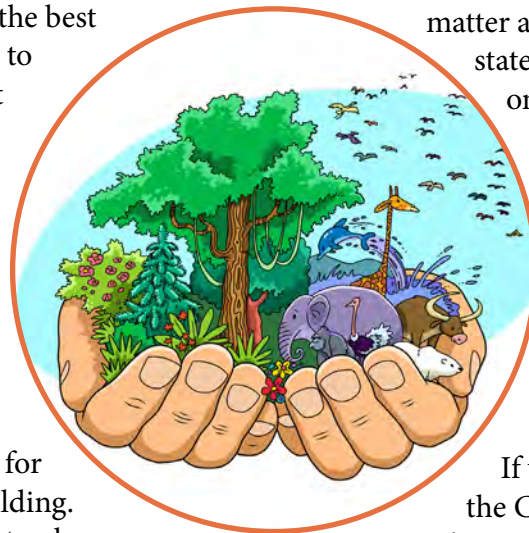
Efforts continue to make our facility a more green and environmentally friendly building. Look for the recently installed bins for recyclable materials around the building. The recent Block Party event in September was almost 100% Zero Waste, using compostable food service and delivering the compostable trash to the nearby Shoreview compost site. Work to transition from harmful Styrofoam food service items to more compostable items in all our hospitality events continues. Energy-saving LED lights have been installed in many places around the building and parking lot.



An effort to revitalize and restore the Rain Garden in the southeast corner of our property has begun. Work to remove invasive species and dead trees, prune existing plants, add plantings to nurture pollinators (see the Living Lutheran resource below for more on pollinators), and repair seating areas has begun.

Many members of the Incarnation community are active in several organizations including the

St. Paul Area Synod Care of Creation Team, Lutherans Restoring Creation, and Blessed Tomorrow, a coalition of religious partners working to advance climate solutions. Education about the climate crisis continues with small group offerings, documentary movie viewings as well as several great resources in our library.



The climate crisis can be overwhelming and so large that it seems the actions of any one person will not matter at all. But all our actions matter. As stated in the ELCA Social Statement on Climate Crisis “In the Holy Scriptures, God assigns a sacred responsibility to human beings: we are to care for and keep God’s creation for future generations.” The Incarnation community takes this responsibility very seriously. We all have a role in preserving our earth for generations to come.

If you would like to learn more about the Climate Care Action Group contact Mike Vant at mjvant@gmail.com or Nancy Stutzman at nancystutzman@comcast.net

Be a part of this sacred responsibility.

Resources:

ELCA Social Statement on Earth’s Climate Crisis

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths Climate Crisis Social Message.pdf?_ga=2.181487077.338733615.1716947863-1765036555.1715982362](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths%20Climate%20Crisis%20Social%20Message.pdf?_ga=2.181487077.338733615.1716947863-1765036555.1715982362)

Caring for creation, one butterfly at a time:

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2022/03/caring-for-creation-one-butterfly-at-a-time/>

<https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>

<https://blessedtomorrow.org/>

Who Am I and Why Do I Matter

By Chris Morpew

Chris Morpew has authored a series of “Big Question” titles for youth, answering some of the main questions that young people wrestle with today (and have likely always done so.) His latest title, *Who Am I and Why Do I Matter*, refers back to Scripture and uses examples from the Bible reminding youth that we are all made in God’s image. He further shows that we have worth just because we are made in God’s image and that we are called to follow Jesus. He uses the hope of the gospel to further the understanding that past mistakes don’t define either current self-worth or the future.

Morpew never talks down to young readers. They will find this title an answer to one of their big questions. And make your conversations with them easier, too.

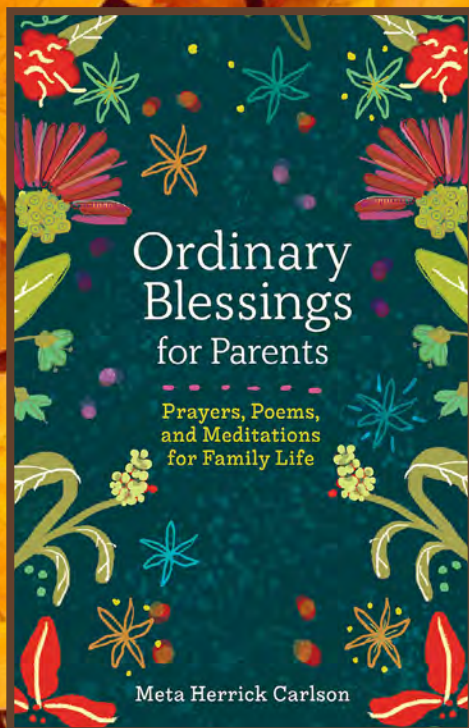
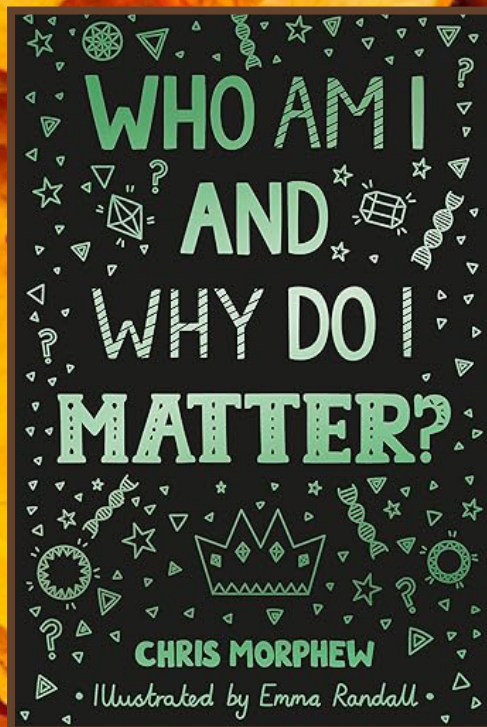
Ordinary Blessings for Parents: Prayers, Poems and Meditations for Family Life

By Meta Herrick Carlson

Our church library already had a copy of Meta Herrick Carlson’s *Ordinary Blessing: Prayers, Poems and Blessings for Ordinary Life* so when we read a review of this new book by her in Living Lutheran magazine, we knew it would make a good addition to our collection. We think you will agree.

Carlson writes this collection of blessings, especially for caregivers of children, those adults who bear witness and show up for the ordinary things about family life - - often adults who are not biological parents but care deeply for children. All the blessings are meant to honor God’s interest in the very ordinary things of life and celebrate that. The blessings range from those for beginning parenthood, through birthing, the first year, little bodies, big feelings, first and transitions, for life together, and for an inheritance. You will find that the nearly 150 blessings, although often brief, have a lot to say. Who will not read the “Blessing for Losing a Tooth” or the one for “Picky Eaters”?

— The Library Group



Dan Wolpert Preaching

Daniel Wolpert, author of the book *Looking Inward, Living Outward* that we've been reading this fall in connection with the fall sermon series, will be preaching at Incarnation **at both services on Sunday, November 10**. We hope you can join us!



Carols & Candy Canes

Do you like Christmas carols? Do you like candy canes? Do you like children? If you answered 'yes' to any of these, join us for a short, festive event to support Incarnation Preschool! Find out what makes our Preschool so special and a wonderful place to be!

Date: Sunday, December 8

Time: Immediately following the 9:00 a.m. service (10:00–10:25 a.m.)

What: Join us in singing a few Christmas carols and hear about our fabulous Preschool program!

Current and former preschoolers are especially encouraged to attend!

Donations will be collected in the days leading up to and after the event. Candy canes will be passed out as you exit the singing event!

Join Us for PrimeTimers

North Metro Ukulele Club

Thursday, November 21, 10:30 a.m.



Mark your calendars for a toe-tapping morning of music and fellowship on **Thursday, November 21!** Doors open at 10:00 a.m., with the program starting at 10:30 a.m.

The North Metro Ukulele Club will be sharing their joyful tunes, playing favorites from the 1920s to the 2020s. Don't miss the chance to sing along! After the music, stay for a delicious lunch at 11:30 a.m., all for just \$10, payable at the door.

Please reserve your spot by calling the church office by Monday, November 18, at 651-484-7213. We can't wait to see you there!

All Saints Sunday



On Sunday, November 3, we are observing All Saints Day and will remember those who have gone before us and light candles in their memory.

Both worship services will be identical with beautiful music selections for that day. We hope you can join us!

PUBLIC PRAYER CONCERNS:

Judy Wicks; Anna Thorstad; Jan Johnson; Bill Swenson; Mike Branch; Kara, Jackson, Michael & Kaitlyn Genia; Jon Nelson; Kate Tollefson & family; June Fischer; Kirsten Blaseck; Wayne Quehl; Carol Beckerleg; Gene Lindholm; Marian Ness; Lowell Odland, Linda Hudepohl, Tom Henk's brother; Deb Rykken's brother; Larrie Reese's brother Douglas & sister-in-law Marion; Jon & Diane Iverson's sister-in-law; Sue Bernlohr's mother; Lana Bergin's brother; Nicole & Troy Heller's brother-in-law; Mike Wielenberg's parents; Al and Carolyn Ek's son; Mike & Kara Johnson's friend, Jenny; Kim Wielenberg's friend, Cindy; Dede Mattison's friends, Linda and Yvonne; all the people affected by hurricanes in the south

SYMPATHY TO: the family of Jan Johnson on her death; Anna Thorstad & family on the death of her sister; Nancy Erickson & family on the death of her brother; Pat Hoglund & family on the death of her father; Irene Brink & family on the death of her sister;

RECENTLY BAPTIZED: Jaden Mafi Anderson, son of Katie & Ricky Anderson; Kaeden John Saunders, son of Leigh & John Saunders



Once again, tables will line the hallways at Incarnation highlighting the ways in which we are able to extend God's love into our immediate community and around the world. You will have the opportunity to learn more, perhaps volunteer with, and financially support the ministries that our congregation supports beyond our physical building.

November 24, the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving, has again been set aside to help you visit with members of Incarnation who are involved with a variety of outreach opportunities. Displays and conversation will be available before the traditional worship hour (9:00 a.m.) and continue throughout the morning. This means everyone will have

the opportunity to connect, volunteer, and contribute.

Join in ministry during this special season of gratitude and outreach as we live out the message of the incarnation through the many ministries supported by Incarnation and our members. Opportunities abound to connect in areas of hunger, family shelter, housing, dementia/memory care, global partnerships and assistance, and more. Come and learn how you can extend the love you have received from God. We are all called to be part of the sharing of that great love. The ways to connect and serve are many — small and large, quietly and visibly, alone and with others. Come and see.

We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below:

Date Range: 9/20/24 to 10/18/24

Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of:
Grant & Deb Rykken	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Carol Hedman (Sally Lawless’ Mother)
Al & Janet Karvonen-Montgomery	Memorial – Building for Our Future	Sue Miller
Paula Harris	Memorial – Building for Our Future	Bev Stepka
Sue Krabbenhoft	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Bev Stepka
Ken & Rosalie Grosch	Memorial – Operating	Harlan Stoehr
Marlys M. Nelson	Memorial – Quilters	Harlan Stoehr
Terry & Elizabeth Swanson	Memorial – Undesignated	Harlan Stoehr

The list above reflects the donations that were made payable (or endorsed/transferred) to Incarnation Lutheran Church in memory of someone. Memorials are applied to whatever fund the donor designates. If not designated, sometimes the family requests what fund they would like the memorials designated to.

Note: If a memorial gift is received and the check isn't written out to Incarnation Lutheran Church, it will be forwarded directly to the organization that the check was made payable to. Those memorials are typically acknowledged by the organization that receives the donation.

Finance Report

Finance Report September 2024

Actual September Operating Giving	\$147,219	YTD Operating Giving	\$1,638,683	YTD Operating Giving Budget	\$1,909,626
Actual September Operating Expense	\$181,820	YTD Operating Expense	\$1,710,244	YTD Operating Expense Budget	\$1,879,308
TOTALS	-\$34,602		-\$71,561		\$30,318
Actual September Mortgage Giving	\$13,738	YTD Mortgage Giving	\$201,322	YTD Mortgage Giving Budget	\$246,000
Actual September Mortgage Expense	\$33,175	YTD Mortgage Expense	\$223,575	YTD Mortgage Expense Budget	\$223,575
TOTALS	-\$19,437		-\$22,253		\$22,425