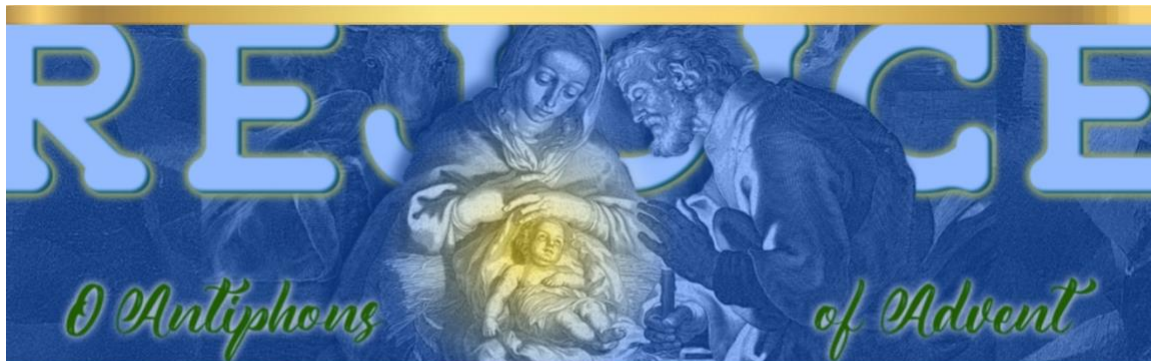


# THE WEEKLY CONNECTION

ONE IN JESUS... REACHING MANY!

Week of December 21, 2025

## WORSHIP CELEBRATION



### REJOICE | Advent 2025 Worship Series

For at least 1300 years, the O Antiphons have been chanted, sung, and prayed by Christians during the last seven days of Advent (December 17-23). They serve as a helpful guide as we move closer and closer to the manger, though most Christians today are more familiar with the hymn which is based upon them: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Each of the Antiphons addresses the Messiah by a different name and all are saturated in rich Old Testament stories and imagery. Together, the O Antiphons preach the Old Testament Gospel of the Messiah who will come for us, live the life we could never live, and ultimately die for us.



*If you miss any of the Rejoice Advent Series messages, they will be uploaded weekly to our Online Resources webpage. Scan the QR code or visit our website below to watch any of the previously aired sermons.*

[stjohnrochester.org/worship/church-online/](http://stjohnrochester.org/worship/church-online/)





## HOLY BAPTISM

This Sunday, December 21, at noon in the Sanctuary we celebrate the baptism of Dominic Stephen Castronova and Connor John Castronova, sons of Alexander and Kathleen Castronova. May God richly bless Dominic, Connor, and their family.

## TRADITIONAL PRAISE WORSHIP OUTLINE

### PRELUDE

**OPENING HYMN:** *Savior of the Nations, Come*

LSB# 332

### SERVICE OF THE WORD

LSB p.203

Invocation/Confession

Hymn of Praise: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

LSB #357 stz. 1

Prayer of the Day

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 7:10-17

New Testament Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

Responsory

Screen

Holy Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

### THE NICENE CREED

Screen

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** *Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring*

LSB #353

### MESSAGE

*Pastor Marc Schwichtenberg*

### PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH/LORD'S PRAYER

### SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

p.208

Distribution

Hymn: *Once He Came in Blessing*

LSB #333

Nunc Dimittis

LSB p.211

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER/BENEDICTION

**CLOSING HYMN:** *Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*

LSB #386

### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Bible teaches that along with the bread and wine of Holy Communion we also receive the true body and blood of our Savior. Jesus' own words, "this is my body" and "this is my blood for the forgiveness of sins" reveal His Real Presence in the sacrament (Luke 22, 1 Cor. 10:15-16). The Bible also teaches (1 Cor. 11:23-32) the Lord's Supper, properly received brings great blessings, but improperly received without understanding can actually incur God's judgment. If you are a baptized Christian who has been instructed in the Biblical teaching of communion, please feel free to commune today. If you have any questions, please first speak to a pastor.

As you come forward, gluten free wafers are available by request, as well as individual cup choice of wine or lighter colored non-alcoholic grape juice (located in the center of the trays). Common cup is also offered during Traditional Praise services at the altar only. **During regular worship weekends, the Lord's Supper is celebrated in Traditional Praise on the first and third weekends of the month; and in Modern Praise on the second and fourth weekends of the month. On months with a fifth Sunday, Communion will be served at both Traditional and Modern Praise services.**



The St. John family invites you to join us for worship this Christmas season  
as we give thanks for our Savior who truly is God with us!

### CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

#### Modern Praise | Gymnasium

Wednesday, December 24

12:00 PM, \*2:00 PM, & 4:00 PM

\*2:00 PM service will be streamed online.

#### Traditional Praise | Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 24

\*6:00 PM, 8:00 PM, & \*\*11:00 PM

\*6:00 PM service will be streamed online.

\*\*11:00 PM service will have Holy Communion.

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday, December 25

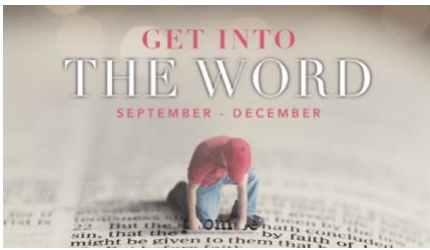
10:00 AM with Holy Communion

10:00 AM service will be streamed online.





## BIBLICAL DISCOVERY



### GET INTO THE WORD

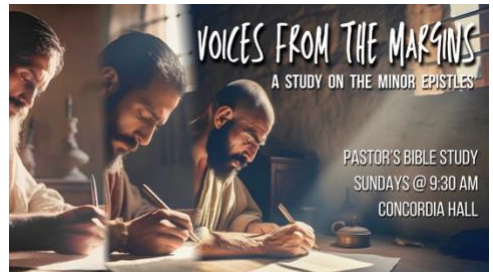
#### Winter Bible Studies & LIFEgroups Starting Soon!

It's almost the new year and with it comes many new opportunities at St. John to grow in your faith through God's Word! New classes are beginning in January! **Check your email for the latest edition of Get Into the Word being released this week!** If you don't receive our emails, sign up by visiting [stjohnrochester.org/stayconnected/](http://stjohnrochester.org/stayconnected/)

### VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: A STUDY ON THE "MINOR" EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Pastor's Bible Study | Sundays at 9:30 AM | Concordia Hall**

Join our Pastors on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM in Concordia Hall, **beginning on Sunday, January 4.** We are familiar with Romans, Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, but what about the smaller Epistles? John's letters, Peter's letters, or even Philemon? We're going to cover these three, studying chapter by chapter and hear from the "margins", the lesser known letters. We can't wait to see you! For more information, contact Pastor Tyler at [pastortyler@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:pastortyler@stjohnrochester.org).



### DADS' BIBLE STUDY | Begins January 7, 6:00 AM – 7:00 AM | Luther Hall

This study is intended for dads of all ages and walks of faith as we grow in God's Word together, learn what it means to lead our families well, and receive encouragement in the highest calling God has for men. **Beginning on January 7**, join us on Wednesday mornings (even if you have to leave early) as we pick a book of the Bible and read through it with discussion. Coffee and bagels/donuts will be provided, so that we don't miss out on breakfast before work! For more information, reach out to Pastor Tyler at [pastortyler@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:pastortyler@stjohnrochester.org). See you in January!



### SUFFERING SERVANT PODCAST

Don't forget to check out Pastor Tyler's podcast! His show attempts to bring meaning to suffering through shorter episodes highlighting basic Biblical truths in the face of suffering, as well as longer episodes conversing with others whom God has used in the midst of their own personal suffering. The podcast is available wherever you listen to podcasts, just search "Suffering Servants" or visit [stjohnrochester.org/sufferingservants](http://stjohnrochester.org/sufferingservants)



# JOIN THE ST. JOHN FAMILY

**MEMBERSHIP CLASS STARTING  
JANUARY 26, 2026**

Are you ready to make St. John Lutheran Church & School your home? Have you or someone you know been looking for an opportunity to learn or rediscover what real faith in Jesus is all about? Join us in a relaxed and welcoming environment where your questions can be answered.

This is a great class for anyone new to St. John or returning after being away for some time, or for those who have been worshipping with us as a guest and feel led to make St. John their church home. Whether transferring from another church or brand new to the Christian faith, the ONE Class is for you... and now is the time to enroll!

Come join Pastors Marc, Steve, and Tyler on this engaging and interactive eight-week journey through God's Word! This is an opportunity to discover the Christian Lutheran faith and understand how our church and school mission and vision are rooted in its teachings. This is also a great opportunity to meet new friends and share your faith journey with others!

**This class meets Monday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 PM, beginning on January 26. The last day to register for this class is February 2. Childcare is available for those who need it!** Upon completion of the class, participants are welcomed to prayerfully consider official membership as part of the St. John family.

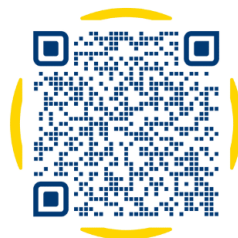
If you have any questions, please contact the Ministry Engagement Coordinator, Deana Stevens at 248-402-8004 or [dstevens@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:dstevens@stjohnrochester.org).

## **THE CLASS OF FALL 2025**



**TO REGISTER FOR THIS  
CLASS SCAN THE  
QR CODE OR VISIT:**

[https://www.stjohnrochester.org/  
event/one-class/](https://www.stjohnrochester.org/event/one-class/)





### THANK YOU ST. JOHN FAMILY!

We thank you St. John Family for the love, prayers and support in the wake of my sister Becky's recent passing. We truly saw the face of Jesus through our pastors, staff members, and many prayer partners/friends as we have faced this most difficult circumstance. Thank you again. Love, The Helmer Family

### OWLS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Sixty-one Older Wiser Lutherans in Service met last Friday for lunch, fellowship, and Pete Grund's presentation "The Real St. Nick" featuring past Lutheran Hour Speaker Ken Klaus. After lunch, Christmas selections were performed by St. John School's Chamber Choir and Preschooler singers and ringers. Join the OWLS at their next luncheon scheduled for January 16, when Rev. Dr. Christopher Thoma (Sr. Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Hartland, MI), will address the topic "Faith in the Public Square".



### LUTHERAN HOUR BROADCAST INFORMATION

Weekly broadcasts of the Lutheran Hour are available in the Detroit area on **WOMC 104.3 FM at 6 AM on Sundays**, or on **WRDT 560 AM at 10 AM on Sundays**. Other nearby options include Adrian (WAAQ, WPOS) and Ann Arbor (WAAM). You can also listen online via podcasts (Spotify, Apple Podcasts) or apps like iHeartRadio, TuneIn, and Lutheran Hour Ministries' website, or on SiriusXM Family Talk 131. Rev. Dr. Michael Ziegler is the current Lutheran Hour Speaker.

### WEATHER RELATED SCHOOL/CAMPUS CLOSING PROCEDURES

If Rochester Community Schools closes due to inclement weather conditions, St. John Lutheran Church & School will also be closed. This means that all classes, programs and activities scheduled for the day will be cancelled. This includes Preschool – 8th grade, athletic events, Bible studies, small groups, and all other facility events. Closure information will be shared on our website ([stjohnrochester.org](http://stjohnrochester.org)) and Facebook page.



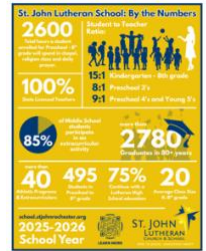
# CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

## ST. JOHN LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Are you seeking a Christ-centered school for your child, with a challenging curriculum, and a variety of fine arts and extra-curricular opportunities, all while learning God's word, serving His people, and growing closer to Jesus? St. John Lutheran School provides an excellent Preschool through 8th grade, sharing Jesus with the community since 1943.

St. John Lutheran School is fully accredited by the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools and by National Lutheran Schools Accreditation. **Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is approaching!** January 12 to 22 is current student re-enrollment and new student applications may be submitted for children of St. John congregation members during this time frame. On February 2, starting at 9:00 AM, student applications may be submitted from the greater community.

**Join us for the 3rd-8th grade School Open House on Sunday, February 1 from 12:00 - 1:00 PM!** Visit the classrooms, meet the teachers and learn more about our 3rd -8th grade. (If you missed our Preschool to 2nd grade Open House in November, personal tours are available!) For application and enrollment information, or to schedule a personal campus tour, visit [school.stjohnrochester.org/admissions/](https://school.stjohnrochester.org/admissions/), or contact Beth Dameron, Director of Admissions, at 248-402-8012 or [bdameron@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:bdameron@stjohnrochester.org). We welcome your visit!



4th grade students recently enjoyed a field trip to the *Cranbrook Institute of Science*. The children enjoyed the museum scavenger hunt, "Forces in Motion" presentation, a traveling dinosaur exhibit, and the planetarium show called, "The Christmas Star."



One of the most favorite units in P.E. is The Merry Christmas Town! K - 8 students have been enjoying using their scooters to explore the library, grocery store, tree lot, tunnel of lights and more in our Christmas Town in gym class. P.E. is one of our K-8 special classes along with music, computers, library, art.

## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL | Sundays at 9:30 AM | **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL 12/28/25 and 1/4/26**

Children ages 4 years to 6th grade are welcome and encouraged to join us every Sunday in the school wing for Sunday School! There are no attendance requirements! If you have any questions regarding Sunday School, please contact the Pastoral Office at [church@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:church@stjohnrochester.org).



**Sign up for our Sunday School email list to get updates! Sign up at the Sunday School kiosk or on our website at [stjohnrochester.org/groups/childrens-sunday-school](https://stjohnrochester.org/groups/childrens-sunday-school)**



## MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH Sundays at 12:30 - 2:30 PM

Middle School Youth meets most Sundays at 12:30 PM in the Youth Room. For more information, please contact Melissa Hammett at [mhammett@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:mhammett@stjohnrochester.org).

## MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH LOCK-IN January 30 from 7:00PM - 7:00AM

Pizza - Games - Devotion - Surprises - SO. MUCH. FUN. All middle school youth (grades 6-8) are invited to join us for our annual lock-in on January 30. This is a completely student-planned event, packed with high-energy games, powerful devotion time, delicious late-night pizza, and a whole bunch of surprises you'll only discover if you're there! For more information and to register scan the QR code or visit [stjohnrochester.org/event/2026-middle-school-lock-in/](https://stjohnrochester.org/event/2026-middle-school-lock-in/).



## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH | Sundays at 6:00 - 8:00 PM

High School Youth meets most Sundays at 6:00 PM. Check your weekly emails for meeting locations and details. For more information, please contact Melissa Hammett at [mhammett@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:mhammett@stjohnrochester.org).

## LUTHERAN HIGH NORTHWEST

There are two Open House events coming up in January for anyone interested in visiting or learning more Lutheran High Northwest.

- **Wednesday, January 14, 7:00 PM-8:00 PM is Transfer Preview Night**, an informal Q&A with the Principal, Admissions Director, and Athletic Director. Learn more about the school and the steps to a Spring or Fall transfer to Lutheran Northwest!
- **Wednesday, January 21, 7:00 PM-8:30 PM is 8th Grade Intro Night**, a program tailor-made for 8th grade families. Whether you've already been accepted at Lutheran Northwest or are visiting for the very first time, there is helpful information! (Note that 8th graders are also encouraged to sign up for the **High School Placement Test on Saturday, January 10.**)

Learn more at <https://www.lutherannorthwest.com/>.



## SACRIFICIAL GENEROSITY

### YOUR FINANCIAL GIFTS MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

Your continued financial support and partnership in the ministry and mission of St. John Lutheran Church & School is so important and is making a huge difference in changing lives for eternity in Jesus' name! If you are worshipping onsite, offerings can be placed in the designated areas outside the sanctuary. You can also scan the provided QR code to give online or visit our website [stjohnrochester.org/give/](https://stjohnrochester.org/give/). If you have any questions, please contact our Director of Operations, Steve Gauss, at [sgauss@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:sgauss@stjohnrochester.org).



### MISSION PARTNER OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

Our Mission Partner Christian Outreach for Africa (COFA) has been **blessed with an opportunity to match all donations received from now through the end of 2025 up to \$380,000!** Your generosity fuels futures at Amajuba Orphanage and St. Peter Christian School in Mhluzi, South Africa, from interactive classrooms and youth ministry to safe housing and college dreams for orphans. This is your chance to double your impact and invest in the lives God has entrusted to us. Give now. Change tomorrow. Create Opportunity. Find out more at [AfricaOutreach.org](https://AfricaOutreach.org)

## CONSTANT PRAYER

### LET US PRAY FOR WHATEVER IS ON YOUR HEART

To submit a prayer request, please email [prayer@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:prayer@stjohnrochester.org) at any time or visit our website and click on the prayer link toward the bottom of the homepage. These requests are received by our pastors and are passed along (or kept confidential when requested) to our prayer warriors and are also included in our weekend worship.



**Healing & Peace:** Emily West - health concerns requiring surgery / Carter Lee (LHNW) - infection in knee from recent surgery, requiring additional surgery / Faith Breuhan - recovering from surgery / Daniel Kah (father of Beth Mick) - hospitalized with severe infection / Christopher Havens (SJR student) / Rick Webster (SIL of Dale & Susan McGorman)

**Strength & Guidance:** Principal and Director of Youth & Family Call Processes

**Gospel Impact:** Next week's Christmas Eve / Day services

**Thanksgiving:** Baptisms of Dominic Stephen Castronova and Connor John Castronova - sons of Alexander and Kathleen Castronova / Peter and Kitty Grund's 62nd Wedding Anniversary

# COMPASSIONATE SERVICE

## CHRISTMAS COOKIE DONATIONS

On Christmas Eve St. John will host a Christmas Cookie and Hot Cocoa Bar from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM for all attending worship to enjoy a treat and some fellowship. We are seeking people willing to **donate store-bought Christmas cookies**. If you would be willing to purchase a container of cookies for the festivities, **please sign up by scanning the QR code or visiting [stjohnrochester.org/cookies](https://stjohnrochester.org/cookies)**. **Please drop off all cookie donations to the designated bin in the Atrium NO LATER THAN Monday December 22.**



## MEAL TRAIN FOR ST. JOHN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Did you know you can serve other's by preparing a meal (or delivering a restaurant/store bought meal) when a family may need help due to illness, surgery, or other circumstances? ***We would like to show our love and support to our middle school teacher, Laura Gilbert, who recently had surgery, by providing meals to assist her.*** If you would like to provide a meal to Laura you can sign up by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://mealtrain.com/vdmn6z>



For more information about our meal train program or to receive regular emails when there is a need, email Gretchen at [sj.meal.signup@gmail.com](mailto:sj.meal.signup@gmail.com)

## FAMILY OF GOD | January 4, 2026

The first Sunday of each month our St. John family provides a meal to Family of God Church in Detroit. Our next serve event is January 4. There are several ways you can help:



1. **Donate Food:** Sign up to donate specific items by visiting the link below. Donations can be dropped off to the St. John church kitchen (downstairs).
2. **Meal Prep Team:** Help prepare food (at St. John) after worship on January 4.
3. **Greet & Serve:** Travel to Family of God (carpool leaves St. John at 2:00 PM) to greet and serve the meal.

### SIGN UP NOW AT:

[www.stjohnrochester.org/FOG2026](https://www.stjohnrochester.org/FOG2026) or scan the QR code!

For more information, please contact our Director of Missions & Outreach, Jennie Eller, at [jeller@stjohnrochester.org](mailto:jeller@stjohnrochester.org).





## WEEK AT A GLANCE: DECEMBER 22-28

*Here is a highlight of activities happening on campus this week.*

MON Office Open 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

TUE Office Open 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

WED Campus Closed - No Classes or Meetings  
See Christmas Eve Worship Times on page 2

THR Campus Closed - No Classes or Meetings  
See Christmas Day Worship Info on page 2

FRI Campus Closed - No Classes or Meetings

SAT 10:00 AM GriefShare (Church Library)

SUN 9:30 AM Pastor's Bible Study (Concordia Hall)  
NO Sunday School

Glory  
TO THE  
NEWBORN  
KING



## WEEK AT A GLANCE: DEC. 29 - JAN. 4

*Here is a highlight of activities happening on campus this week.*

happy  
new  
YEAR

... the old has  
passed away,  
behold, the new  
has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

MON Office Open 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

TUE Office Open 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

WED Campus Closed - No Classes or Meetings

THR Campus Closed - No Classes or Meetings

FRI Campus Closed - No Classes or Meetings

SAT 10:00 AM GriefShare (Church Library)

SUN 9:30 AM Pastor's Bible Study (Concordia Hall)  
NO Sunday School





#### Worship Schedule

**Traditional Praise:** Sundays at 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM (also online), and 11:00 AM

**Modern Praise:** Saturdays at 5:00 PM | Sundays at 10:45 AM (also online)

1011 W. University Dr. | Rochester, MI 48307 | 248.402.8000 | [stjohnrochester.org](http://stjohnrochester.org)