

# Fourth Sunday in Advent

## December 21, 2025

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### *Pastor's Corner for December 21-27*

#### **The Gift of Immanuel... "God with Us" (Matthew 1:23)**

A wise man once said to me: "Let's not stop and pray that God helps us execute OUR plan. Let's stop and pray that we may discern what GOD'S plan for us might be in this sticky situation." Amen, brother. There is of course more than a little chutzpah in thinking we can ever read God's mind! But the emphasis here is on taking important decisions out of the automatic heat of personal "fight or flight" and beginning to discern how God can be best glorified in spite of difficult or seemingly impossible circumstances. Believing in the promise of "God with us" doesn't mean believing God simply rubberstamps every decision we care to make. And just because we believe "God is with us" doesn't mean we really think God will turn every choice we make about enduring in the face of trial into a happy ending. Believing in the promise of "God with us" means living

as if God is present not only with me but with the community of God's people of whom I am called to be a part... and that He empowers and directs me in ways that will ultimately bless and sustain me – even if I don't see that blessing yet. That kind of living is living that we fail, on a daily basis, to accomplish. What comfort, then, to know that "God with us" ("Immanuel") is also "God saves" ("Jesus")! The manner of saving might not be in accordance with my schedule and my list of priorities, but it is always salvation from the biggest and most pressing issue there is: the sin problem!

At times we place too much trust in the experts and pundits we expect will have all the answers. Sometimes they might even seem to get things right! This week we are directed to seek the sign of God's power among us where we least expect to find it: with a pregnant woman carrying a tiny, unplanned for, baby. Believing that the promise of "God with us" is fulfilled in Jesus, our Savior, we are given the grace to not fight or flee but to wait. To rest. To put our hope in the God who keeps His promises. The God of promises fulfilled is up to something again this Christmas!

A very blessed Christmas to all,  
Pastor Jonathan

Please note, the church office will be closed on Thursday, December 25 and Friday, December 26. Merry Christmas!

**Prayers of the Church**

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## **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

**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 with Brass Ensemble, Sanctuary Choir, and Heavenly Handbells  
(Live Stream on YouTube)

**10:00 pm**

Candlelight Service with Traditional Christmas Carols and Holy Communion

December 25 ~ Christmas Day

10:00 am

Festival Celebration of Holy Communion with Christmas Carols

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As you may know, Resurrection Lutheran Church is currently considering a capital campaign to raise the funds needed to address our capital and financial needs.

As a preliminary step to this effort, we're conducting a Fundraising Feasibility & Planning Study to obtain feedback and assess our financial potential. Toward that end, you are cordially invited to participate in our **Online Survey** which is available through this weekend.

I invite you to read the Preliminary Case Statement explaining the perceived needs and expected costs for a campaign like this posted on our church website prior to taking the survey.

**Some have already completed this survey and we thank you. If you haven't, please make sure to complete by December 21 (last day available).**

Your feedback is important to us, please participate if you can.

May the wonder and hope of Christmas be yours again this year!

In Christ,  
Pastor Jonathan Blanke

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Baptized on Sunday, December 21 at 9:30 am

**Alexander Paul Benson**

born July 4, 2025,  
son of Peter Anders Benson and Christina Marie Benson.

*May God's blessing be upon Alexander Paul as he grows in his baptismal grace.*

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**Flowers Placed in the Sanctuary  
In Memory of Loved Ones  
by Meta Linde and Gail Reilly**



**Sign up for Altar Flowers in the Sanctuary and Family Life Center.  
Click below or call the church office at 919-851-7248.  
Flowers are from Cary Florist and cost \$45.**

**[Sign Up for Altar Flowers!](#)**



*Wishing you peace, joy, and happiness!  
Merry Christmas from the RLC Staff!*

Pastor Jonathan Blanke, Pastor Zach Sarrault, Pastor Alan Shaw, Vicar Chris Reed, Bob Unger, Jenny Piontek, Erika Hulse, Margaret Hyatt, Susan Moore, Evy Suskin, Spencer Hulse, Garrett Douglas, Bill Werner, Dennis Merrill

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## **Adult Bible Study Opportunities**

### **Sunday Morning**

#### ***Last* Holy Communion**

**Sundays, 9:30-10:30 am ~ October 26-December 21**

Fellowship Hall

Ian Glenn

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 also be discussion on the 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 a 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.

### **Tuesday Morning**

#### **No Tuesday Morning Bible Study**

**Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 am ~ September 2-May 19**

Fellowship Hall

Pastor Jonathan Blanke, Pastor Zach Sarrault

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.

#### **No Wednesday Evening ~ Supper & Scripture**

No Wednesday evening activities for the next two weeks, December 24 and 31.

Supper & Scripture will resume on **Wednesday, January 7** with dinner, adult Christian education classes, Confirmation, youth events, and music ministry rehearsals.

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## Stephen Ministry



Stephen Ministry is a listening ministry focused on confidential care for those struggling with any number of life issues from grief to depression to loneliness to anxiety. We are there to walk alongside and support.

And we need you to prayerfully consider becoming a Stephen Minister. If you are up for the challenge, the next class starts **January 4, 2026**. Ask the pastors to link you up with a Stephen Leader or email us at [stephenministry@rlcary.org](mailto:stephenministry@rlcary.org). We'll see you in class!

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## Appalachia Service Project

### The ASP Experience

Appalachia Service Project provides one of the most rewarding structured service opportunities in the nation — bringing thousands of volunteers from around the country to Central Appalachia to repair and replace homes for low-income families.

Since 1969, ASP has made homes warmer, safer, and drier for families and provided transformational service experiences for volunteers. Learn more: [Appalachia Service Project | Mission Trips in Appalachia](#)

Resurrection Lutheran Church participated in ASP Summer Mission Trips in



years past. Kevin Kuhl (Former ASP Youth Team Member, Current Adult Leader for High School, Youth Ministry) is interested in reviving this popular servant event again.

There will be two ASP Interest Meetings held on **Sunday, January 4** at 12:30 pm in Room 240, Family Life Center, and **Wednesday, January 7** at 7:00 pm in The Warehouse, Room 253, Family Life Center. You only need to attend one.



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**The Coffeehouse  
for Special Needs Adults**  
Friday, January 9

We thank all our volunteers who help us to have wonderful Coffeehouses! We couldn't do it without our faithful volunteers. Please consider joining us as a volunteer! Our special needs guests love to attend these events, and we need lots of volunteers to make them feel special and loved. The monthly Coffeehouses happen every 2nd Friday, January-November.

We thank God for this ministry among us! We need Setter Uppers at 5:30 pm (both food and room), Servers at 6:30 pm, and Cleaner Uppers at 8:30 pm. Sign Up: [bit.ly/3VAatWWO](http://bit.ly/3VAatWWO)

The first Coffeehouse of our 24th season is **Friday, January 9** from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Family Life Center. *The Lochnuts* will be performing for us.



Questions? Contact Brenda Peterson through RCB or the church office (919-851-7248, [office@rlcary.org](mailto:office@rlcary.org)).

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## Prayer Cards

Visual Faith® Ministry has provided prayer cards by the prayer sheets in the Narthex and the Family Life Center. We invite you to take a few cards home and add prayer notes for your family and friends for whom you are praying.

As you pray for those concerns, color the card, and then send it to the person with a note that says, "You've been in my prayers this week."

If you have questions, please contact Jamee Thieme through RCB.

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## 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



Oh what fun it is to see all that is happening in Children's Ministry!





Questions? Contact Erika Hulse, Children and Family Ministry Director, at [erika.hulse@rlcary.org](mailto:erika.hulse@rlcary.org) or 919-851-7248, ext. 62.

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## Youth Ministry

Middle School and High School

***Merry Christmas!***

### **December 21:**

Sunday School for Middle and High School, 9:30 am

High School Youth Group, 6:30-8:00 pm

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

## LAST HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP (OF THE CALENDAR YEAR)

Hot cocoa bar, cookies, Christmas pj's, time to chill, sound perfect?  
Then come to this week's High School Youth Group  
Dec. 21 @ 6:30 - 8pm  
Hey College Alum, if you are in town, JOIN US!



Questions? Contact Jenny Piontek, Youth Director,  
at [jenny.piontek@rlcary.org](mailto:jenny.piontek@rlcary.org) or 919-851-7248, ext. 24.

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## Resurrection Lutheran Preschool

### Enrollment for 2025-26

at Resurrection Lutheran  
**PRESCHOOL**

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



+ Classes for children 2-years-old  
thru 5-years-old +

[office@rlpcary.org](mailto:office@rlpcary.org)  
**919.851.7270**



## Resurrection Lutheran Preschool

### 3-year-olds to Rising kindergarteners

(children currently in our 2's classes can come!)  
(ALL Ages MUST be toilet-trained)

**June 1 – 4** (9:15-12:30)

**June 8 – 11** (9:15-12:30)

**June 15 – 18** (9:15-12:30)

RLChurch VBS June 22-26

Neighbors, friends, & family welcome!

*Look for Brochures & Registration forms in January*

## Mark Your Calendars!



**email- [office@rlpcary.org](mailto:office@rlpcary.org)  
call- 919-851-7270**

[rlpcary.org](http://rlpcary.org) | 919-851-7270 | [office@rlpcary.org](mailto:office@rlpcary.org)

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## Resurrection Lutheran School



[rlscary.org](http://rlscary.org) | 919-851-7271 | [contact@rlscary.org](mailto:contact@rlscary.org)

**Latest Lion's Tale**

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For online services, connect through our YouTube channel at  
[youtube.com/ResurrectionLutheranChurchCaryNC](https://youtube.com/ResurrectionLutheranChurchCaryNC)  
 or through our website at  
[rlcary.org/about-us/online-worship](https://rlcary.org/about-us/online-worship).

### **RLC Worship Servants and Training**

There is always a need for more volunteers to assist in all of our worship services. Please consider being a greeter or usher, a worship assistant or lay reader, a slide tech or live stream team member. Feel free to reach out directly to the following for more information:

- Saturday, 6:00 pm - Lori Jannings
- Sunday, 8:00 am - Brenda Peterson
- Sunday, 9:30 am - Dara Linn
- Sunday, 11:00 am - Suzi Heffner

You may also contact the church office at 919-851-7248  
 or [office@rlcary.org](mailto:office@rlcary.org) for assistance.

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## This Week's Visual Faith Sheet

## Christmas Eve Visual Faith Sheet

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### Weekly Attendance

#### In-Person Worship Attendance:

Wednesday, December 10

6:00 pm - 72

Saturday, December 13

6:00 pm - n/a

Sunday, December 14

8:00 am - 148

9:30 am - n/a

11:00 am - 78

**Total In-Person Worship: 298**

#### Views of Online Worship at RLC's YouTube Channel:

Sunday, December 14

8:00 am - 268

11:00 am - 64

**Total Online Views: 332**

## Financial Update - Fiscal 2024/25

### November 2025

Budgeted Giving to Date: \$589,000.00

Actual Giving to Date: \$605,259.90

**Current Over/(Under) Giving: \$ 16,259.90**

Budgeted Expenses to Date: \$633,33.33

Actual Expenses to Date: \$578,288.45

**Current Under/(Over) Spend: \$ 55,044.88**

Questions? Contact [finance@rlcary.org](mailto:finance@rlcary.org).

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## Church Calendar



100 W. Lochmere Drive, Cary NC 27518

[rlcary.org](http://rlcary.org)

919-851-7248 | [office@rlcary.org](mailto:office@rlcary.org)

## **Prayers of the Church – December 21, 2025**

*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence,  
so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.  
Hebrews 4:16*

### **We lift the following prayer requests this week:**

#### **Ongoing Prayers**

\*Diane Cuper, \*Anne Altieri, \*Charlotte Raines, \*Eric Hammergren, \*Anita Moore, \*John Shaeffer,  
\*Vern Ebert, \*Aaron, Marcus, Malcolm, \*Sandy Douglas, Henry Otten, Michael Flannery, Paul Batt,  
\*Geoffrey Wiggins, Caitlyn, Mark Zimmerman, Justus Nicolai, Alex Fernandez

#### **Ongoing Cancer Treatments**

\*Mike Allen, Anne Price, Angie Price, Alison Zieglmeier, Carol Diliberto, Jackie, Kathy Siemon,  
Scott Brinkley, Hope Mackelprang, Melissa Huntsman, Sue, Kathy, Pamm Haley, Bob, Michael Murphy,  
\*Greta Nelson, \*Marina de Moura Torres, Ames, Emily, \*Alison Whatley, Joe Huley, Lyn Becksford

#### **For Expectant Moms**

\*Melainey Unger Campos, Hannah Peterson, Sarah Hulse

#### **Those Prayed for on December 14, 2025**

#### **Thanking God Today**

- Our RLC Family
- Family Celebrations and Time Together, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Weddings, Births, Baptisms
- Our Many Blessings
- Safe Travels
- Caring Organizations Serving Our Local Communities
- Birth of Katie Ann Shaw, Proud Parents \*Kevin and \*Alyssa Shaw,  
Grandparents \*Stuart and \*Linda Shaw
- Congregation Generosity Christmas Store Gifts
- Wonderful Advent Tea
- New Office Assistant, Evy Suskin
- New and Outgoing Church Council Members
- RLC Finance Team
- Voter's Meeting
- Birth of Annabelle Guerin, Proud Parents \*Zachary and \*Renee Guerin

#### **For Healing**

- \*Kim Goss
- All Those Exposed to COVID, with COVID, and Recovering from COVID

- Blind Ministry Guests - Maria and Jeff Barker, Linda Jones, Judy Dean, Ruby Franklin, Miriam Delgado, Helen Rice-Lyles, Nancy Waggoner, Kathy Stegall
- \*Greta Nelson
- Pastor William Otto, Cancer Treatment and Surgery
- \*Pam Dickson
- \*Stephanie Ford
- Betty, and Others with Dementia
- \*Mindy Stephani, Healing and Restoration
- Terrie Johnson, Mother of \*Jen Kirby
- \*Alison Whatley
- Bryon, Recovery from Brain Injury
- Carrie Heilman, Cancer Treatment, Daughter-In-Law of \*John and \*Virginia Heilman
- Clare Roberts, Recovery, Mother of \*Michelle Wood
- \*Charlie Shiel
- \*Charlotte Raines
- Cynthia Wyse
- Brian Gorneau, Recovery from Accident at Home
- \*Fern Frusti
- Deb, Sister of \*Pam Dickson
- Tyler, Recovering from Burns, and His Family Supporting Him
- Belle and Hayes, Childhood Cancer
- \*Clinton Peterson
- Kathy Mitchell
- Khari Otten
- Tommi
- Ryan
- Henry, Grandson of \*Mark and \*Pat Otten
- Makayla
- Carli
- Kyler
- \*Yvette Crawley, Healing and Recovery
- Lorrie Muller, Cancer Treatment
- \*Cheryl Roth, Healing and Rehab
- \*Jan Wozniak, Healing and Rehab
- \*Amelia Sarrault, Healing
- Patrick Tray, Surgery and Recovery
- Sheila, Cancer Treatment
- Alicia, Don, Mark, James, Gary, Gene, Lois, Walter, Megan, Ben, Alex, Andy, Olevia, Larry, Jessica, Stacy, Gail, Ray, Scott, Gia, Joy, Jean, Bill, Kathy, Catherine, Stella, Jan, Melissa, Marcus, Denise, Pat, Pam, Cynthia, Brian, Steve, David, Virginia, Donald, Ruby, Joe, Jake, Amanda, Julie, Herbie, Jeri, Lynne, Eddie, Jeff, Jessica, Keyan

#### **For Comfort**

- Family and Friends of Griffin Tilton, Especially Grandparents \*George and \*Chris Johanson
- Family and Friends of Mindy Burge
- Family and Friends of Patricia Meinzer, Mother of \*Stacy Miller

### **For Provision, Peace, Strength, and Patient Endurance**

- Persecuted Christians
- People Around the World Affected by Natural Disasters and Weather Events
- Families and Businesses Recovering in Western NC
- Safety and Thanksgiving for People Helping with Recovery Efforts
- People of Ukraine, and All Those Who Serve to Support Them
- People of Israel and the People of Gaza, Peace in the Middle East
- All Those Supporting Family Members with Caregiving Needs
- Annie Ruth Ford, Mother of \*Dennis Ford
- \*Eric and \*Jill Hammergren
- \*Jan Wozniak
- Jan and Rich Bloom
- \*Ginny and \*Ed Koren
- \*Meredith A.
- \*Fran Xenakis
- \*Carol Mitchell
- Our Government and Leaders
- Those Enduring Marriage Struggles and Families in Turmoil
- Those Seeking Jobs and Career Changes, and Federal Workers
- Victims, Families, and Communities Suffering with Gun Violence,  
Especially Brown University and Bondi Beach
- Dorothy Conners
- \*Jim and \*Thelma Rhodes
- \*Anita Moore
- \*Rundle Family
- Marion Cecconi, Mother of \*Lecia Roberts
- \*Kathy Rihani
- Those in Process of Selling and Purchasing Homes
- Jeri Breitsprecher, Mother of \*Sue Campau, Recovery and Guidance for Her Family
- For the Director Search at Resurrection Lutheran Preschool
- Safety for Hunters
- Congregation Preliminary Study for Possible Capital Campaign
- Safe Travel for Nick, Elena, William, and Robert Balmes
- Be With Families of Those with Dementia
- Peace Throughout the World

### **For the Lord's Wisdom, Guidance, Strength for the Health and Well-Being of the People They Serve**

- Pastor Jonathan and Juli, Associate Pastor Zach and Kelsey, Assistant Pastor Alan and Faith,  
and Their Families
- Pastor Alan Shaw, Intentional Interim Pastor at Peace Lutheran Church, Goldsboro NC
- SMP Vicar Christopher Reed, SMP Training and Vicarage, and His Family
- Pastor Jon Richter, Discernment in Serving
- Resurrection Lutheran Church and Schools Staff
- Area Pastors and Schools Staff
- Our Stephen Ministers
- Our Caring Presence Ministry

- Divorce Care Program, Beginning Early 2026

#### **For Ongoing Mission and Outreach Efforts**

- RLC's The Coffeehouse
- RLC's Blind Ministry
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace
- Safe Families for Children
- Families Together/PLM
- Camp Agape Ministries
- Read-a-Book at Reedy Creek Elementary School and Our RLC Volunteers
- Orphan Grain Train
- Eastern NC Lutheran Via de Cristo

#### **For Our Missionaries**

- JP and Aimee Cima, Cambodia  
[Click here for the Cima Family Newsletter!](#)

*Lord Jesus, thank You for Your abiding Presence and saving grace. All is in Your Hands.  
We trust You are working all things according to Your good plan and purposes,  
and with that trust and confidence, we release these prayers to You. In Your Holy Name, Amen.*

**\*RLC Members**

*Updated 12/19/25*