... and you shall call his name

Jesus

for he will save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21, ESV



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church December 21, 2025

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

106 Scheid Road, Sandusky, OH 44870 (419) 625-2192 www.stjohnlcsandusky.com Sanctuary Worship 10:30 a.m. Live streamed to Facebook

Stacy Lauer-Scovanner, Pastor

December 21, 2025 Fourth Sunday in Advent

Welcome to Worship! Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

As Lutheran Christians, we believe and teach that Christ is truly present in the celebration of Holy Communion as he is God with us. Christians of all denominations are encouraged to come to the Lord's table. We commune children of any age who have received communion instruction at St. John or another Christian church. Children who have not yet received communion instruction will receive a blessing. Both red wine and white grape juice are offered to accommodate various traditions. Gluten free wafers are provided for those with dietary restrictions. Please make the pastor aware of your need.

We thank Walter Baughman for sharing his musical gifts with us today. If you are visiting today, please sign the guest register after worship. Plan to worship with us again soon.

Bell

Welcome and announcements

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God. *Please stand if you are able*

Confession And Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Long-expected God,

we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide.

We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.

Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised.

Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness.

→ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

ELW **242**

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1 Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born, behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together, he opens wide the heav'nly door and lives now inside us forever.

3 In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the world is despairing, as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring. Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder, the weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder.

2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel comes a-singing, his humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing; music to heal the broken soul and hymns of lovingkindness, the thunder of his anthems roll to shatter all hatred and blindness.

4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night, though dark the winter and cheerless, the rising sun shall crown you with light, be strong and loving and fearless. Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story; may God fill ev'ry day we share and bring us at last into glory.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Responsive Litany Hope for Those Who Are Wounded Snook/Scovanner families

Advent is a time to bind up the broken hearted.

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For past wrongs that prevent us from moving forward:

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For any bitterness that scratches our soul:

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For relationships left in decay and neglect:

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For any action that has wounded us or by which we have wounded others:

Grant that we might have the peace of Christ as we wait, the love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.

Advent Hymn

"Christ Be Our Light"
Congregation sings Verse 4

Cranberry Hymnal 715

4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold. Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. *Refrain* Refrain Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Candle Lighting

This morning, we light four candles. The **first candle** is the light of hope for those in times of waiting. The **second candle** is the light of hope for those who are wearied by the circumstances of life. The **third candle** is the light of hope for those eagerly watching for God's promised glory. The **fourth candle** is the light of hope for those who carry the wounds of life. Today we acknowledge our pain and the pain we have caused others. As the light shines, we turn to the Savior who came to rescue the lost, to help the hurting, and to bind up the broken.

Please be seated

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

A reading from Isaiah.

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (Read responsively)

- ¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
 - ² In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.
 - ³ Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
 - ⁴O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?
 - ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
 - ⁶You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
 - ⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
 - ¹⁷ Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.
 - ¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.
 - ¹⁹ Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

A reading from Romans.

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

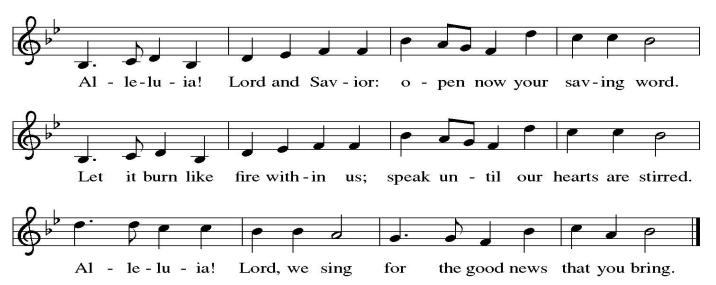
¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Please stand

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Youth Time

Sermon

Please stand if you are able

Hymn of the Day

"My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness"

ELW **251**

Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

Outside the USA: Arr. from The English Hymnal © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.

1 My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord; I sing my Savior's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace.
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim-great wonders you have done for me, and holy is your name.

3 To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure; the promise to our parents made their children will secure.

2 To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever flows.
With mighty arm you dash the proud, their scheming hearts expose.
The ruthless you have cast aside, the lowly throned instead; the hungry filled with all good things, the rich sent off unfed.

Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the Word, and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all adored.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.*

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the people:

Response: God of grace, hear our prayer.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please be seated

Choir Offering

"Advent Hymn" Don Besig

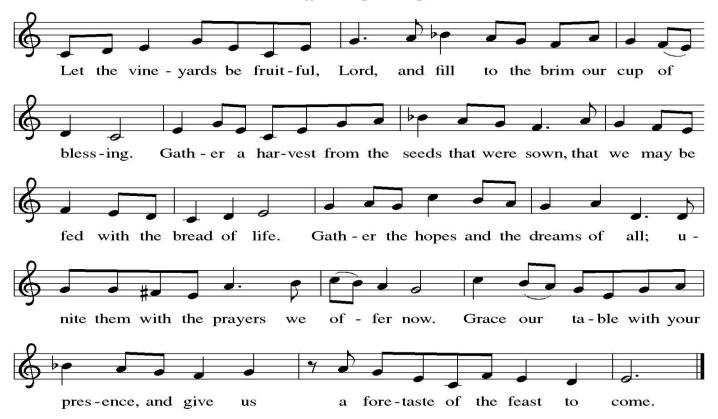
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Please stand if you are able

Offering

^{*}Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful Offering Song



Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980 Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923 Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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Offering Prayer

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Preface

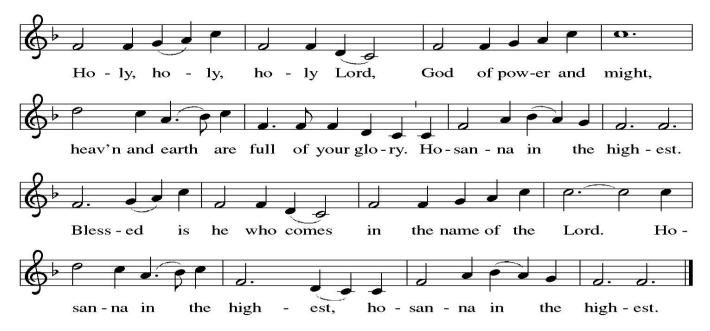
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

Holy, Holy, Holy



Thanksgiving at the Table

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Invitation to Communion

Taste and see that the Lord is good. *Please be seated*

Communion Song



Distribution Hymn

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Text © 1997 Augsburg Fortress

ELW **257**

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Refrain Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
- 4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Refrain
- 2 O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh: in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way. Refrain
- 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai's height in ancient times you gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe. Refrain

5 O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Refrain

7 O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one: refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new. Refrain 6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. Refrain

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Refrain

Distribution Hymn

"Love Has Come"

ELW **292**

Text © 1996 Living the Natural Way, admin. Music Services, Brentwood, TN

1 Love has come--a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

3 Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Love is Jesus within and among us. *Please stand if you are able* 2 Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers; Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas; Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Post Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His care.

Amen

Prayer After Communion

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Amen

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748 Music: English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

3 No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,

far as, far as the curse is found.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord! Thanks be to God.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

Postlude Walter Baughman

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> St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is: "A Family of Disciples, Faithfully Making Christ Known" And a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

PEOPLE OF ST. JOHN'S, MINISTERS

Stacy Lauer-Scovanner, Pastor

Pastor Stacy's Day Off – Friday

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Cell: 419-680-0358

Mrs. Sandy Thompson, Admin.

419-625-2192

E-mail: Sandy8110@gmail.com

Organist: Nathan Samsa Lay Reader: Sandy Thompson

Usher: Ray Witt Communion Assistant: Sandy Thompson Audio/Visual Tech.: Brandon Alt Assisting Minister:

Website: www.stjohnlcsandusky.com Attendance: Dec. 14 -

Like us on Facebook: St. John's Lutheran Church, Sandusky

2025: The Year of Rest Memory Verse

"Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live..." (Isaiah 55:3a).

Communion Clean-up today: Sue & Lynn Schlessman

Dec.24 – Set-up – Elizabeth Libben Cleanup – Elizabeth

28 - Joint Worship at Zion Huron, 9:00 am

Thank you for your willingness to help with this important ministry. If you would like to help, please see Joleen Dillender or Sandy Thompson.

Christmas Worship Opportunities:

Christmas Eve: Christmas Eve worship will be held on Wednesday, December 24th. Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with worship service at **5:00 pm.** The service will feature both Holy Communion and candlelight. Spread the word; invite family and friends to come for Christmas Eve worship!

Sunday, December 28: Lessons and Carols will be a Joint Worship at Zion Lutheran Church, Huron at **9:00 am**. No worship at St. John's.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THESE SPECIAL WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO PREPARE YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD!

Pastor Stacy on vacation: Pastor will be on vacation beginning December 29th through January 5th. Please contact the church office at 419-625-2192 for emergency pastoral needs.

New Ministry Lists are posted on the bulletin board for the first quarter of 2025. If you are looking for an opportunity to help with ushering, lay reading, help serve

communion or help with streaming our worship, see all the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board.

Annual Meeting/Mark your calendars: St. John's 2025 Annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026 after worship.

Teams and Committees: Team/committee reports for the 2025 annual congregational booklet will be due by January 11th to Sandy Thompson. Please send your report in a Word doc to sandy8110@gmail.com or mail to the church at 106 Scheid Rd Sandusky, OH 44870 attention Sandy Thompson

Assisting Ministers! Our order of worship leaves space for people to assist in leading worship. Our teenagers are brave and are willing to help us try out this new role over the next few weeks. The assisting minister leads the prayers, among other things. If you would like to be an assisting minister, please let Pastor Stacy or Sandy know.

One Call Now: We are working on a program that will automatically call and text you to let you know when something is happening at St John's. The texts won't be too often, but will alert us to prayer requests, upcoming events, and worship cancellations due to weather. To begin the process, please text the word ALERT to 22300. This will allow us to text you when there is something to share. Thank you!

2026 Calendars: Have you received a 2026 calendar or an abundance of calendars that you don't need? Please bring in your 2026 calendar and place in the basket in the back of the sanctuary and they will be taken to nursing homes. Thank you.

Weekly Listening Plan

December 2025 Weekly Listening "LasPosadas"

Week 4 – "Enter, holy pilgrims, receive this humble dwelling, for though it is poor, I give it to you from my heart!"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCCTS92JMsI

- 1. Read and reflect on the scripture that inspired the song. Luke 2:1-7
- 2. Explore weekly practices connected to the lyrics throughout your week.
- 3. Christmas is not just a date on the calendar; it's a celebration of God's tangible love, who takes on the most fragile human form: a vulnerable baby. This demonstrates that when you love, you make yourself vulnerable. God isn't looking for a "perfect place"; He's looking for a heart willing to love. What does love mean to you? How

do you show it to your family? How do you show it to your friends? How do you show it to strangers and foreigners?

ST. JOHN'S CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 21ST THRU JANUARY 4TH

| Sunday, Dec. 21 | 9:00 am 9:15 am 10:30 am | Study with Lynn, Zion Christian Center Youth Christmas Party in Upper Room Worship |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Wednesday, Dec. 24 | 5:00 pm | Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship |
| December 25 | | MERRY CHRISTMAS |
| Sunday, Dec. 28 | 9:00 am | Joint Worship at Zion Lutheran Huron No worship at St. John's. |
| Thursday, January 1 | | A BLESSED NEW YEAR! |
| Sunday, January 4 | 9:15 am 10:30 am | Study with Lynn in the Upper Room Worship |

We thank all the following members who furnished poinsettias to beautify our sanctuary this Christmas season:

Toni Nossaman in loving memory of my parents and Mr. & Mrs. Manuel Nossaman.

Kathy Strayer in loving memory of Bob and our parents and sister-in-law, Barb.

Paul and Laura Knott in loving memory of loved ones

Lynn and Sue Schlessman in loving memory of our parents.

Chuck and Sandy Thompson in loving memory of our parents Arden and Ruth Bruns and Charles and Pearl Thompson and in honor of our children and grandchildren.

Peg Kingsley in loving memory of Chuck.

Doreen Ross in loving memory of Mark, Dean and Mom and Dad.

Jim Kluding and Kathleen Shuck in loving memory of our parents.

Bonny Ambos in loving memory of husband, Dale, son, Mike and grandson, Stone.

Ann Voight in loving memory David Voight Jr.

Jon and Trudi Baaske in loving memory of our parents, Wayne & Joyce Baaske and Ernest and Phyllis O'Hara.

Mike and Pat Babiuch in loving memory of our parents.

Nathan and Christine Samsa in loving memory of Susan Samsa and in honor of Paul Samsa, and Jim and Barbara Candea.

Ruggles family in loving memory of Sharen Smith, Chuck Ruggles III and loved ones. In honor of Ray Smith and Barb Ruggles.

Brandon Alt in loving memory of Patricia Alt, Ernie and Carol Laughlin.Ray Smith in loving memory of Sharen Smith.Carolyn Steinfeldt in loving memory of William Steinfeldt.