

DECEMBER 2025

#### From the Pastor

# Immanuel, "God with Us" Right Here and Now

(Matthew 1:18-25)

LCMS historian Dr. Paul L. Maier once said this about one thing that makes the Christian faith stand out among other world religions: "The divine-human encounter in the biblical faiths always involves claims about *real* people, living in *real* places, who acted in real events of the past" (*In the Fullness of Time*). That means that the first Christmas was about real people — just like you and me. It's easy to forget but keeping that in mind matters.

In my mind I know Mary, the mother of Jesus, was not a fairy-tale princess bride. In my heart I realize Joseph, the adopted father of Jesus, was not the picture of worldly success and moral wisdom I sometimes imagine. Yet when I hear their story again this Christmas, wrapped in tinsel and glitter, it's easy to forget their humanity. Mary was the mother of our Lord! Joseph was visited by an angel! Surely, they didn't face ordinary



struggles of dashed hopes or anxious thoughts about the future. But they did! Joseph wrestled with the fear that his betrothed might have been unfaithful. And we can imagine how Mary would have felt the weight of his anxiety.

Immanuel, 'God with us,' was born into real humanity — not someday, not once we've kept our promises, not when we've sorted out our lives. He is God with us now. He is

God with us here. He enters our mess, walks with us, and rescues us. And what hope: in every darkness, the light of God's love shines again through the Son of God, Jesus Christ!



# **Dates of Interest:**

Hanging of Greens	Dec 3
Advent Tea	Dec 6
Voters' Meeting	Dec 7
Carols Outside	Dec 10
Following Naomi	Dec 11
Parents Night Out	Dec 12
Men's Breakfast	Dec 13
Christmas Music	Dec 14
Holden Evening	Dec 17
Christmas Eve	Dec 24
Christmas	Dec 25

# Sunday Morning Bible Study

**Holy Communion** 

Sundays, 9:30-10:30 am Fellowship Hall

#### October 26-December 21

Using Luther's Small
Catechism and the Bible,
this class will be focused on
the Lutheran understanding
of Holy Communion, where
it comes from in the Bible,
and what we can learn
about it from the early
church writers.

There will be discussion on similarities and differences between the Lutheran understanding of the sacrament with those of other Christian denominations in an effort to help prepare participants for discussions that might arise in day-to-day life.

It is hoped that participants will gain richer understanding and appreciation for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and how it has shaped Christian worship throughout the centuries.

Bring your Bible and Luther's Small Catechism. Some will be available.

Led by Ian Glenn.



As we celebrate Jesus' first coming and await His return, we are also preparing for something new: a possible Ministry Expansion Campaign at Resurrection Lutheran Church in 2026. With the help of a consultant, we're discerning if and when to begin. You'll hear more soon. Watch for invitations this December — and remember, your voice matters.

I look forward to seeing you at our special December events: midweek Advent services on December 3, 10, and 17; our congregational meeting on December 7; the Christmas Cantata on December 14; and of course, our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day celebrations. Thanks be to God that Jesus, our Immanuel, is 'God with Us' — not far away, not someday when we've straightened ourselves out, but right here and right now. We prepare to receive Him again!

Love in Christ, Pastor Jonathan



Giving thanks to God for 30 years of faithful service at Resurrection Lutheran Church by our Operations Director,

Margaret Hyatt!

Congratulations, Margaret, on this milestone of service!





# **Advent Worship Services**

**December 7** Second Sunday in Advent

**December 10** Wednesday, 6:00 pm Carols and Lighting of Tree in Circle Drive

**December 14** Third Sunday in Advent What Sweeter Music, Sanctuary

8:00 am and 9:30 am Services

**December 17** Wednesday, 6:00 pm Holden Evening Prayer, featuring

Old North State Brass in Sanctuary

**December 21** Fourth Sunday in Advent

Worship Times, unless noted: Saturday 6:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am, 9:30 am, and Praise 11:00 am

# Christmas Worship Services

#### December 24 ~ Christmas Eve

3:00 pm ~ For Families with Young Children, Interactive Lessons and Carol Singing

4:30 pm ~ Traditional Christmas Carol Family Worship Special Pre-Service Musical Offerings by Students

6:00 pm ~ Candlelight Service with Contemporary Settings of Traditional Carols and Holy Communion in Family Life Center

8:00 pm ~ Candlelight Service with Traditional Christmas Carols (live stream) with Brass Ensemble, Sanctuary Choir, and Heavenly Handbells

10:00 pm ~ Candlelight Service with Traditional Christmas Carols, Holy Communion

# December 25 ~ Christmas Day

10:00 am ~ Festival Celebration of Holy Communion with Christmas Carols

# Outreach Service to the Community

# **Advent Offerings**

Each season of Advent, RLC designates ministries to support in reaching out with Christ's love to all people. This year, the following organizations were chosen:

#### Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels of Wake County provide our homebound and senior neighbors with a nutritious hot meal, along with a check-in and visit. Their services provide the opportunity for seniors to continue living well nourished, independent and safe lives, in their own homes and communities.

Learn More: Meals on Wheels Wake County

#### Warmth for Wake

Warmth for Wake is a seasonal energy assistance outreach program that is sponsored by Wake County Health & Human Services. The goal of the program is to provide assistance to low-income residents of Wake County during the coldest winter months with firewood or space heaters.

Learn More: Warmth for Wake

Please use the Advent Offering envelopes or indicate 'Advent Offering' on memo of checks.

# Men's Ministry

# **Combined Breakfast**

The Men's Ministry monthly breakfast in November was a special event—combining men *and* women—for an enjoyable morning. This month, back to just the men on **Saturday, December 13** at 8:00 am.











# Stephen Ministry

# **Blue Christmas**

In December, the Stephen Ministry focus is on what's called "Blue Christmas." If you've never heard of it, then maybe you know the Elvis Presley song. Feel free to sign along:

"I'll have a blue Christmas without you I'll be so blue just thinking about you Decorations of red on a green Christmas tree Won't be the same, dear, if you're not here with me".

Many people who have lost a loved one this year – or even several years ago – may experience a "blue Christmas" that extends from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day. The holiday season is a time of "thanks" and "joy" and "hope" and "family" and "new beginnings". But some experience the opposite as they remember a lost loved one and reminisce on holidays gone by. The "hustle and bustle" of this time of year may cause some to feel uncomfortable being around others or sharing their grief.

If you know someone who may be experiencing a "blue Christmas" then your RLC Stephen Ministry team wants to encourage you to share a message of hope by saying (or hearing), "It's OK that you're not OK." One of the songs we may sing over the Christmas season is #359 in the LSB: "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming." For those experiencing a "blue Christmas", hear the words (or sing along again) from verses #3 and 4:

"This flow'r, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God, From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev'ry load. O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human
woe; O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day."



Stephen Ministry is a great resource to those experiencing the loss of a loved one. It is not designed to replace professionally trained grief counselors, but we are well-equipped to support people during challenging times in life. Stephen Ministers are called "Care Givers", but we know that only Christ is the "Cure Giver". It is through Christ's relationship with us that Stephen Ministers can be that safe space for people to express their grief. It is our "ministry of presence" and sometimes all a person needs to know is that they are not alone.

<u>To learn more about Stephen Ministry at RLC, click here.</u> If you or someone you know who could use a listening partner, consider emailing the Stephen Leader team at <u>stephenministry@rlcary.org</u> and ask about how to make a referral to a Stephen Minister.



### **Adult Christian Education**

# **Weekly Bible Study Opportunities**

# **Tuesday**

### **Tuesday Morning Bible Study and Fellowship**

10:30-11:30 am — Fellowship Hall — September 2-May 19 Leaders: Pastor Zach Sarrault, Pastor Jonathan Blanke



God gives His Word to instruct, guide, and bless our lives. The Scripture lessons in worship offer a menu every week to build up the people of God in faith and hope. We will study the lessons for the following Sunday, and as we do, we expect that this Word will enrich and edify our community prayer, faith, and servant life in Christ.

# Wednesday

### Women of the Word (WOW) ~ Everlasting: Peaks, Valleys, and Grace in the Psalms

7:00-8:00 pm (Fellowship at 6:45 pm) — Fellowship Hall — September 3-December 10 Contact: Jamee Thieme

All women are invited to this discussion-based study using the book, *Everlasting: Peaks, Valleys, and Grace in the Psalms* by Christina Hergenrader. Feel free to jump in, even though we already started!

Anxious. Worthy. Ashamed. Nostalgic. Lonely. Secure. This is just a handful of emotions we observe in the Psalms – and in our day-to-day lives, too. In this women's Bible study, you'll be guided through 25 psalms, digging into their genres, perplex emotions, glimpses of Jesus, and more.

Zoom version also available on Mondays, 7:00-8:00 pm.

#### **Men's Ministry**

7:00-8:00 pm (Fellowship at 6:45 pm) — Room 245, Family Life Center

Leader: Tom Gebbia

On December 3 and 10, Larry Cameron will be presenting to our group some poems about the nativity of Christ. John Donne and John Milton were both 17th century British poets and prominent figures in the current affairs of their day. John Donne served as Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral while John Milton occupied a cabinet post in Oliver Cromwell's Puritan government following the English civil war. Their poems may cause us to reflect in new ways on the events surrounding the birth of Christ.

#### **Sacred Marriage**

7:00-8:00 pm — Room 251, Family Life Center — October 29-December 17

Leader: Pastor Alan Shaw

Whether you are married now or plan to be someday, this workshop will look at marriage as much more than a union between two people. It is a spiritual discipline ideally suited to help you know God more fully and intimately. *Sacred Marriage* shifts the focus from marital enrichment to spiritual enrichment in ways that can help you love your mate more.

Whether it is delightful or difficult, your marriage can become a doorway to a closer walk with God. Everything about your marriage — from the history you and your spouse create, to the love you share, to the forgiveness you both offer and seek — is filled with the capacity to help you grow in Christ's character. Books provided.

View the Christian Education Booklet, Fall 2025, Session 2

### From the Archives

# Symbolism in the Sanctuary

#### "I am the resurrection and the life." - John 11:25

These key words of Jesus are the congregation's namesake. So, we have used this theme verse as our inscription on the front of the altar. As you cast your eyes upward toward the front wall, a special cross, called a passion or suffering cross, is hung. The pointed ends of this cross remind us of the wounds of Christ.

The red tiles symbolize the blood of Christ shed for our sins. Thus, both Jesus' death and resurrection are brought into focus for us. The altar is a place of sacrifice, as well as a place for Christ's family to gather and celebrate our most precious gift - "given and shed for you and for the forgiveness of our sins."

We have a new, forgiven life through Christ. In the Bible, water is used as a sign of this cleansing and rebirth. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism has a prominent place in the life of our congregation. It is here that our old sinful nature is drowned and our new life is formed. The blue tiles remind us that we can't forget the water and the promise that God puts together over our heads as he makes us his Kingdom people.

The ever flowing water in our font reminds us of the freshness and newness of God's grace always overflowing in our lives. The inscription is from John 4:14 where Jesus tells the woman at the well in Samaria, "The water I give will become a spring welling up to eternal life."

Our Christian life is a journey. We need to hear and reflect on God's Word in order to be and live as God has called us. "I am the way and the truth." (John 14:6). This inscription on the front of our pulpit remind us from whom it is and from where it is that we receive our strength and understanding for our journey. Behind the pulpit hang our paraments which will change with the seasons of the church year as God's salvation event unfolds for us again.



May our worship in this place be a never ending celebration as God continues to act with his love in the lives of his people.

# Gifts & Memorials

#### In Memory of Cheri Spitz

For Gifts & Memorials

Marilyn Bremer Dave and Karen Noreen The Spitz Family (Children)

For Resurrection Lutheran Preschool

Robert and Joyce Hirt

## In Memory of Helen Campbell

For Gifts & Memorials

Kathy Rihani



## Widow's Group

# **Following Naomi**

This year, our **Christmas Luncheon** will be held at Lugano's Restaurant on **Thursday, December 11** at 2:00 pm. Hope to see you there!

Contact Eydee Persson or the church office (office@rlcary.org, 919-851-7248).

# **Small Groups**

# **DivorceCare**

Join us for a *Surviving the Holidays* seminar and discover helpful ways to deal with the hurt of divorce and separation during the holiday season!

# Surviving the Holidays Sunday, December 14 at 2:00 pm

Room 151, Family Life Center

Register: find.divorcecare.org/ministries/178938





Resurrection Lutheran Church will be hosting a DivorceCare Support Group starting in **January 2026**. This is a Christ-centered and biblically-based program for those who are going through the pain of separation and/or divorce.

Volunteers are needed to help. Volunteer roles are:

- Promotion within the church and our community
- Hospitality welcoming, registration and refreshments
- Small Group Facilitation help lead the session or provide support to hurting individuals
- Recruitment of Volunteers

Training is provided and is self-paced online.

Contact Sue Campau through RCB or the church office (919-851-7248, office@rlcary.org).

# Cross-Cultural Mission Engagement Team

# **Mission Minute**

The Cross-Cultural Mission Engagement Team (CCMET) hosted an information booth about mission work in Cambodia before and after all services the weekend of November 8–9 in the Narthex and Family Life Center lobby. CCMET members shared about the LCMS missionary family our congregation supports — the Cimas — and talked with worshippers about the team's plan to send several members on a mission exploration trip to Cambodia this spring.

Children enjoyed practicing their chopstick skills by moving mini marshmallows and had fun learning interesting facts about Cambodia. They also had fun locating Cambodia on a globe.

The response from the congregation was incredibly encouraging. As a result of the conversations, **23 people signed up to serve as prayer warriors** for Cambodia and mission work there. They received a prayer calendar from the team and will receive ongoing prayer updates by email. **Four members expressed interest in joining a short-term mission team** to Cambodia in 2026, and several others shared a desire to **support Cambodian mission work financially**.

If you weren't able to stop by the CCMET booth and would like to know more about supporting missions in Cambodia, please email <a href="mailto:ccmet@rlcary.org">ccmet@rlcary.org</a> and a member will reach out to you!

# Community Partner Highlight

# NeighborUp

We are THRILLED to announce our new name and rollout our new brand! Watch this video and see the story start to unfold! Come NeighborUp with us and provide help for today and hope for tomorrow.

For decades, **Dorcas Ministries and Western Wake Crisis Ministry** have walked alongside our neighbors, providing food, financial assistance, and hope during difficult times, leaning into the call to love one another and serve the least of these.

Now that our two trusted organizations have come together as one, we are already seeing more opportunities to equip and empower our neighbors, serving them more deeply and broadening our impact throughout our communities. Because together, we are better — better for our neighbors, better for our community, and better for the future we're building where everyone can thrive.

We are pleased to share that our beloved **Dorcas Thrift Shop** will keep its name! So many neighbors and supporters love the store, and we want to honor that legacy while continuing to grow and serve the community through our programs. The Dorcas Shop is a vital part of our mission, providing high-quality items at affordable prices and serving as a revenue stream to support the services we offer.

Stay tuned as our websites and social media accounts merge completely and transition to NeighborUp over the coming days. We hope you'll like, share, and celebrate big with us! Let's NeighborUp together and continue the important work of providing help for today and hope for tomorrow.

**NEIGHBORUP** 

# Stewardship of Life and Health Team

# **December News**

Upper respiratory infections ("URIs") peak during the winter months of December through February. Almost all URIs are caused by viruses, and therefore antibiotics are not usually helpful. There are several ways you can prevent URIs and/or to keep it from spreading to others:

- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose.
- Clean surfaces and objects you touch a lot, including sinks, counters, tables, door handles, remotes, and phones. The germs that cause URIs can live on surfaces for at least 2 hours.
- Do not share cups, food, towels, bed linens, or other personal items.
- Stay away from other people when you are sick. When you do need to be around other people, consider wearing a face mask.

There are also several vaccinations that can help reduce the risk of catching specific respiratory illnesses and/or developing their serious complications, such as hospitalization and death. As always, talk to your trusted healthcare provider for more specific and personalized information.

- Influenza Vaccine
  - ♦ Available annually for ages 6 months and older
  - ♦ Strongly recommended for those with immunosuppression, advanced age, or pre-existing lung disease.
- Covid-19 Vaccine
  - ♦ Available annually for ages 6 months and older
  - ♦ Strongly recommended for children less than 2 years old
  - Strongly recommended for adults who are 65 years and older, immunosuppressed, or have serious pre-existing medical conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, and cancer, among many others.
- Pneumococcal Vaccine
  - ♦ Targets the most common bacteria that causes pneumonia
  - Strongly recommended to adults ages 50 and above, or adults ages 19-49 who have certain predisposing chronic medical conditions (given every 5-10 years)
  - ♦ Strongly recommended for all children less than 5 years old (3-dose primary series plus a booster)
- RSV Vaccine
  - ♦ Targets the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
  - ♦ One-time dose strongly recommended for all people 75 years and older, or ages 60-74 with serious pre-existing medical conditions.
  - ♦ A maternal RSV vaccine can be given during the third trimester of pregnancy between the months of September through January to protect the infant

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20



# Stephen Ministry

# **Upcoming Class**



We're looking for a few good people to train for Stephen Ministry?

Do you have what it takes? (Hint: We think you do)

Next class starts January 4, 2026.

For more information, email <u>stephenministry@rlcary.org</u> or ask any of the Pastors and Stephen Ministers for more information.

We'll see you in class!



# Happy Anniversary!

#### December 1

Doug and Lori Durnbaugh 35 years

#### December 4

Alan and Linda Sullivan 54 years

#### **December 7**

Vern and Dorothy Ebert 73 years

#### **December 12**

Matthew and Leah Combs 10 years

### December 19

Martin and Mindy Stephani 55 years

#### December 23

Bob and Barb Shimmel 58 years

#### **December 27**

Lyle and Sue Malotky 57 years

Craig and Sue White 50 years

#### December 29

Dennis and Stephanie Ford 52 years

Todd and Cyndy Vagle 35 years



Sign Up: <u>bit.ly/47q9s92</u>

Questions? Contact Jenny Piontek at <a href="mailto:jenny.piontek@rlcary.org">jenny.piontek@rlcary.org</a>.

# **Youth Ministry**

# Middle and High School

### Youth Alumni Care Packs Sent

Each year in the fall, our High School youth group packs care packages for our college undergraduate students/ RLC youth alumni. We include handwritten cards, a devotion, and small gifts from us to let them know we are

thinking about them. And more importantly, that God is with them and God is holding them up where ever they are.

It is always fun to check in with our college crew and see how their semester is going. Some are getting ready to finish their very first semester of college, while others are getting ready for graduation. Exciting times!

We pray that as these packs arrive to our college friends they are reminded that God is with them on this journey, his timing is perfect and he is above all things. We love our RLC Youth Alums!





Contact Jenny Piontek, Youth Director, at <u>jenny.piontek@rlcary.org</u> or 919-851-7248, ext. 24.

# Children and Family Ministry News December 2025

**Upcoming Events:** 

December 12 - Parents Night Out 6-9 pm in the gym

December 14 - No Children's Sunday School

December 14 - Young Family Gathering at the Justice Family Home 4 pm

**December 19 - Moms Night Out** 

December 24 - Christmas Eve Family Interactive Service 3 pm

December 28 & January 4 - No Children's Sunday School

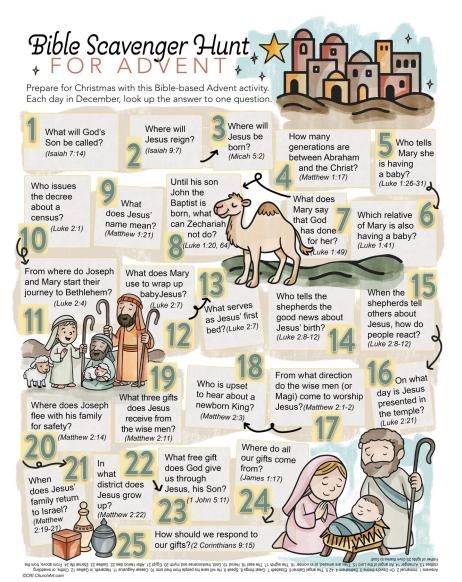
January 7 - Kidz Live and Parenting resume 6-7 pm FLC

January 11 - Children's Sunday School resumes 9:30-10:30

\* MERRY \*
CHRISTMAS



Questions? Contact Erika Hulse, Children and Family Ministry Director, at <a href="mailto:erika.hulse@rlcary.org">erika.hulse@rlcary.org</a> or 919-851-7248, ext. 62.



#### **Download Pages:**

Full Color or Black/White





## Resurrection Lutheran Preschool

Diane Hooper, Director

rlpcary.org 919-851-7270 office@rlpcary.org



# Enrollment for 2025-26

at Resurrection Lutheran

PRESCHOOL

Classes for children2-years-old thru 5-years-old ★

Our program provides a balance of academic and social opportunities by 'learning through play' in a loving Christian atmosphere.

#### Announcement

As some of you may know, I became a grandma in September and I am excited to take on this new role! It is a blessing to have my daughter, Emily, and her family close by in Raleigh.

After many amazing years at Resurrection Lutheran Preschool, I have decided to retire at the end of the preschool year in June of 2026. This decision was both difficult and easy. As my daughter transitions back into her job as a nurse, I will be taking care of my grandson, James. RLP families and the RLP staff are like family to me. The Preschool has been a huge part of my life over the past 26 years - as a parent, a teacher, Assistant Director, and as the Director for the past nine years. So, this decision was not an easy one.

This being said, the Preschool Board and I have begun the search for the next Preschool Director. The Board and I will be thoughtful and collaborative in this process. The staff and I remain dedicated to providing the same high level of care and education to our families as we have over the past 40+ years.

RLP will continue fulfilling its mission of providing a loving, safe, enriching, and Christian environment for children and their families.

- Diane Hooper



#### **STEM NEWS**

We are very proud to say that RLS will be presenting at NCTies (North Carolina Technology in Education Society) for the fourth year! All of our middle school students and both 5th grade classes will be in the Student Showcase during NCTies 2026.

This year's theme for NCTies is "Totally Ties" with an 80's vibe! Some of the projects are entitled with the 1980's in mind.... Totally Tubular Scale Drawings, Rad Room Designer, and Future's So Bright - Our 15 Minute City. The projects include technology, math, Makey Makey kits and many STEM recycled materials.

Fifth grade students will be using the Ozobots and Spheros for their three Student Showcase projects with a focus on weather. Isn't it "totally awesome" that we will be presenting EIGHT projects?!

#### **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is now open to the public! We are so grateful that the vast majority of our families have already re-enrolled, and we're thrilled to be welcoming many new siblings next fall. What a gift it is to continue growing together as a school community.

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**December 19** Christmas Program, 8:40 am

Junior Kindergarten-8th Grade

Last Day of School for 2025 (Early Release)

Looking Ahead...

January 5 Back to School

January 16 Spelling Bee, 8:45 am





## Resurrection Lutheran School

Robin Hester Principal

rlscary.org 919-851-7271 contact@rlscary.org

Come Grow With Us: Rooted in Christ. Growing in Grace.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

#### Mission:

Resurrection Lutheran School is committed to educating generations of children in the training and instruction of the Lord.
Because of this commitment, we will provide a Lutheran educational experience that is Christ-centered, as well as academically focused for children in junior kindergarten through eighth grade.



### **WORSHIP**

#### Join us for worship!

Saturday, 6:00 pm Sunday, 8:00 am\*, 9:30 am, and Praise 11:00 am\*

\*Live Stream Services

Connect through our YouTube channel @ResurrectionLutheranCary

or through our website at rlcary.org/about-us/online-worship



#### **LEARN MORE**

rlcary.org | office@rlcary.org | 919-851-7248

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Blanke, Senior Pastor Rev. Zachery Sarrault, Associate Pastor Rev. Alan Shaw, Assistant Pastor Christopher Reed, SMP Vicar

# **GIVING**

We appreciate your contributions to our congregation. Here are the different ways to make your offering:

- · Place in offering plate during worship
- Mail to 100 Lochmere Drive West, Cary NC 27518
- Through Online Glving
- Download the Vanco Mobile app to transfer funds from your account

Questions? Contact finance@rlcary.org.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**



facebook.com/ResurrectionLutheranCary



instagram.com/ResurrectionLutheranCary



youtube.com/ResurrectionLutheranCary

Newsletter deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please send submissions to susan.moore@rlcary.org.

100 LOCHMERE DRIVE WEST, CARY NC 27518