



December 2025

# FAMILY OF GOD

Monthly Newsletter

“Children by grace, extending Christ’s embrace”

## CHURCH NEWS AND EVENTS

### WORSHIP & COMMUNION

Sundays at 9:30 am

In-person and  
livestreamed on our  
website [fogchurch.org](http://fogchurch.org)  
Just click on YouTube



### THIS MONTH’S REMINDERS

- Young Adult Bible Study Thursday at 6:30 pm
- Advent Services Wednesdays at 7pm, meals at 5:45
- Christmas Eve Services at 4pm and 10:30 pm
- Blue Christmas service December 21st at 7 pm

Family of God Lutheran Church, ELCA  
8625 Zane Avenue N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443 763-424-8625  
[fogchurch.org](http://fogchurch.org)

## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR...

**Pr. Paul Burow**

With our November snow storm and cold snap, it began to look a lot like Christmas even earlier this year. Kroger is a giant grocery store chain in the south with 2700 stores. These stores will be open on Thanksgiving Day, and no doubt it will be the same at Christmas. This is great if you need some more cranberry sauce or an extra pie, but I am glad I don't work there.

There are several ways to think about the issues of changing cultural mores regarding the winter holidays.

One is to bemoan the fact that it isn't the way it used to be. Thanksgiving was sacrosanct, so was Christmas Day (even for Scrooge), and no one would dream of opening stores and violating the spirit of the day. If only legislators and companies would find a way to forge an agreement and agree on common sense rules for keeping employees home and giving everyone an appropriate day off.

Another approach is to see that this is actually good for our economy. The growth of e-commerce has been so difficult on bricks and mortar stores they need to find any edge they can to compete and make their sales targets for the year. A successful Black Friday or after Christmas sale actually helps to employ people and improve their lives by offering employment, which is good for everyone. Adding another open day or two can make or break their bottom line.

A third approach is to see that the old informal alliance between government, commerce, and the church have eroded away. During much of the 19th century and long before, these three pillars of society worked together to maintain certain standards regarding holidays and other long held practices. Since we live now in a post-Christian world, where religious faith are no longer given a significant voice or preference in culture, government, or the marketplace, it is too much to expect that it can ever be the way it was again.

No one forces us to go shopping on Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day. The marketplace is very responsive to demand. Even if my little choice to not shop then has lit-

tle effect on the masses of consumers, it still doesn't have to affect me. I can stay home and enjoy Thanksgiving and Christmas with no pressure to go out and be the first in line to get a deal after the holiday dinner.

Living in a post Christian world is actually more like the ancient church of the Book of Acts and the first several centuries which followed the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. And somehow the Church survived. Perhaps it became even stronger, because the message of Jesus was no longer convoluted and watered down by the forces of culture who had other priorities.

At best, living in a post Christian culture helps us to focus on what's really important this time of year. There are many things to like and treasure, like meals, family time, a day off, gift giving, football, family games, great desserts, lights and trees, seasonal songs, snow, and yes, Christmas worship.

The best treasure of all is our Lord Jesus Christ, made flesh at Christmas, to become a servant, live the lives we do, show us the way God always intended for us, and to accomplish our eternal salvation.

"Sacred infant, all divine,

What a tender love was thine,

Thus to come from highest bliss

Down to such a world  
as this."





## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR...

Pr. Erin Koster

Greetings to everyone at Family of God —

We are officially getting ready for Christmas! This is one of the busiest times of year at church, and I don't want you to miss out on anything we have planned.

First up is our **childcare event** from the Children, Youth, and Family Committee. On Sunday, 12/7, anyone responsible for a child (parents and other caregivers) can drop them off after worship in the cornerstone room. We'll feed the kids lunch and watch a Christmas movie. Pickup is at 1PM. Everyone's welcome. There's no fee but we appreciate any free will offerings!

Our **midweek Advent services** are on Wednesday nights (12/3, 12/10, and 12/17). Meals are at 5:45PM, organized by various FOG ministries. After that, we gather for Holden Evening Prayer at 7PM. These evenings are a wonderful chance to enjoy each other's company, to sing, and to hear the gospel. This year, our theme for our midweek sermons is angels.

Our Sunday School **Christmas program** is also on the horizon. The title this year is "Footprints to the Manger," adapted by Alicia Campos. The kids' program will take place in lieu of the sermon on the third Sunday of Advent (12/14) during worship. We'll be in communication with families about rehearsal and other details!

Last year was FOG's first **Blue Christmas**. This is a worship service especially for those having a difficult time during the holidays.

Our congregation has experienced a number of deaths this year, so I hope those of us who need comfort will find some during this service. Blue Christmas will take place at 7PM on 12/21, which is also the solstice and darkest day of the year.

You have likely heard about our emergency **food drive** this month. Even though SNAP has been reinstated, many members of our community are still struggling. We will collect food into the month of December. A list of especially-needed items is in the narthex, along with a QR code to donate to CEAP (the local food shelf) directly. We are also doing other drives like the mitten tree, so please look around the narthex or read the bulletin for info on that.

And finally, we will culminate the season with **Christmas Eve services**! Join us at 4PM or 10:30PM for special music, the Christmas story, candlelit hymns, and more. A blessed Advent and Christmas to you and your loved ones!

— Pr. Erin Koster

### Youth & Education

We were pleased to present Bibles to our 3rd Graders Addie and Tommy.

Sunday School is gearing up for the Christmas Program- Stay tuned!

### Facility Updates

We have 2 AC units needing replacement. Funding was approved up to \$15,000 to cover the cost. A third bid is pending before a decision will be made.

### New FoG Members Voted In

Council voted unanimously to welcome three new members to Family of God:

Allyson McDonald, John Henke and Paul Daniel Burow!

### Finance

Budgeting process for 2026 will be gearing up in December. Please remember to turn in your pledge cards so we can better plan.

We are in process of moving financial institutions from Wells Fargo to Top Line Credit Union. It will take several months to get all accounts transferred.

Quickbooks was purchased with a donation from Ruth Circle. This should make finance management much simpler.

### 2026 FoG Drama Production Announced:

"The One-Act Play That Goes Wrong" by Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer & Henry Shields

Auditions: January 11 & 12

Performances: April 23-26

FoG Drama Ministry is excited to announce our 2026 production: "The One-Act Play That Goes Wrong", directed by Lynn Mullin. From Mischief--the creators of the West End smash Peter Pan Goes Wrong and the Tony Award®-winning Broadway hit "The Play That Goes Wrong"--this is the original one-act play which started everything going wrong. This comedy about an amateur theater company trying to perform a murder mystery will both keep you on the edge of your seat and give you a stitch in your side!

We are looking for actors from age 10 to adult for a variety of roles--no experience necessary. Everyone who auditions will get to participate. Please pencil in January 11 & 12 and stay tuned for more details in December. If you have questions, please reach out to Lynn Mullin at [benlynn.mullin@gmail.com](mailto:benlynn.mullin@gmail.com).



**Book Club** meets the third Monday of the month at 1pm. The following are the books they are reading:

Dec 15 Five People You Meet in Heaven  
Mitch Albom  
Jan 19 Martin Luther, A Life  
James Nesting

New members welcome!

**Contact Joan Hermanson with any questions.**



## LINUS QUILTERS

Project Linus donation  
for November:

2 fleece blankets

23 quilts

8 warm hats

To CEAP, project Linus ad Head-start

Back on Monday, December 15,  
2025



### *"Just for fun" dates in November*

Dec 3: Make a Gift Day  
Dec 7: Letter Writing Day  
Dec 9: Christmas Card Day  
Dec 12: Gingerbread House Day  
Dec 18: Bake Cookies Day  
Dec 21: Crossword Puzzle Day  
Dec 26: National Candy Cane day  
Dec 28: Card Playing day

### The FOG December 6 Christmas Brunch

The Women's Christmas Brunch is only days away, and excitement is in the air.

Also in the air are the scents of Christmas and aromas of delicious food.

Our guest speaker is Pastor Kevin Doely who will lead us in song and laughter.

A free will offering will be taken. See you soon. You do not want to miss this memorable FOG annual event.





## Sunday Flowers

12/07 Elsass

12/14 Linda Broman

12/21 Connie Anderson

12/28 Pam Williams

**2025 Flower Chart** is posted on the  
narthex kiosk.

The cost of the flowers is \$35.



## Global Mission Support

12/07 Lenthe

12/14 Hatcher

12/21 Umlands

12/28 —

**2025 Global Mission Support Calendar** is posted on the kiosk in the narthex. Your \$35 weekly donation goes to support Megan Tee and Tee Sieng's ministry work in Japan.

## NLC Christmas Festival

**The National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival** celebrates the Incarnation with music that invites hearts to open to the mystery of love dwelling in our midst. With the voices of the National Lutheran Choir, the NLC Children's Ensemble, instrumental chamber ensemble, and narrator Brian Newhouse, this beloved tradition includes the audience in a shared celebration of Christmas. Concerts will be held at the beautiful Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis, on Friday, December 12, 4:30 pm and Saturday, December 13, 1:30 pm and 8:00 pm.

**The Saturday 1:30 pm concert will be live-streamed at [nlca.com](http://nlca.com).** Tickets available at [nlca.com](http://nlca.com). **For a discount, use code SAVE5NLC.**





## BIRTHDAYS

Tom Orluck 12/01

Alissa Ventura 12/02

Jonathan Burow 12/05

Allison Letsche 12/06

Darlene Peterson 12/06

Charlotte Sedesky 12/09

LeAnne Tieman 12/11

Monica Heltemes 12/12

Nancy Knoell 12/12

Janice McFadden 12/13

Robyn Courchane 12/14

Shane Noah 12/15

Alexander Campos 12/16

Karin Jacobson 12/17

Benjamin Olson 12/18

Brianna Wallman 12/19

Camden Symoniak 12/19

Stephanie Statz 12/19

Richard Schupbach 12/20

Randy Blackorby 12/20

Bill Lanctot 12/21

Dean Jahns 12/24

Ryan Ferguson 12/25

Aaron Peterson 12/25

Mary Lou Gorres 12/26

Gary Fisher 12/28

Rhonda Withers 12/28

If your birthday does not appear, please  
bring this to the office's attention.

## ANNIVERSARIES

Jim & Susan Elsass 12/01

Steve & Annie Borgstrom 12/02

Samuel & Happiness Ntor-ue 12/10

Dean & Carolyn Jahns 12/16

Terry & Chris Carter 12/20

Pastor Paul & Jill Burow 12/27

If your anniversary does not appear,  
please bring this to the office's attention.

### Family of God Memorial Garden

The cross that was hidden in the pine trees in the front of the church has been repaired, repainted, shortened and moved to become the focal point in our new memory garden.

Landscaping, lighting, a Tree of Life bench, and pavers have been added to complete the project.

Beginning next spring, we will start taking orders to create engraved pavers in memory of lost loved ones. Engraving specifications and cost will be available at that time.

Dedication will take place the third Sunday in May.

## **CALLING ALL FOG CRAFTERS!**



FOG Crafters will meet the second Friday and Saturday of each month. Subject to holidays and the church calendar. Scheduled weekends are in the Narthex.

Stephanie Statz 612-850-8220 [StephStatz24@gmail.com](mailto:StephStatz24@gmail.com)

LeAnne Tieman 612-508-7921 [lrtieman@comcast.net](mailto:lrtieman@comcast.net)

All types of crafters are welcome. We will set up in the Cornerstone Room to utilize the tables. Any questions, please call/text Stephanie Statz at 612-850-8220 or LeAnne Tieman at 612-508-7921.



## **Energy Efficient Devices**

We have available (in limited quantities) to handout to anyone looking to try out some energy saving devices at home the following -

A19 - LED bulbs (60watt equivalent replacements)  
Energy Saving Advanced Power Strip  
Water saving Niagara shower heads and faucet aerators.

They will be available in the cornerstone stone room after Sunday services until gone.

If anyone has questions about the above, they can contact Larry Parson or Paul Z.





As I am writing this I am listening to the song "Mary Did You Know". Pondering on just how much Mary did know. She knew she was carrying the Messiah. She most likely knew what the Scriptures said about Him. She would have known that He was bound for amazing things, but she didn't know what that would look like.

When she broke out in song at her Aunt Elizabeth's home, she sung of what God had already done. As Christmas approaches we sing of what God has done; we sing of that first Christmas and the life of Christ. We praise the name of Jesus as we remember the day of His birth. You are encouraged to attend music at FOG

**Weekly Advent services** beginning December 3. Wednesday nights at 7 pm using the Holden Evening prayer.

**Weekly Advent services** on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am

**Brooklyn Big Band** with festive music of the season. Saturday December 13 3:00 pm Free admission

**FOG Children's Christmas program** during worship on December 14 at 9:30 am.

**Blue Christmas** Sunday December 21 7:00 pm.

**Brooklyn Community Band** with festive music of the season Monday December 22 7:00 pm Free admission

**Christmas Eve services** December 24 at 4 pm and 10:30 pm. New this year beginning at 10:00 pm a 30 minute prelude of music.

O come, let us adore Him.

See you in church,

Judy Blomgren

FOG music director



This Christmas, our sanctuary will be decorated with wreaths and poinsettia plants. If you would like to donate toward the cost of a wreath, or purchase a plant, please complete the forms found in the Narthex and submit this form to the church office by Sunday, December 14.

Please make your check payable to Family of God and write in the memo line "Wreath" or "Poinsettia." Thank you. You will be able to pick up the plant following the 10:30 pm Christmas Eve Service (or the following week) or the plant can remain at church



This poinsettia is from last year!



## Be Still and Know That I Am God



While driving on Douglas Drive in Crystal recently, I spotted a church marquee displaying the words, "Be Still and Know That I Am God," (Psalm 46:10).

Coincidentally, this was the Bible verse quoted by a Ruth Circle member as one of her favorites. She spoke of her reliance on these words when life seems to be overwhelming with multiple demands being made in her daily life. These words, on a refrigerator magnet no less, are her refuge when she is feeling overwrought.

Another Ruth Circle member noted John 3:16 as a favorite verse. It reads. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." These lines from scripture were among the first she memorized in Sunday School, and which are always with her.

There were further thoughts on memorization from another member. "When I was about 10, my brother and I, as soon as school was out for the summer, would go to our grandpa and uncle's farm. We were often there when my cousins were scheduled for VBS, so we 'got' to go too. They did memory work! And I had to memorize Psalm 103! We never had to do memory work in my Sunday School back home. I struggled and remember sitting at my grandpa's

rolltop desk trying to memorize the lines (and) crying. Well, I guess I did okay and Psalm 103 is still my favorite today."

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forgot not all his benefits:

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;  
who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;  
who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,  
so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

(Psalm 103: 1-5, KJV)

Please ponder these words of scripture with us and stay tuned for more favorite Bible verses.

Myra Madsen



Thank you so much to everyone who has brought in mittens/hats. We will keep mitten tree up until Dec 15th.

## Social Ministry Corner

Our food drive for CEAP will also be continuing.



### Mitten Tree

It is an annual tradition at Family of God that we have a mitten tree in November. We will be giving mittens, hats & snow pants to Evergreen Park Elementary in Brooklyn Park. We have gotten a Thrivent grant to order warm, waterproof mittens. You can help by donating hats and snow pants. We will also be donating to the PICA Head Start Early Childhood Development Center right across the street on Zane. Their needs are hats, mittens and underwear for 3-5 year olds. Please bring in smaller hats, mittens and underwear. These could be a little less expensive as they are not out in the snow as much. Thanks for helping with this project.

### Emergency Food Drive

With SNAP expiring on 11/1, FOG is hosting a food drive to help our neighbors. We will be bringing the first round of donations on 11/20, with another donation in December. Please bring your donations to church.

Suggested items include:

#### Holiday Essentials:

#### For baking:

- |                      |                   |                             |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Oil                | • Flour           | • Mashed Potatoes           | • Canned Carrots        |
| • Sugar              | • Salt            | • Rice                      | • Canned green Beans    |
| • Vanilla            | • Yeast           | • Pasta                     | • Canned Corn           |
| • Baking Soda        | • Chocolate Chips | • Gravy                     | • Canned Sweet Potatoes |
| • Marshmallows       | • Jell-O          | • Cream of Mushroom Soup    | • Canned Cranberries    |
| • Spices             | • Pie Filling     | • Chicken/Vegetable broth   | • Velveeta Cheese       |
| • Pie Crust Mix      | • Pudding Mix     | • Cornbread and Biscuit Mix | • Mixed Fruit           |
| • Cookie Mix         | • Cake Mix        | • Mac & Cheese              | • Onion Mix             |
| • Baking Decorations | • Frosting        | • Juice                     | • Fried Onions          |



# December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Bible Study 9:30 am & 7 pm No Bull AA 7 pm	3 Connie's Quilters 9:30 am Ruth Circle Supper Advent Service 7:00 PM	4 Young Adult Bible Study 6:30pm Riverlyn AA 7 pm	5 WCB Set up 1pm.	6 Women's Christmas Brunch @ 10:30
7 9:30 am Worship Sunday School Bible Study at 11 am 12pm Christ Chapel Int	8	9 Bible Study 9:30 am & 7 pm No Bull AA 7 pm	10 Connie's Quilters 9:30 am Council Supper Advent Service 7:00 PM	11 Young Adult Bible Study 6:30pm Riverlyn AA 7 pm	12 Craft Group 5 pm Fri & 9 am to 4 pm Sat	13 Brooklyn Big Band Christmas concert 3pm
14 9:30 am Worship Sunday School Bible Study at 11 am 12pm Christ Chapel Int	15 Linus Quilters 10 am	16 Bible Study 9:30 am & 7 pm No Bull AA 7 pm	17 Connie's Quilters 9:30 am Men's Supper Advent Service 7:00 PM	18 Young Adult Bible Study 6:30pm Council Mtg Riverlyn AA 7 pm	19	20 Men's Breakfast at 8:30 am Elife Christmas cantata 4pm
21 9:30 am Worship Sunday School Bible Study at 11 am 12pm Christ Chapel Int	22 Brooklyn Community Band Concert 7pm 	23 Bible Study 9:30 am	24 4 pm service 10:30 pm service Christmas Eve	25 OFFICE CLOSED  Christmas Day	26	27
28 9:30 am Worship Sunday School Bible Study at 11 am 12pm Christ Chapel Int	29	30 Bible Study 9:30 am No Bull AA 7 pm	31 OFFICE HRS 9-12  New Years Eve			



# December worship helpers



## Lectors

7 \_\_\_\_\_

14 LaDonna Blackorbay

21 Andrew Peterson

28 Mary Lou Gorres

## Refreshments

7 Withers

14 Lenthes

21 \_\_\_\_\_

28 \_\_\_\_\_

## Altar Care

7 Withers

14 \_\_\_\_\_

21 Cindy Buesgens

24 Elsass

28 \_\_\_\_\_

## Ushers

7 Chuck L

14 Randy Blackorbay

21 \_\_\_\_\_

28 \_\_\_\_\_

## Greeters

7 Carolyn Jahns

14 \_\_\_\_\_

21 \_\_\_\_\_

28 \_\_\_\_\_

## Nursery Care

7 Claudia

11 Claudia

21 Claudia

28 Madison

If you are unable to serve on a Sunday you have signed up for, please inform the church office as soon as possible. Thanks!

**\*\* IF YOU CAN FILL IN A BLANK SPOT PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO [admin@fogchurch.org](mailto:admin@fogchurch.org) SO A MASTER LIST CAN BE KEPT AND SO A REMINDER CARD CAN BE SENT. THANK YOU!\*\***

We wanted to send a thank you letter to the congregation for their help in donating to our winter clothing for those less fortunate in Minneapolis. It was a great experience and joy to see smiles on these faces of those who received these items you helped collect for us.

Thanks again for making a difference in others lives.

David and Rita Loos







## FAMILY OF GOD RUTH CIRCLE KITCHEN GUIDELINES

*When you enter the kitchen, turn on the dishwasher. The on/off button is located on the right hand panel near the bottom. The dishwasher will run a quick rinse right away. Turn on the coffee system.*

### COFFEE

- See instructions on how to make coffee and clean up. They are located in the drawer under the coffee maker system.
- To fill the air pots, please use a glass carafe. Then pour the coffee into the air pots.
- Rinse out all air pots, coffee baskets and the carafes that are part of the coffee maker system.
- Be sure you shut off the system before you leave.

### DISHWASHER

- Remove trays from dishwasher
- Use the flat tray for silverware
- See photo on front of dishwasher to load properly. Dishes will not come out clean if not loaded correctly.
- Be sure to wash all dishes that have been laid out, whether used or unused.
- Remove all food into the waste basket. Then thoroughly rinse the dishes, using a colander to catch any more food particles. Load dishwasher according to instructions above.
- Use one scoop of dishwashing soap, located on a cart by the dishwasher. Put the soap on the dishwasher door.
- Close the door and press the wash cycle button, located on the top right of the dishwasher panel. It's a blue round light.

### REFRIGERATOR

- Be sure to take all leftovers home.
- If you spill something, please wipe it up.

### CLEAN UP

- Wash all dishes from your event, whether used or unused, in the dishwasher
- Wash tables and kitchen countertops
- Sweep the floor, if needed. The brooms are located in the closet beside the refrigerator.
- Take any leftover food home. DO NOT leave any leftovers in the kitchen or refrigerator.
- Take out all garbage and recycle. Separate garbage from recyclable items. The dumpsters are located behind the church. You may use the Sunday School entrance
- Replace garbage bags in baskets. Extra garbage bags are located in the drawer under the pass-through counter.
- Take soiled towels/aprons home and launder them. Please return them to FOG as soon as possible.

### STATE/CITY REGULATIONS

- See the guideline information located in the tray by the coffee system and phone.

### SUPPLIES

- If you notice we are getting low on supplies, please fill out the form located in the tray by the coffee system and phone. Put the form on our secretary's desk and she will make sure it gets filled.

**Family of God Lutheran Church**

8625 Zane Ave North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

**Change Service Requested**

**Rev. Paul Burow**, Senior Pastor  
pburow@fogchurch.org

**Rev. Erin Koster**, Associate Pastor  
Perin@fogchurch.org

**Allyson McDonald**, Admin Assistant  
admin@fogchurch.org

**Judy Blomgren**, Music Director  
judyb305@gmail.com

**Claudia Peterson & Madison Benton**, Nursery

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friday

9:00 am—1:00 pm

Website: [www.fogchurch.org](http://www.fogchurch.org)