



**DECEMBER 2023**



*Worship Service—Sundays 10 a.m. Sunday School—Sundays 9 a.m.  
Adult Bible Study—Thursdays 10 a.m.*

8867 Kent Street, Portland, MI 48875 Office Phone: 517-647-4473  
Email: portlandstandrew@gmail.com Website: www.portlandstandrew.com

**Rev. Roger Straub, Intentional Interim Pastor**

Pastor's Phone: 517-230-3872

**Home of Wee Grow Christian Preschool**

**FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

Dear Members and Friends of St. Andrew,

As we begin a new church year with the season of Advent, it is helpful to remember that “advent” is from the Latin word that means “come.” During the season of Advent we are reminded that God comes to us and for us in Jesus. Jesus came once. Jesus is coming again. Jesus comes repeatedly in word and sacrament. Jesus comes in forgiveness of sin, to deliver us from death and the devil. It’s a joyful time of year as we remember and celebrate Jesus’ coming.

Our Thursday morning Bible study group has been reviewing *Luther’s Small Catechism*. In reflecting on the Third Commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy,” there was considerable discussion on worship. It was suggested that a portion of that discussion on worship be shared with the congregation in our next newsletter ...

Our worship, in the Lutheran Church, has traditionally been liturgical. There are several liturgical orders of worship in *the Lutheran Service Book*. Their pattern reflects that of the early church. The words of the liturgy are all taken from the Scriptures. And the beauty of this is the liturgy, along with Bible readings, hymns, preaching and prayers, tells the story of salvation. Speaking of hymns, many of the hymns in our hymnal are several hundred years old. We speak of them as being traditional. Most of them have three or four verses: some of them, several additional verses. In contrast to what we refer to as contemporary songs, which have much simpler lyrics and are quite repetitious, the hymns in our hymnal are considered “teaching” hymns, in that they also tell the story of salvation. (They were, by the way, at one time considered contemporary.) Lutheran worship, traditional and liturgical, with a few contemporary songs included, is rich, beautiful, and gives glory to God because it tells and retells the story of God’s love and salvation in Christ.

With respect to Bible study, several people have expressed an interest and a desire to review *Luther’s Small Catechism* on Sundays. We invite you to prayerfully consider joining. We plan to get underway on January 7, 2024, 11:30am – 12:30pm. Or, if you are available and interested, you are welcome to join the Thursday morning group, 10am – 11am.

We will be offering three Wednesday Advent dinners, December 6, 13 and 20, at 6pm followed by Advent devotions, readings and carols around the tables at 6:45pm. Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service this year will be on Sunday, December 24 at 4pm.

On Sunday, December 10, our Michigan District President, Pastor Dave Davis, will be preaching for our worship service and will be meeting with us, following worship, to help us along with our call process. Please mark your calendars and plan to be present. The following Sunday, December 17, a Voter’s meeting is scheduled following worship.

December is a busy and joyful time as we celebrate the coming of our Savior. God’s blessings!

In Christ,  
Pastor Straub,  
Intentional Interim Pastor

## DECEMBER SCHEDULES

### Acolyte

- 3 William Roof
- 10 Bella Roof
- 17 Zach Roof
- 24 Bella Roof
- 31 William Roof



### Fellowship

- 3 Sue Ruehs
- 10 Jeff & Elena Brooks
- 17 The Roof Family
- 24 No Fellowship
- 31 Dave & Marty Frick

### Greeters

- 3 Tracy Wineland
- 10 Jack & Mary Sandborn
- 17 Dave & Marty Frick
- 24 The Roof Family
- 31 Jeff & Elena Brooks

### Worship Readers

- 3 Mark Haworth
- 10 Elena Brooks
- 17 Jeanne Bauer
- 24 Chris Roof (Christmas Eve 4 pm)
- 31 Elena Brooks

### Piano

Judy Nobis



### Altar Guild

Tracy Wineland &  
Ruth Helmreich

### Elder

Jeff Brooks

## ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Thursday morning Bible Study is continuing its study of Luther's Small Catechism. Reflecting on the Holy Spirit's work in the early church is insightful for a congregation like St. Andrew in transition. Come out and join us at 10 a.m.!



Our Sunday morning (after Service) Bible Study will return in January 2024.

## FOOD DONATIONS FOR DECEMBER

December 17<sup>th</sup> is our regular 3rd Sunday Food collection day and will benefit the Portland area Food Banks.



## NOISY OFFERINGS

On Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Noisy Offering will go to Lutheran's for Life. Save your change (and bills), bring them to church and drop them in the buckets to help us "Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord."



## ANNUAL VOTER'S MEETING

On Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, after Service, there will be a Voter's Meeting. We will discuss and vote on the 2024 Budget, and other items. Please plan to attend.

## TRUNK OR TREAT A SUCCESS

Although the weather outside was frightful, our indoor Trunk or Treat event was a great success! On October 31st we were pleased to provide candy, hot dogs, chips and hot chocolate for hundreds of Trunk or Treaters.

We received positive feedback from the community about our Trunk or Treat event. Many people expressed their thanks to us for hosting the event and on social media, a community member left this comment: "Thank you for providing a safe, warm place for Portland's children to celebrate a fun holiday."

Thank you to all of our donors and volunteers for helping make this event possible and successful.





## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Kelly Ward
- 6 Matt Haworth
- 10 Mark Brooks
- 13 Parker Chapin
- 17 Josh Patterson
- 23 Bonnie Miller
- 25 Ruth Helmreich
- 29 Zachary Bauer



## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 20 Jay & Brenda Dennis



## CHRISTMAS DECORATING

We are looking for volunteers to help with Christmas decorating at St. Andrew. The decorating will take place on Saturday, December 2nd at 10 a.m. and should take about an hour. If you are available to help decorate, previous decorating experience is not necessary, please talk to Tracy Wineland. Note: We have gotten our Christmas decorating down to such precision, we will not be having lunch this year. We will decorate, fairly quickly, leaving you with the rest of your day to enjoy! Thank you to Don Miller for working on and making needed repairs to our Nativity.

## STEWARDSHIP CORNER

### Sent to Tell the Good News

The season of Advent has provided opportunity for us to reflect on God's great love for us fallen sinners that has caused Him to send His very own Son Who came for the ungodly, even for those who will never acknowledge His sacrifice and who reject His free gift of salvation. Along with the joy that we have in our Savior, especially at this time of the celebration of Jesus' birth, the knowledge that not all experience this joy brings a sorrow to us as it does to the heart of our Lord.

Just as God in His love sent His Son into this world to save the lost, so we are now sent to tell others of that love. The shepherds at Jesus' birth did not hesitate to tell others. *"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen..."* (Luke 2:20). Like the shepherds, our joy and mission are to share the good news with all people that Jesus came *"to seek and to save the lost"* (Luke 19:10). By grace, we are invited to be participants who declare to the world how God has reconciled us to Himself through His Son. God makes His appeal to unbelievers through us, and, therefore, it is imperative that we share the Gospel, which is the life-giving truth. We are to preach and teach the Word of God.

God calls us to share our faith and to let His light shine brightly. You and I have something to share that is needed by others, and that is the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ, Who came to us as a babe in a manger. In light of what Christ has done for us, we respond with a desire to serve and glorify Him. We are equipped and enabled by the Holy Spirit through His Word and Sacraments (2 Timothy 3:16-17) to be participants in His mission. We are the feet, eyes, ears, mouths, and hands who carry the message, who see the needs, who listen to the cries of those in need, who bring help to them, who tell them the message of reconciliation.

God's Word challenges us to use our time, talents, and money, so we can make an eternal difference in the lives of others. Because God is always with us, we can be faithful in our purpose to be God's participants in His mission to save all people.

May we all keep Christ as the heart of our Christmas and see Jesus as the reason for our joy. God's blessings on your Christmas worship and celebration with loved ones.

Have a blessed Christmas!



## FROM THE TREASURER

### Church Finances – October 2023

For the month, income exceeded expenses by \$4,705.82. Year-to-date income has exceeded expenses by \$39,913.13. The October 31 checkbook balance is \$5,026.80. The discretionary fund balance is \$73,975.32, and the building fund balance is \$.00. The Temple Scholarship fund balance is \$20,270.20. We received \$8,359.66 from Church Mutual for storm damage to replace storage building and to repair some church damage. We paid \$4,200 for uninsured water damage at the front of the church sanctuary and for fascia repairs. We used up the building fund money on water damage and paid the difference from our operating fund. A \$500 contribution was received for the Temple scholarship fund. This money was sent to Independent Bank to put into the Cetera investment fund but will remain uninvested and will be used for next year's scholarship.

Jesus Is the Reason  
For the Season

### Advent and Christmas Eve Services

**Midweek Advent Celebrations**  
Wednesdays - December 6, 13, 20, 2023

Dinner at 6 p.m. followed by  
Readings, Devotions and Carols

**Christmas Eve**  
Sunday, December 24, 2023  
4 p.m. Candlelight Service with Communion

### St. Andrew Lutheran Church

Roger Straub  
Intentional Interim Pastor

8867 Kent St.  
Portland, Michigan

Phone: 517.647.4773

Facebook  
Portland St. Andrew

Email:  
portlandstandrew@gmail.com



## LWML - WOMEN IN MISSION

A special thanks to the ladies of St. Andrew that generously contributed material and sheets needed to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Our quilting group has completed and tied 5 large quilts. Thanks to all who have helped work on them, brought material and other needed supplies. Your response has been great. We will take the month of December off and meet again on Tuesday, January 9th at 9 a.m. at Judy Nobis'.

St. Peter Lutheran Church in Riley has invited us to their Advent Brunch on Tuesday, December 5th, beginning at 9:30. It is always a festive time with a speaker, a carol singalong, and wonderful brunch.

Our Mission Grant emphasis this month is the National LWML Grant # 1 - Orphan Grain Train Servant Center - \$100,000. The Orphan Grain Train has conducted the mission of the Lord for thirty years by providing humanitarian service to those in need.

Orphan Grain Train (OGT) touches millions of lives around the world by shipping donated food, clothing, medical supplies, and other needed items to people in the U.S. and seventy other countries. This Lutheran volunteer network always tries to work through the church, so the Gospel accompanies the assistance given. Funds will support a new project at the Norfolk, Nebraska site. The Mercy Meals packaging area will be expanded to allow more resources to be under one roof and increase the number of meals from five million to more than ten million a year.

Please keep feeding your mite boxes with coins that help support mission grants like this one - Orphan Grain Train.

*You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

Psalm 118: 28-29.





## **LADIES GROUP**

We will not have a meeting in December. Our next meeting will take place on January 21st at 9 a.m. in the Conference Room. We will begin making plans for the New Year. All ladies are welcome to attend. Please plan to join us!

## **ADVENT MEALS**

We will have meals before our midweek Advent celebrations at 6 p.m. in the fellowship hall, with Advent readings, devotions, and carols to immediately follow, around 6:30 p.m. The meal and celebration will take place in the fellowship hall, in a casual setting.

December 6 - Baked Potato Bar with Soup and Chili

December 13 - Pizza and Salad

December 20 - Lasagna with Garlic Bread and Salad

The meals will be provided by the Ladies Group. A free will offering will be accepted. All funds collected will go to the Ladies Group to support the projects and ministries of St. Andrew.

## **BOOK TALK**

Our next book is *So Long, Chester Wheeler* by Catherine Ryan Hyde. Our Book Talk will take place on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. We will meet at Riversedge at 9:15 a.m. You can visit the Book Talk website at: <https://standrewbooktalk.weebly.com/> to learn a little about the book and the author. Plan to join us on January 2nd to discuss the book and for fellowship - even if you haven't read the book. We hope to see you there.



## **GAME NIGHT**

Game Night made a return this fall, however, participation was extremely low. Therefore, Game Night is on hiatus until further notice. The Ladies Group will discuss this at their meetings in the New Year to determine how to proceed.

## **LWML MITE DONATIONS**

In September our collection of MITE boxes totaled \$88.61, which has been sent on to the LWML. MITE collections are used to support district and national missions of the LWML. Thank you for your support! Please keep filling those MITE boxes. If you have any questions about MITE's, the LWML or need a MITE box, please see Judy Nobis.



## **ALTAR GUILD**

Altar Guild: "The Altar Guild is to serve. It serves by making sure that the place of worship is maintained and set up for the times and seasons of the church year. It serves by seeing to it that the paraments and linens are put out, cleaned, and stored appropriately."

We are pleased to welcome Mary Latusek as the newest Altar Guild member at St. Andrew. Mary has had years of hands-on training for Altar Guild and will be an asset.

Altar Guild members, if you are not able to serve a day or days during your designated month, please reach out to other ladies serving on Altar Guild to see if they will trade days or sub for you. You can also reach out to Cathy Haworth, our Altar Guild sub, as she may be available to cover for you.

Thank you to all of the ladies that serve on the Altar Guild at St. Andrew. We appreciate your time and support. If you have any questions or are considering volunteering for the Altar Guild, please speak with Tracy Wineland.

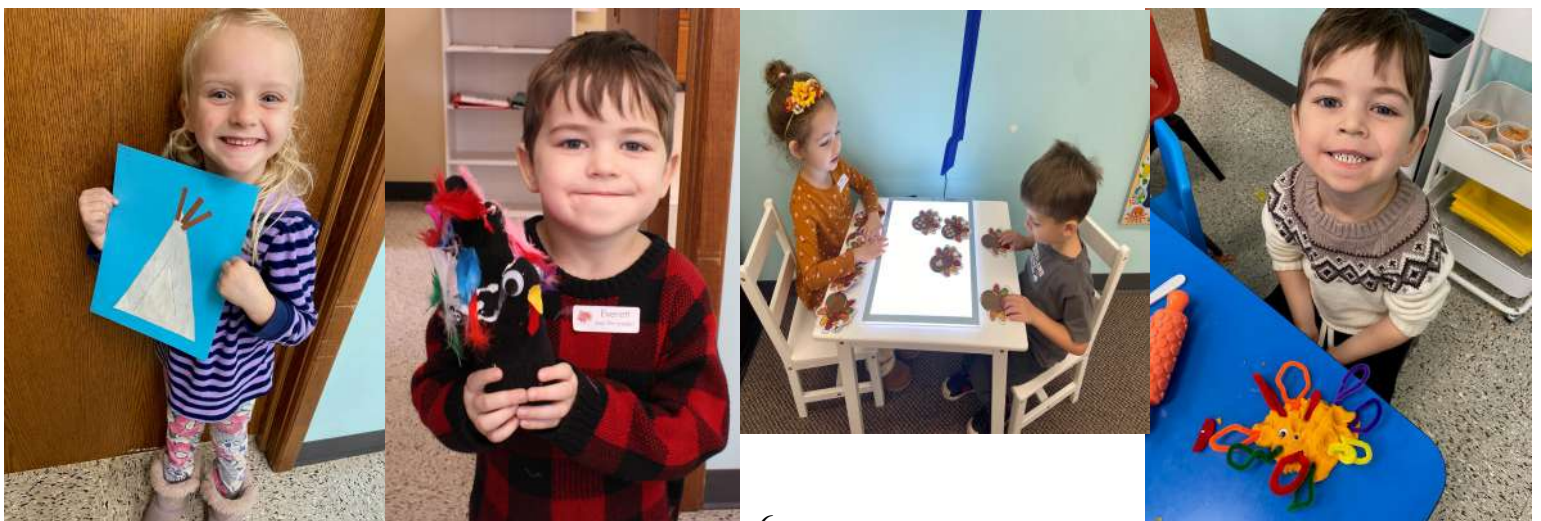
## **The 2024 Altar Guild Schedule**

January	Judy Nobis and Laura Roof	July	Jeanne Bauer and Tracy Wineland
February	Mary Latusek and Tracy Wineland	August	Elena Brooks and Ruth Helmreich
March	Ruth Helmreich and Tracy Wineland	September	Mary Latusek and Judy Nobis
April	Jeanne Bauer and Elena Brooks	October	Mary Sandborn and Tracy Wineland
May	Judy Nobis and Mary Sandborn	November	Ruth Helmreich and Laura Roof
June	Mary Latusek and Laura Roof	December	Jeanne Bauer and Elena Brooks

During the month of November we learned about what Thanksgiving is really about and talking about what the children were "Thankful" for. We made turkey crafts and read special Thanksgiving Books. Our bible stories this month were Jesus Feeds 5,000 and The 10 Lepers. The 4 year old class also enjoyed corn day. They made an Indian corn project, cooked popcorn on the stove and explored different corn items in the sensory table. The 3 year old class learned how to make pumpkin pie, had a taste test and made potato turkey centerpieces.

After Thanksgiving Break, we will begin learning new songs for our Christmas Programs: The Story of the Candy Cane and Happy Birthday, Jesus! We will also be making parent presents, creating Christmas crafts and performing random acts of kindness for our friends, family or community members. Our Christmas Parties will be December 21st and 22nd. The children will be exchanging presents, playing games and making crafts. We will be performing our programs on December 16th at 9:00 (4's class) and 10:30 (3's class). We hope you can attend!

## Staff of Wee Grow



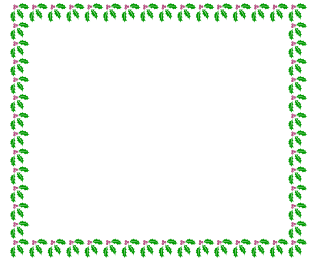


# DECEMBER EVENTS CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 9am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11:15am - Fellowship &	27	28	29	30	1 Altar Guild: Tracy & Ruth Elder: Jeff Brooks	2 10am - Church Decorating 
3 9am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11:15am - Fellowship &	4	5	6 6pm - Advent Meal & 	7 10am - Adult Bible Study @	8	9
10 9am - Sunday School 10am - LCMS Pres. Davis 10am - Noisy Offering - 11:15am - Fellowship &	11	12	13 6pm - Advent Meal & 	14	15	16 9am - Preschool Christmas
17 Food Collection Day Newsletter Deadline 9am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11:15am - Fellowship & 11:15am - Voter's Meeting	18	19	20 6pm - Advent Meal & 	21 10am - Adult Bible Study @	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 4pm - Worship Service	25 Christmas Day 	26	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve 9am - Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11:15am - Fellowship &	1 Altar Guild: Judy & Laura Elder: Jeff Brooks 	2 9:15am - Book Talk	3	4 10am - Adult Bible Study @	5	6

## ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH

Home of Wee Grow Christian Preschool  
8867 Kent Street  
Portland, MI 48875



### PCFA CHRISTMAS GIVING PROGRAM

St Andrew is again supporting the PCFA in their annual Christmas Giving Program. The Food Tree is in the narthex. The paper bags with food shopping lists are hung on it and the black bucket is there for you to put the food items into. We have also received Gift Giving tags (12) to shop for specific items for those in need. If we run out of Gift Giving tags, please let Shannon know and she will contact PCFA to see if there are more. **All food items must be returned no later than Dec 6<sup>th</sup>; gifts by Dec 11<sup>th</sup>.**

### THE LUTHERAN WITNESS PERIODICAL

*It's time to re-subscribe or subscribe to THE LUTHERAN WITNESS at a discounted rate!*

The Lutheran Witness is the official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is published 11 times a year. It provides Missouri Synod laypeople with stories and information that complement congregational life, foster personal growth in faith, and help interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective.

Subscriptions for The Lutheran Witness, the official periodical of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod can be purchased through the church office for \$19. Payment and mailing address information must be received by Sunday December 10, 2023, in the church office by David Frick, treasurer. Checks should be made out to St. Andrew Lutheran Church.