

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION + THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 14, 2025 + 8:30 A.M.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH + NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA



Welcome to worship at St. John's!

We especially welcome all who are visiting this morning!

*All are invited to **sign the welcome sheets** in the black folders at the end of the pews.*

*Please pass them to the center and then back
so you can greet those worshipping around you.
Ushers will gather these following worship.*

*In the red hymnal (Evangelical Lutheran Worship), or purple hymnal
(All Creation Sings), hymn numbers are at the top of the page in the hymn section,
and page numbers are at the bottom of the page in the front section.*

An asterisk () invites you to stand as you are able.*

P Pastor, **L** Leader (Assisting Minister), **C** Congregation

Children are welcome to participate throughout our
worship service, including at Holy Communion.

*Parents, please assist children when they come forward for communion
to extend their hands if they are to receive the bread and wine.*

Children's Bibles and activity bags
*are available at both entrances to the Sanctuary
and scribble cards are available in the pews.*

*Hearing assistance devices are available outside the Sanctuary or from an usher.
For those with hearing aids, the Sanctuary is equipped with a hearing loop.*

Large print bulletins and hymns are available for worship services.



*St. John's Lutheran Church is a community grounded in the promise of God's grace
and called to extend Christ's welcome to all people. Every day, Christ meets us all just as
we are, extending love to people of every age, race or ethnicity, physical appearance,
sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, marital or
relationship status, economic circumstance, educational achievement,
political affiliation, or religious background.*

*While we do not always agree, we choose to walk and grow in faith together,
believing that God creates diversity, and loves and welcomes us.*

We warmly welcome you here.

GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Prelude — *Three About John:*

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

Franklin Ashdown

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

John Ferguson

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

Robert Hobby

Welcome and Announcements

***Confession and Forgiveness**

Front of ELW hymnal, page 94

***Gathering Hymn** — ELW No. 264

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

***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.

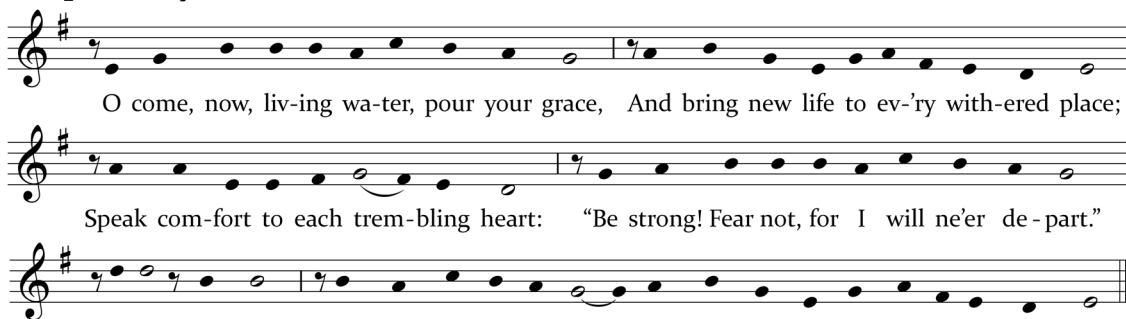
***Prayer of the Day and Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

☐ Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises.

☑ Amen.

***Response Hymn — “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

VENI, EMMANUEL



O come, now, liv-ing wa-ter, pour your grace, And bring new life to ev-'ry with-ered place;
Speak com-fort to each trem-bling heart: “Be strong! Fear not, for I will ne'er de-part.”
Re-joice, re-joice! Take heart and do not fear, God's cho-sen one, Em-man-u-el, draws near

Text: Barbara Lundblad, 2013. Used with permission. Music: French processional

HEARING GOD'S WORD

First Reading — Isaiah 35:1-10

Pew Bible, page 578

After the reading:

- ☐ The word of the Lord.
- ☒ Thanks be to God.

Psalmody — Psalm 146:5-10

Antiphon: Kevin Vogt, *St. Olaf Morning Prayer*

Antiphon: As morning breaks I look to you, O God, to be my strength this day. Alleluia.



- ⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob ¹for their help,
whose hope is in the ¹LORD their God;
⁶who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that ¹is in them;
who keeps promis- ¹es forever;
⁷**who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to ¹those who hunger.**
The LORD sets the ¹captive free.
⁸**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind and lifts up those**
who ¹are bowed down;
the LORD ¹loves the righteous.
⁹The LORD cares ¹for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way ¹of the wicked.
¹⁰The LORD shall ¹reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. ¹Hallelujah! *Antiphon*

Second Reading — James 5:7-10

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Text: Taizé Community; Music: Jacques Berthier © 1994 Les Presses de Taizé, admin. GIA Publications

*Gospel — Matthew 11:2-11

Spark Story Bible, page 234

P The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 11th chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn of the Day — ELW No. 250

“Blessed Be the God of Israel”

*Advent Credo

Daniel Berrigan, 1921–2016

- P** It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss—
- A** **This is true: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”** (John 3:16)
- P** It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction—
- A** **This is true: “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”** (John 10:10b)
- P** It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever—
- A** **This is true: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, his name shall be called Wonderful Councilor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”** (Isaiah 9:6)
- P** So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope.
Let us see visions of love and peace and justice.
Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage:
Jesus Christ—the life of the world.
- A** **Amen.**

*Prayers of Intercession

After each petition:

- L** Lord, in your mercy,
- G** hear our prayer.

*Peace

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

You are invited to share God's peace with those around you.

Offering of Our Gifts

Music at the Offering

"Let Your Heart Speak Music"

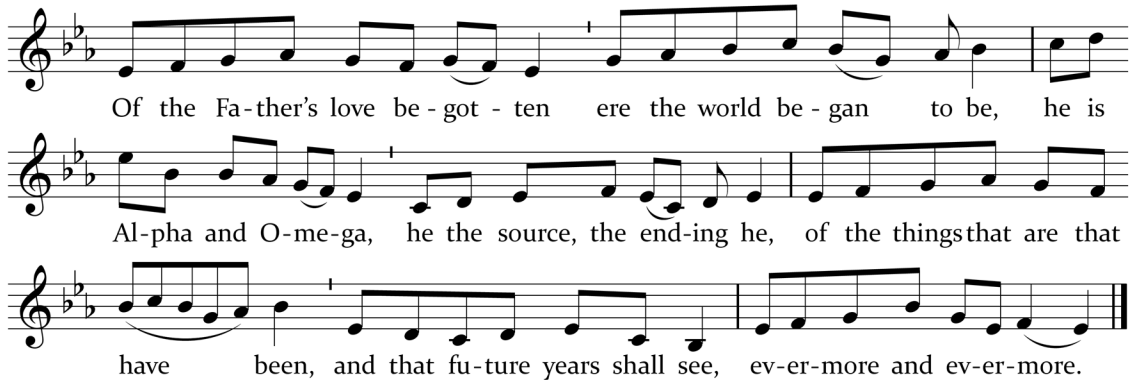
Jocelyn Hagen

Kneel amid the cattle and the shepherds poor; with tender lambs and angels tremble and adore. Lo, within the manger lies the Undeiled, small and curled and rosy as any newborn child. He, the swaddled promise of the ancient law, slumbers in a stable on a bed of straw! Be humble here with Joseph, meek with Mary's grace, and let your rapture burgeon in this hallowed place; let your heart speak music though your lips be dumb . . . here is Love, unmeasured! Here is heaven come!

– Florence Hynes Willette

St. John's Chorale

*Offering Hymn — "Of the Father's Love Begotten" stanza 1 DIVINUM MYSTERIUM



Of the Fa-ther's love be - got - ten ere the world be - gan to be, he is
Al-pha and O-me-ga, he the source, the end-ing he, of the things that are that
have been, and that fu-ture years shall see, ev-er-more and ev-er-more.

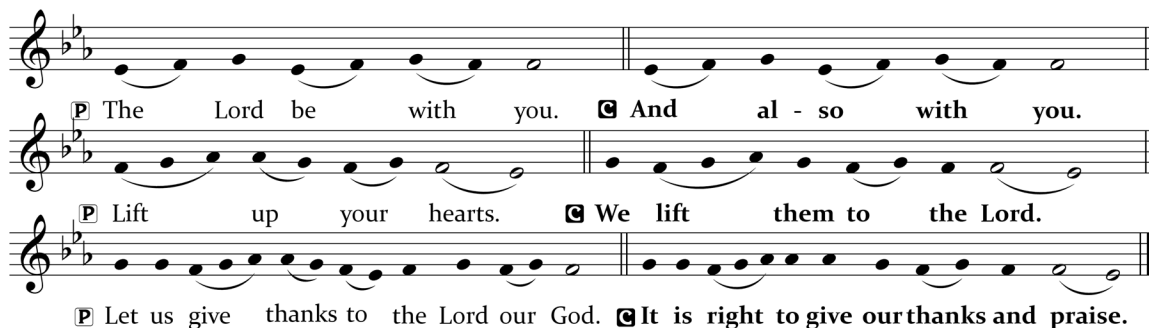
*Offering Prayer

L Let us pray.

C Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.

SHARING THE LORD'S SUPPER

*Great Thanksgiving



P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **C** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might, heav-en and

earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na, ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Words of Institution

*The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Communion will be received standing at stations in the front of sanctuary; ushers will direct you forward. **Gluten-free wafers** are available in the center. After you have been served the bread you will be offered wine or grape juice. The grape juice is white and is located in the center of the tray. **If you are unable to come forward, let an usher know, and communion will be brought to you.**

Music during Communion

“Lamb of God”

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;

grant us peace, grant us peace.

Anthem — “Is It Far to Bethlem City?”

Giovanni Gastoldi, 1591

Is it far to Bethlem city? Is the way lit by a bright star? Has the night revealed its mystery? Let us run to find the stable, let us boldly knock and enter, lay our gifts upon the table. And if we rock the manger, we'll guard the babe from danger. May we touch the gentle oxen? May we pull the curly sheep wool? May we hear the shepherds' piping? See, the sky with joy is ringing, a new star over manger shining, and the world hears angels singing. Three kings approach the maiden, with gold and incense laden.

– Francis J. Guentner

Hymn — ELW No. 867

“In Thee Is Gladness”

*Post-Communion Blessing

***Sending of Communion to the Sick and Homebound**

***Prayer after Communion**

- ℣ God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.
- ☞ Amen.

DEPARTING TO SERVE GOD’S WORLD

***Blessing**

Response:

☞ Amen.

***Sending Hymn** — ELW No. 248

“People, Look East”

***Dismissal**

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

Postlude — on BESANÇON

Kristina Langlois



Lectionary Readings for Next Week (December 21):

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16 † Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 † Romans 1:1-7 † Matthew 1:18-25

SERVING AT ST. JOHN'S TODAY:

Preaching	Pastor Pam Fickenschner
Presiding	Pastor Jonathan Davis
Assisting Minister	Eden Kaiser
Organist	Nathan Proctor
Choir	St. John's Chorale
Livestream	Rob Nutt, Dave Zdenek
Communion Prep	Angie Gehring
Communion Cleanup	Beth, Charlotte, and Kip Cox
Greeters	Judy Smith
Coffee Service	TBD
Treats	Rhonda Reece
Counters	David Becker, Brenda Bultman, David Nitz
Ushers	Dan Franklin, Jon and Cindy McBroom, Don Sahling, Dean Schoeb



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover art by John Maakestad based on Isaiah 35.

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Announcements

Additional announcements can be found in the weekly E-Voice.

Today's Radio Broadcast is given by friends of St. John's. Sunday services are broadcast on KYMN Radio 1080AM/95.1FM at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays. If you would like to sponsor a broadcast (cost is \$160), contact the church office at office@StJohnsNorthfield.org or 507-645-4429. Next available dates: December 21 & 28.

Today's Altar Flowers are given in memory of Mary Downing, grandmother of Micah, Jude, Solomon, and Caleb Hassanally. Her unconditional love was a gift and her deep faith a blessing.

St. John's Children's Christmas Program is happening today at the 10:45 a.m. worship service.

Advent Vespers

Wednesdays, December 17

6:15–6:45 p.m., Sanctuary

We gather for a quiet service of poetry and prayer. Join us for 30 minutes in the Sanctuary to let the waiting and hope of the season sink in.

Pub Theology: Christmas, Angels, and Fear

December 15, 6:00–7:30 p.m., Flaherty's Northfield Lanes

It's easy to miss, but fear is very much part of the Christmas story. Where might there be fear in the Christmas story we are about to step into? And what's your relationship with fear? In her blog post, "*Anatomy of Fear*," Rev. Cameron Trimble speaks to the societal and spiritual damage fear can do to a person and a people. Please read Trimble's article in preparation (copies are available at the Welcome Desk).

St. John's Community Christmas Day Dinner

December 25, 11:15 a.m.–1:30 p.m., St. John's Hall

We are excited to be hosting this wonderful holiday meal to all, but need volunteers and food donations to make it a success! Paper sign-ups are available in the Commons and will continue until all needs are met. Sign-up is also available on the church website in CCB listed in the Group "Christmas Dinner 2025." You can also sign up by contacting Angie Gehring at 507-645-4429 or sharedministry@StJohnsNorthfield.org.

Poinsettia Orders

The Chancel Guild will be taking orders for poinsettias again this year. The flowers will be used to decorate the church for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. If you would like to order a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone or in celebration of Christmas, the order form is available in the Commons, [online](#), or by scanning the QR code. The last day to place your order is Wednesday, Dec. 17.



Announcements (continued)

Annual Meeting Reports

For all those who are submitting information for the Annual Report, please turn in your report by Friday, December 19, and mark your calendar for the annual meeting on Sunday, January 25. (Watch future publications for more details regarding the annual meeting.)

Year-End Giving

Year-end giving typically provides an outsize portion of St. John's annual budget. If you have not yet been able to contribute in 2025 and can at this time, your gifts to our operating funds will be much appreciated! Mailed checks need to be postmarked by December 31. Online gifts can be given by December 26 at www.StJohnsNorthfield.org. Thank you!

Greeters Are Needed for the Christmas Services

Greeting those who come through our doors on Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning not only adds to the welcoming and celebratory atmosphere of this holy occasion, but also provides important guidance for visitors who may be unfamiliar with where things are located, such as the Sanctuary, coat racks, bathrooms, nursery, etc. No training is required to be a greeter. Simply arrive at least 30 minutes prior to worship, provide a friendly greeting, hold the door for someone who could use an extra hand, and be a building guide as needed. Consider serving in this way for the worship you are planning to attend. Family and friends are welcome to join you—the more the merrier! Sign-ups are available in the Commons. Thank you!

LOFTY—Lights Out for the Youth

Sunday, December 21. 6:00–7:00 p.m.

On Sunday, December 21, the Northfield community is invited to raise awareness of youth housing insecurity. You're invited to turn out your lights from 6–7 p.m., and to donate to a fund that will house a young person at the Wallflower House for a year. This project received initial funding from the St. John's Foundation. Faith leaders will be hosting a brief moment of silence and prayer at Bridge Square at 6:00 p.m. when the lights will be turned off downtown. For more information and to donate, visit www.lightsoutfortheyouth.org or scan the QR Code.



Learning and Fellowship Between Services

This Week (December 14)

Coffee and Fellowship, St. John's Hall

Sunday School: Preschool–Grade 5 (9:45–10:30 a.m., Lower Level)

Sunday Youth Group: Grades 6–12 (9:45–10:30 a.m., Youth Room)

Next Week (December 21)

Coffee and Fellowship, St. John's Hall

Prayer Requests

We are called to remember one another in prayer. The church office has been made aware of the following persons for whom we pray today. This list is also for your use this week.

Healing and Support

Those in the hospital or in need of healing

Bob Flaten, Fred Huemoeller, Dagfinn Moe

Those mourning the loss of a loved one

Family of Mary Downing (Grandmother of Micah, Jude, Solomon, and Caleb Hassanally)

Those with ongoing health concerns

David Halsor, Greta Matzner-Gore, Dolores Nelson, David Norman,
Alice Rickert, Ruth Smestad Anglin, Lori Skoglund, Ingrid Alberding,
Darlene Schloeder (mother of April Fitzloff), Glen Norgaard (father of Brett Norgaard)

All who are homebound, including

Janice Helgeson, Carol Johnson

Involved in the mission of the church who have ties to St. John's

The Savior (El Salvador) Lutheran Church in El Cocuy, Colombia;
Iambi Lutheran Church in Iambi, Tanzania; Katie Larson, ELCA missionary in Colombia

Prayer Requests / Stephen Ministry Requests

Stephen Ministry Requests

Contact one of the pastors at 507-645-4429.

Prayer Chain Requests

Contact Mary Cisar at 507-663-1097 or macisar@gmail.com, or contact a pastor.



**Served from 5:15–6:15 p.m.
in St. John's Hall**

Menu for Wednesday, December 17:
Pizza Burgers

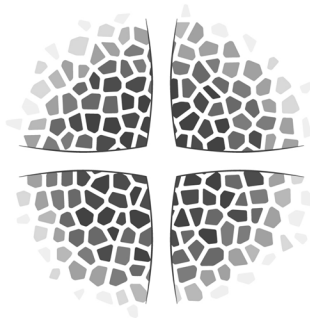
All are welcome!

*Wednesday Meals are made and served completely by people donating their time and talents.
Dessert contributions are always welcome and needed!*

This Week At-a-Glance

*The full calendar of events and building usage can be accessed
on our website at www.StJohnsNorthfield.org.*

Monday, Dec. 15	9:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Monday Exercise Class, Fellowship Hall Lunchtime Text Study via Zoom Pub Theology, Flaherty's Northfield Lanes
Tuesday, Dec. 16	7:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Tai Chi Class, Fellowship Hall S.A.I.L. Exercise Class, Fellowship Hall Staff Meeting, Fireside Room Worship Planning for Staff, Fireside Room Laura Baker Services - Holiday Party, St. John's Hall Stephen Ministers, Fireside Room Church Council, Undercroft NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness), Youth Room
Wednesday, Dec. 17	2:00 p.m. 3:45 p.m. 5:15 p.m. 5:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Nominating Committee, Fireside Room Afterschool Programming (Kindergarten-Grade 5), St. John's Wednesday Night Meal, St. John's Hall Wellspring Craft & Conversation, Fireside Room Advent Vespers, Sanctuary Confirmation (Grades 6-8) High School Youth Group (Grades 9-12) Politics & Faith Discussion Group, St. John's Library St. John's Chorale, Room 209
Thursday, Dec. 18	7:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 1:30 p.m. 5:30 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Tai Chi Class, Fellowship Hall Quilting & Bandage Rolling, Fellowship Hall Executive Committee via Zoom Thursday Night Big Book Group, Youth Room Rejoice Ringers, Sanctuary
Friday, Dec. 19	9:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	S.A.I.L. Exercise Class, Fellowship Hall NAMI Support Group, Fireside Room
Saturday, Dec. 20		No Scheduled Activities - Building Closed
Sunday, Dec. 21	8:30 a.m. 10:45 a.m.	Worship / Nursery, Sanctuary <i>(For the schedule between services, please see page 13)</i> Worship / Nursery, Sanctuary



St. John's
ELCA NORTHFIELD • MN

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Pam Fickenschner, *Senior Pastor*
Jonathan Davis, *Associate Pastor*
Julie Brehmer, *Director of Children's Ministry*
Steve Harner, *Facility Manager*
Leah H. Garlie, *Office Manager / Finance Manager*
Angie Gehring, *Shared Ministry Coordinator*
Sally Lindell, *Parish Nurse*
Arielle Loy, *Alleluia Choir Director and Early Childhood Specialist*
Kristin Partlo, *Director of Ministry with Youth & Families*
Nathan Proctor, *Organist and Director of Worship, Music & Arts*
Arturo Rosas, *Custodial Associate*
David Sims, *Director of Rejoice Rings*

Call the church office or check the website for a complete listing of staff emails.