



Alleluia! Lutheran Church, 4055 S. Book Rd., Naperville, IL 60564

www.alleluia!lutheran.org Phone: 630-904-3311

Our Mission: To enable all to come, connect, and commit to Jesus.

January 2026 Alleluia! NEWS

Note this Service Time Change

Sunday, Jan. 4th: we will have ONE worship service at 10:00am. Following worship we will have a Farewell Reception in honor of Michele Nelson Lui.



Michele has served as an Alleluia! staff member and in other innumerable ways since **Day One** and will be greatly missed. Please come to thank her and wish her well!

Women's Ministry Half-Day Event

Saturday, Jan. 24th, 8:45am-12:00pm



Speaker Amy Jackson will speak to us about God's gift of REST.

Details on page 11

Household Blessings

Blessings for individuals and families will take place during worship on Sunday, Jan. 4th.

Please join us and receive a blessing for the new year! There will be

ONE service on this Sunday at **10:00am**.



An Adult Learning Opportunity

- Longing for a deeper connection with God?
- Seeking intentional practices to grow your faith in 2026?

Join us for this Adult Ministries Class led by Pastor Joel on 4 Wednesday evenings throughout January.

Come for ONE or come for all FOUR!

[CLICK HERE](#) for details and registration.



Saturday, February 28th

More info on page 10

Save the Date!



Tickets are Going Fast!

Coming to Alleluia! — Thursday, April 9th

More info on page 11

View photos from many Christmas events throughout this newsletter.



Christmas Eve at Alleluia!



A special
THANK YOU
to our many
volunteers!



Message from Pastor Joel



"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: . . . a time to heal, a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

~ Ecclesiastes 3:1, 3-4.

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us that there is a season for everything. Earlier this month you should have received in your email a letter from Michele Lui our Director of Worship and Music sharing that she has decided to step down from this role. When I ask people, "What brought you to Alleluia!?" The most common answer I hear is, "Michele! Michele is who brought me to Alleluia! Michele is the reason I'm here."

Her leadership on Sunday mornings in worship, her effervescent personality that permeates every interaction she has, and her deep abiding faith in Christ, have helped to form us into a people these last 33 years at Alleluia! Personally, I am so grateful for her friendship, her wisdom, and her encouragement this last year and a half. And I'm thankful that after a little time away for her to heal and get healthy, she promises to come back as a member.

If you have not had a chance to read Michele's letter to the congregation, please do so. It is included in this newsletter on pg 8. We are actively looking for our next Director of Worship and Music, and if you happen to know of someone who might be a good fit, please encourage them to consider applying. You can find the job description on our church website under the "About Alleluia!/Employment" tab.

Lastly, on Sunday, January 4th we will have only one service at 10:00am. During the service we will have an opportunity to hear from Michele as she shares some of her favorite things about Alleluia! Following the service there will be a time of celebration, giving thanks to God for the 33 years of ministry that Michele has given to Alleluia! If you would like to give a card or gift for Michele, feel free to bring them on that day, or drop them off in the main office anytime the church is open.

Annual Congregational Meeting One Service at 10:00am

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

All members are invited to join us for our annual meeting on **Sunday, February 1st following 10:00 a.m. worship.** At the meeting we will celebrate God's faithfulness to Alleluia! Lutheran Church over the past years. We will look ahead to what God is inviting us to in the future. We will provide an update to how we ended the year 2025 financially, present a 2026 Operating Budget for approval by the congregation, and vote to elect our new congregation council members. **We will have one worship service that morning at 10:00 a.m.** with the congregational meeting to immediately follow the service. All members are encouraged to attend.

Children's Ministry

Sharing the love of God with children and families so they can come, connect, and commit to Jesus.

KidsConnect Church School - Every Sunday During Both Services

We welcome children 3yrs-5th grade, placing them in age-appropriate classrooms where they explore Bible stories in fun and meaningful ways. Each week, kids dive into God's Word through **art, games, music, videos, science, or drama**, making the Bible come alive! Our time together begins with **worship music, the Lord's Prayer, communion, and blessings**—a sacred and joyful experience created just for kids. Don't miss out — [CLICK HERE](#) to register your child today!



KidsConnect resumes on January 4th. Our next rotation will be on The Lord's Prayer. We are in need of volunteers at both services—your help makes a huge difference! Please join us in making a lasting impact on the faith journey of our children.



- We offer:
- * flexible scheduling
 - * easy-to-follow no-prep lessons
 - * a meaningful and rewarding experience
 - * occasional sweet treats as a thank-you!

Whether you're a middle schooler, high school student, or adult, there's a place for you on our team. [CLICK HERE](#) and sign up to be part of something special.

Wednesday Night Programs will resume January 14th

Connect45 and Confirmation students are heading to **Feed My Starving Children** on January 21st! There's still time to join our Wednesday Night Programs and be part of meaningful—and fun—nights like this. We meet from 6:00-7:00 PM in the lower level Celebration Room. [CLICK HERE](#) to register today to enjoy weekly gatherings filled with Bible lessons, games, service projects, and more! Contact April Blair, ablair@alleluia.church with questions.

First Communion Instruction Retreat Registration is OPEN!



Sunday, March 8th, 1:00pm-5:00pm

First Communion instruction is designed for children in 4th-6th grades. Sessions will be led by Alleluia! staff with parent volunteers as small group leaders. An adult must attend with their student. Students will have the opportunity to make a personal communion banner and can receive their First Communion at one of the following services: **Sunday, March 29th at either the 9:00am OR 10:30am, OR at the Maundy Thursday service, April 2nd at 7:00pm.** [CLICK HERE](#) to register a student for the retreat. Questions to April Blair, ablair@alleluia.church

Something NEW! Play & Connect Days for when School is Out!

January 19th, 10am-12pm: Families are invited to join us for an action-packed Gym Day at Alleluia! We'll beat the winter chill with an indoor "snowball" fight, a thrilling obstacle course, and plenty of room to run, play, and burn off energy on this day off from school. Contact April Blair at ablair@alleluia.church with questions!

February 16th, 10am-12pm: Let's meet at **Funtopia** (2639 Aurora Ave in Naperville).

Tickets can be purchased ahead of time via the Funtopia website. Be on the lookout for more Play & Connect Days in the New Year!



More Children's Ministry Info on the following page

Children's Ministry

Created By God: Bridge to Adolescence Human Sexuality Program for 5th & 6th Graders

Created By God is a Bible-based program on human sexuality, appropriate for current 5th & 6th graders. The classes will be held in January over 3 sessions on 1/18, 1/24, & 1/25 9:00am—12:30pm. A Parent Orientation will be held to allow parents to view materials and ask questions. See signup for details.



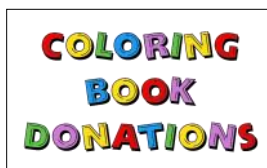
Register your student [HERE](#) or scan the QR code.

Contact April Blair at ablair@alleluia.church with questions.



January Service Project: Coloring Book Donations

Throughout January, the Children's Ministry will be collecting **NEW coloring books** to donate to local children's hospitals. During KidsConnect, all grades will write or draw a cheerful message inside each of the front covers to help brighten a child's day.

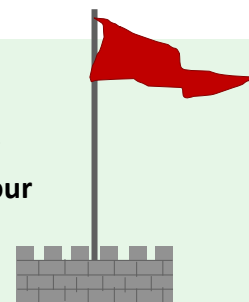


Please consider donating **NEW coloring books** for Alleluia! kids to spread love and kindness in our community. Drop donations in the collection box near the KidsConnect check-in stations. Thank you for your generosity!

VBS Kingdom Quest: An Epic Journey to Discover God's Kingdom!

Join us **June 8-12** for *Kingdom Quest*, a spiritually rich VBS adventure where kids will discover what it means to follow Jesus and live in God's Kingdom. Planning begins in February—**join our first meeting on February 22 at 11:30am** in the Our Saviour's Room.

Stay tuned—registration for students and volunteers opens on March 1st!



Wednesday Night Groups will Volunteer at Feed My Starving Children

In January, members from several of our Wednesday Night groups—Connect45, Confirmation, and the Resolve 2026 Adult Learning Group, will volunteer at the **Feed My Starving Children** Aurora facility.

Please contact group leaders, **April Blair** (ablair@alleluia.church), **Kurtis Arndt** (karndt@alleluia.church), or **Pastor Joel** (jvanderwal@alleluia.church) for additional information.



The Children's Ministry wrapped up 2025 with much joy and celebration!

- We went caroling at Sunrise Assisted Living in North Naperville
- KidsConnect enjoyed a festive Bingo Christmas Party
- Wednesday Night Programs celebrated with a "Happy Birthday, Jesus" Party

We can't wait to see all the fun and faith-filled moments 2026 will bring!

Please enjoy photos from many of our Christmas celebrations on page 12.

Alleluia! Youth News!

Confirmation (6th - 8th Grade)



In December, we dove deep into worship doing our weekly Holden Evening Prayer during Advent. Students loved CommuniTEA and special guests Zachariah, Mary, and Joseph during our time together. While in Confirmation Class - students learned what Advent is, Mary's importance to the Christmas Story, and had a Christmas Celebration! To cap off our Christmas Party - our winners of the Fall Semester of the Clash of the Classes are announced!



In January, Confirmation students can look forward to a brand new slate for the "Clash of the Classes." Topics of learning include The Church: People, A Night at Feed My Starving Children, and Vocation.

We have a rolling registration! Want to get involved in this program? We're starting a new semester! Sign up [HERE](#).

High School Youth Group (9th - 12th Grade)



Students grades 9-12 meet on Sunday Nights in the Underground Youth Center from 6:30pm - 8:00pm for fellowship, a lesson, and a wide variety of activities including games, community building, service projects, and more. As always - all are welcome to come as they are!

Our January lesson series is, "Shelter in Psalms," where we will have three distinct weeks of reading, understanding, and even writing our own Psalms!



1/11 - What are the Psalms?

1/18 - How do we use the Psalms?

1/25 - Creating our own Psalms!

Our High School Youth Group is always growing and welcoming new faces! Want more information or to be added to the email list? Scan the QR code or [CLICK HERE](#)!



2026 Mission Trip: Let It Shine! June 27th—July 3rd



This little light of mine? I am going to let it shine!

This simple song from our younger years talks about letting the light of God shine bright through your actions, being, and the way you interact with the world around you. What also is fascinating is that this light we have is contagious...a spark can create a wildfire of love that spreads among communities and in our young people! Much of this trip theme is going to be getting away from the hustle and bustle, retreating to nature, exploring God's creation, and serving communities in a variety of ways!

Our 2026 Mission Trip will be to Iowa!

Our basecamp for the week will be the Charis House at Camp Shalom in Maquoketa, IA (muh-kow-kuh-tuh), serving not only Maquoketa, but also the Quad Cities and Dubuque will be a daily activity for the week of June 27th—July 3rd. As mentioned in our announcement of this trip, this trip will start on June 27th and conclude before noon on July 3rd for 4th of July activities!

Be sure to save these dates: June 27th—July 3rd, 2026! Registration and more information will go live in January! All current 8th—12th graders are invited to join in on this week of adventure, faith exploration, service, and fellowship!

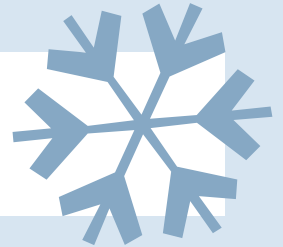


January Music News

**Alleluia! Music begins 2026 with much gratitude for you.
Here are some highlights from A! Music 2025:**

- * Many, many thanks for two very successful fundraisers—Butter Braid and the Christmas Confectionary!
- * We were able to make some improvements in the production department!
- * The Brass Choir, Instrumental Ensemble, and Flute Choir made a few appearances!
- * Our Traditional and Contemporary Praise Teams WELCOMED some new musicians!
- * The Children's Choirs have grown throughout 2025 and welcomed some new friends! They have been singing in worship once each month. Alleluia!
- * We offered Alleluia! Music Jam Nights on the 3rd Thursday of each month to give ALL a chance to sing or play! We've enjoyed having some people check it out!
- * The Hand Bell Choir has been playing MONTHLY and we've added some new "ringers!"

**Please read an important letter from Michele Nelson Lui
on the following page.**



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Alleluia! Lutheran Church currently seeks to fill the following positions:

- A **full-time Worship & Music Director** for Alleluia!
- A **part-time Music Teacher** for our Little Blessings Preschool Program
- A **part-time Cook** for our Little Blessings Preschool Program

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information and full job descriptions for these positions.

Letter to the Congregation from Michele Nelson Lui

Dear Alleluia! Lutheran Church Family,

As I prepare to say goodbye after 33 wonderful years as your Worship and Music Director and six years of leading Children's Ministry, I can't help but reflect on the profound blessings we've shared. This reminds me of the words from Psalm 118:24, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Together, we have rejoiced, worshipped, and grown. The moments we've shared in ministry, from heartfelt worship to joyous laughter in our halls, have shaped my life and faith in ways words cannot fully express.



I have deeply cherished my time teaching Music 'N Me since 1999 and leading our Little Blessings students in song. Guiding preschoolers through 5th graders in children's choirs has been an absolute joy, filled with the vibrant energy and innocence of our youngest members. Their enthusiasm and faith have been a testament to the bright future of our church.

While it saddens me to leave, it comes after facing some health concerns. Though this decision was not made lightly, I'm hopeful for what lies ahead for both myself and all of you. I am excited about the incredible ways you will continue to accomplish God's work together as a community. Your unwavering support, kindness, and perseverance have been the cornerstone of Alleluia! I will see you again!

I will carry with me memories that showcase your incredible spirit. Who could forget the moment when the frozen pipe thawed during the 9 am service in the CLC? So many of you quickly sprang into action with dry vacs, ensuring our 10:30 service happened without a hitch! And that unforgettable Christmas Eve when the fire alarm rang true—true to our Alleluia! spirit, the musicians adapted and led us joyfully into worship!

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this incredible journey. As I step aside, I wish each of you love and joy, trusting that "goodness and mercy will follow me all of my days," as the song reminds us. Continue to shine God's light inside and outside the walls of this church, and rally for Christ through every trial and triumph.

I hope you will join me on January 4th, after the one 10:00am service, to celebrate our time in ministry together.

With all my love,
Michele (Nelson) Lui



Little Blessings News!

January 2026



From the Director's Desk

Happy New Year, Little Blessings families! As we begin a new year together, January is a wonderful time for fresh starts, new routines, and renewed growth. Our classrooms are filled with excitement as children return ready to learn, explore, and strengthen friendships. In our classrooms, we are strengthening routines, growing independence, and supporting academic progress through hands-on, play-based learning.

As children expand early literacy, math, and problem-solving skills, we also focus on teaching kindness, patience, and responsibility. Through play, Bible stories, and classroom conversations, we help children understand that God has created each of them uniquely and with purpose. Our goal is to nurture confident learners who know they are loved by God and capable of great things.

As always, our goal is to nurture the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally—while providing a safe, loving environment rooted in faith. We are grateful for the partnership we share with our families and look forward to a strong and successful start to the new year.

Thank you for being a part of the Little Blessings family.

Blessings,

Shannon Webb

Little Blessings Preschool Director

Clothing Donation Request

If your child has gently used clothing in sizes **2T–5T** that they've outgrown, we would love the donation! These items help us restock extra clothes for accidents and messy moments at Little Blessings Preschool. You can send them with your child or drop them off in the Preschool Office.

Thank you for your support!



Upcoming Dates

December 22-January 2: NO SCHOOL - Christmas Break

January 5: Welcome Back!

January 12: NO SCHOOL – Teacher Work Day

January 19: NO SCHOOL – Martin Luther King Day

Bake Sale Thank You

Thank you so much for your incredible support of our recent bake sale! We are thrilled to share that, thanks to your generosity, we raised **over \$1,700** for Little Blessings Preschool.

This success would not have been possible without the many families who donated baked goods, volunteered their time, and stopped by to make a purchase. Your kindness and willingness to give truly reflect the strong, caring community we are blessed to have at Little Blessings and Alleluia! Lutheran Church.

The funds raised will go directly toward supporting our classrooms and enriching the learning experiences of our students. We are grateful for your continued partnership and for the many ways you support our school throughout the year.

Thank you again for helping make this bake sale such a success. We appreciate each of you and are so thankful to be part of such a wonderful school family.

Enrollment Open for 2026-2027

As we look ahead, we are excited to share that **registration for the 2026–2027 school year is now open**. We encourage current families to take advantage of this opportunity to secure placement and select class options that best fit your child's needs. Share our information with all your friends and neighbors looking for preschool. Please feel free to reach out with any questions as you plan for the coming year.

4055 S. Book Rd, Naperville - littleblessings.org - 630-904-9898

Little Blessings is a Ministry of Alleluia! Lutheran Church

All are welcome at Sunday Worship - Traditional: 9:00am - Contemporary: 10:30am



ALLELUIA! GAME NIGHT - Saturday, Feb. 28th

Doors open 4:00pm - Games begin at 5:00pm

- ♦ Do you love watching TV game shows?
- ♦ Have you dreamed of being a contestant on the Price is Right?
- ♦ Do you love spending time with friends and having fun?
- ♦ Want to support the Missions and Ministries of Alleluia!?



If you answered yes to any of these questions then Alleluia! Game Night is for you!

Alleluia! Game Night is a fundraising event where you and other adults (21+) can come together for some entertaining game show type games while supporting Alleluia! This is our biggest fundraiser of the year so we will need everyone's help and support to make it a success! You will be working as a team at your table and competing with the other tables.

Fill a table with 8 of your friends or family members. Your table will work together prior to the event to come up with a theme (this is optional, not a requirement). You can decorate your table and dress according to your theme. Please bring appetizers and desserts you wish to share with your table. You can make it more fun by matching these to your theme. Themes can be formal (examples: Gala theme or Wedding theme, Pajama Party theme, Sports Fan theme). Have fun with it! There will be a prize for the table with the best theme.

Doors will open at 4:00 for people to set up their tables and bid in the Silent Auction. Games will start at 5:00. We will have a 50/50 raffle, a silent auction, and a live auction. For your \$35 ticket you will receive 2 drink tickets. Or purchase an entire table for \$245. **Ticket prices increase to \$40 a ticket with no table discount on Feb. 2nd**, so order your tickets soon. We hope you can join us!

Ticket sales have begun! [CLICK HERE](#) to purchase tickets! Ticket sales end on Feb. 22nd.

Interested in helping with this event? Contact Laura Bowler at LBowler@alleluia.church

Alleluia! Game Night Needs Your HELP to Make Our 2026 Fundraiser a HUGE Success!

DO YOU HAVE . . .

- a vacation home or time share?
- tickets to a play, show, or sporting event?
- a business or have friends with a business who you could ask to donate an item or gift card?
- gift cards for restaurants or your favorite store lying around the house that you are not using?
- baskets that you could donate to the event?
- a talent to share – prepare a special meal, bake a special treat, do a fix-it project, sew, or make custom floral or craft items?
- Any interest in putting together a “themed” gift basket? Or having your small group or Bible Study do a basket as a group?

Could you call on businesses for donations? We are looking for a few people to ask local businesses for donations in person.

If you are willing to donate and/or help collect donations, please contact Laura Bowler at lbowler@alleluia.church. Thank you in advance for your support!



Women's Ministry Event!

Saturday, Jan. 24th, 8:45am-12:00pm



This half-day event at Alleluia! will feature Amy Jackson from *The Perch* in Aurora speaking to us about the importance of **REST**.

Rest is not a reward. It's a gift God wants us to open every single day. Needing to rest isn't an annoyance—it's precisely the way God made us. When we rest, we stand in God's truth that our value and worth never come from what we produce—no matter what the world may tell us. If we want to live in step with God, we have to learn to slow down and rest.



[CLICK HERE](#) to sign up. The cost is \$25.

An Acoustic Evening with Sidewalk Prophets

Thursday, April 9th at Alleluia!



Get your tickets NOW! Over 200 tickets have already been sold!

[CLICK HERE](#) -or- Scan the QR code -or- Visit alleluia.lutheran.org/events/upcoming



900 Million Streams
588,000 Monthly Listeners
Red Rocks
K-Love Cruise
Ryman Auditorium
Grand Ole Opry
National Anthem at Wrigley Field
Five #1 Christian Hits

New Member Class - Save the date!

The next New Member class will be held Wednesday, Feb. 4th, 2026. We will meet at 7:00pm in the Legacy Room. Childcare is available upon request. Reach out to Deb Bostjancic at dbostjancic@alleluia.church with any questions.



Breakfast in Bethlehem

Many thanks to all who attended and volunteered!



Christmas Celebrations at Allvelial



The Children's Choirs Christmas Party

Caroling at Sunrise Assisted Living

We sang "Happy Birthday" and blew out the candles on the cake at our Birthday Party for Jesus.



More from the Christmas Season at Alleluia!

Thank You!

Our sanctuary and other spaces were decorated so beautifully for the Christmas season and also for our Breakfast in Bethlehem event by many of our creative and talented members. Thank you so much for transforming our church for the season. You help make it so special!

THANK YOU to Wendy & John Ploense, Tawni Cramer, Alan Cook, Elaine & Roy Bynum, Jennifer Finnerty, Matt & Aaron White, Eric & Calen Walsh, Sean & Maureen Green, Stephanie Salzer, and Isa Borezka. Our wish is to thank everyone but there were so many helpers! Many thanks to **YOU** — even if we missed you by name.



Many thanks to all the families who lit candles and shared the readings throughout the season of Advent.

Thank you, Alleluia!, for your support of the Giving Tree and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. Your generosity helped to make Christmas even more special for those served by LSSI.



The Children's Choirs helped us get into the Christmas spirit by singing in worship in early December.



— Temporary PAID Position Available —

We are in need of a temporary nursery attendant for Sunday services. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and have experience in childcare. A background check is required. If interested please contact Deb Bostjancic at dbostjancic@alleluia.church for further information.



EXCITING NEWS! Alleluia! Livestream is Transitioning from Facebook to YouTube!

This wonderful step forward will **make it easier** than ever for you to find and enjoy our Sunday services, live and anytime afterward. While we've appreciated our time on Facebook, we are embracing YouTube's platform to offer:

- **Easier Access:** Videos will be simpler to locate on Sunday mornings and much more convenient to revisit after the stream ends.
- **A Growing Ministry:** This allows us to expand our digital reach and better share the good news of God with our entire community.
- **The Traditional Service Livestream Continues:** Our 9:00am traditional service is already a success on YouTube and will joyfully continue there!

How to Join Us

Start by finding us now on YouTube—our name is "Alleluia! - Naperville, IL"— you'll be notified when we go live!

We'll always post a direct link on our Facebook page to take our regular viewers straight to the YouTube stream.

We're very excited about this next chapter! We hope to see you **online or in person** as we continue to grow and receive the good news of God together!

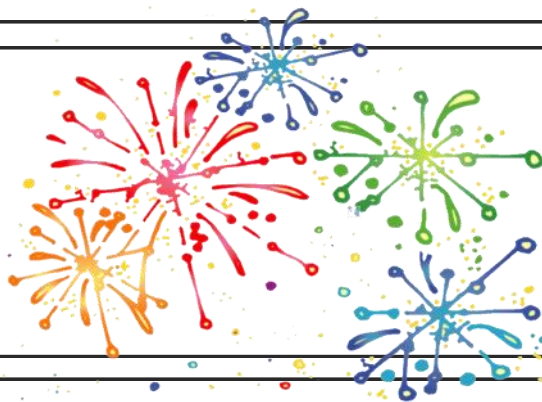


ONCE AGAIN, members have received messages claiming to come from an Alleluia! staff source, requesting that they provide gift cards for distribution to people in need of help.

Please be assured that no one from Alleluia!, pastor or staff, will ever message or email requests for any form of monetary help. If you ever question any communication coming from Alleluia! please contact the church office at 630-904-3311.



The Alleluia! Staff
Wishes You
a Happy & Healthy
New Year!



4055 S. Book Rd.
Naperville, IL 60564



Worship Schedule

All are welcome to join us
for worship!

Sunday Morning
9:00am & 10:30am

Stay Connected!

Website: www.alleluia!lutheran.org



Alleluia - Naperville, IL



Alleluia! - Naperville, IL

Church Council members may be contacted via
council@alleluia.church
or separately via email addresses below:

Laura Bowler at LBowler@alleluia.church

Nancy Hamera at NHamera@alleluia.church

Darcy Jasien at DJasien@alleluia.church

Carole Krush at CKrush@alleluia.church

Kent Nelson at KNelson@alleluia.church

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