

The December 2023 Monthly Newsletter of Community of Joy Lutheran Church

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Worship with Us this Christmas Season

December 17th

Children's Christmas Choir

Christmas Eve Services

5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Please join us for cookies and refreshments between the services



There will be no 10AM Sunday worship service on Christmas Eve.

Bearing Christ's Light Amidst the Darkness

In a few weeks we will hold Christmas Eve services, and our worship will culminate in the singing of *Silent Night* as we each hold candles and become literal bearers of light. Perhaps this tradition is so beloved because it physically enacts the very message of Christmas: *That we are surrounded by darkness, but the light of God's universal love shines in the darkness. And that because this universal love was born in Jesus, it can also be born in each of us.*

In this season we of course remember that the light of Christ first appeared over 2000 years ago in the place we now call Israel and Palestine. But as we have all likely gathered, recent weeks have been a time of great darkness for the Holy Land. War has erupted once again, and we all now watch in horror as one cycle of violence begets the next one.

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People Page

December Birthdays

7th: Paul Anderson
 11th: Meghan Lyman
 12th: Cameron Sillence
 16th: Tom Ball
 Phil Reu
 21st: Cal Lovell

Wedding Anniversaries in December



14th: Lee & Jill Glauvitz (11 yrs.)
 Pelly & Debbie Hutton (39 yrs.)
 19th: Ronald & Mary Bencke (62 yrs.)
 29th: Paul & Jackie Anderson (52 yrs.)



This past month we prayed for:

Donna Doles
 Dick & Peg Tool
 Connie White (Stephanie's mom)
 Joan Bouty, Louise Scott
 Warren Sullivan
 Steve Gamrath
 Paul & Jackie Anderson
 Norma Gruber
 Nance Crow
 Bill & Jean Potabi
 Paul Blott
 Sheldon Miller (11/7)
 Elvey Walker (11/12)
 Geneva Ellis (11/12)
 Eloise Spradley (11/12)
 Monika & Jasmine Brown (11/12)

Sharon Christenson (11/12)
 Sandra Candelaria (11/12)
 The Vasylenko family (11/13)
 Lucien Remy (11/13)
 Amari (11/19)
 Sarah Dutton (11/27)
 Melissa Eckelbarger (11/27)
 Marty Barton (11/27)
 Peggy & Bob Walls (11/27)
 Carol Rushing Carr (11/30)
 Ruck North (11/30)
 Sheila Oneill (11/30)

If you know of a person or a situation that you would like included in our prayer list, please email them to Earlene (earlene@communityofjoy.com).

COMMUNITY OF JOY

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Pastor:

Pr. Paul Schick
pastorpaul@communityofjoy.com

Church Administrator:

Earlene Shroyer earlene@communityofjoy.com

Worship Leader:

Jon Shodean jon@communityofjoy.com

Treasurer: Dick Tool, Greg Quintana

Bookkeeper: Earlene Shroyer

Proofreader: Jean Potabi

Congregation Council

Lee Glauvitz—President
 Greg Quintana—Vice President
 Karen Lenoski—Secretary
 Sandy Edwards
 Bill Kostel
 Diane Parham

Ministries Leads

- + **Altar Guild:** Debbie Sciortino
- + **Confirmation:** Pr. Paul Schick
- + **F.E.A.S.T.:** Deborah Williams
- + **Fellowship:** Neal Shotwell
- + **Joyful Hearts Women's Ministry:**
Sandy Edwards
- + **Memorial Committee:** Bill Potabi
- + **Sunday School:** Shaila Shodean
- + **Tech Ministry Leader:** Kristen Sillence
- + **Beer Buddies:** Tony Sciortino

For any reports or information, contact the appropriate person listed above

Together in Mission

Camino de Vida—Albuquerque
 Iglesia Cristo Rey—El Paso, TX

Announcements

Help Us End the Year in the Black!

Thank you for all of your generosity over the last year and for the special gifts that came in in response to our recent Stewardship letter. We appreciate your continued generosity as we look to close our deficit by the end of the year.

SERMON ON THE AMOUNTS

Giving for Year through October 31, 2023

Giving	Actual	Budget	more/(less) than Budget
Programs:	\$164,521.00	\$170,275.00	(\$5,997.00)
Building:	\$44,968.00	\$44,500.00	\$21.00
Both Funds:	\$208,799.00	\$214,775.00	(\$5,976.00)

Thank you for your faithful financial stewardship.



Adult Education in December

You are invited to study together the strange Advent season scripture readings with **Pastor Brad Brauer** on **Sundays Dec. 3, 10, and 17.**

Mark's strange Advent moves us backwards in time from the end-times: Jesus' Second Coming, to his opening preaching in 30 AD and John the Baptizer's prior mission, to the beginning "time-before-time" as we hear the John 1 Prologue about Jesus the Eternal Word. The epistle readings are often scary! How shall we sit before end-times judgement, Jesus coming as Lord? The only familiar prophecy is Isaiah 40! What's going on in Mark's very old Advent lectionary for Sunday worship?

Join us around the Bible study table to discuss these themes on Sundays on Dec. 3, 10, and 17.

Men Alive!

Men Alive! will be meeting on the second Saturday (**December 9th**) at 8:30a.m. We will be studying Chapter 17 of Matthew. As is our custom, we will start with a hearty breakfast and lively discussions.

Please contact Charles Fiedler at cwfiedler@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Announcements

New Member Sunday—December 10, 2023

We are once again welcoming in new members!

If you would like to join our church, please let us know!

Following worship we are holding a ***pizza party reception***.

We invite all members to join us for the party and will hold an orientation following the meal.

Employee Appreciation Sunday - December 10th

In celebration of our fantastic staff, we invite you to send in contributions for our holiday bonuses to **Earlene Shroyer** and **Jon Shodean**. On **December 10th**, we will be recognizing them in worship, so please send in your gifts ASAP and make checks out to "Community of Joy".

Please generously show your appreciation to these wonderful COJ employees and commend them on the great work they do for us throughout the year. If you have any questions about this, please see a member of Council.



Employee
Appreciation
Day

Beer Buddies

Due to the holidays, Beer Buddies is cancelled for December. May your Christmas be joyous!

We will resume meetings in the spring.



December FEAST

Date: December 13th (6-7:30 pm)

Potluck: A Holiday Family Favorite (begins at 6 pm)

**Activity: Bonfire & S'mores or Christmas movie
(depending on the weather)**

Worship News



The Baptism of Noah and Malaika Shodean



Thank you to Beer Buddies for the purchase of our new Paschal candle!

Elaine Gauden made these blankets for two of our veterans, Sal Cano and Erik Schei



Worship News

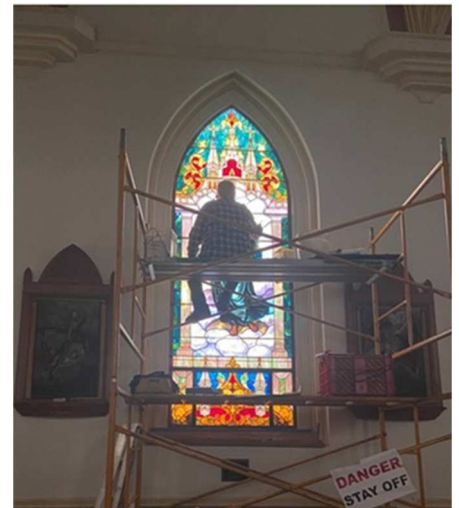
Updates on the Window and A Behind the Scenes with the Artist

The Process: We are excited to share that work on our new window continues at Watkins Stained Glass Studio. The artist, Phil Watkins, has completed the cartoon of the window, which is the exact-to-scale sketch (shown to the right) that will be used as the template for the glass cuttings. This means that he is now in the glass selection stage of the process, whereby he experiments with various fine glass samples to find the most beautiful color combinations for each window segment. Below is a picture of the lighted surface that is used to sample these glass samples.



The Timeline: The window team recently spoke with Phil's wife, Jane, about what kind of timeline we should expect. While it is never possible in life to guarantee an exact deadline, Jane shared that they are optimistic that the project can be completed by around Pentecost Sunday, May 19th 2024.

The Legacy: The heritage of crafting beautiful stained glass windows goes back generations in the Watkins family. In fact, alongside our project, Phil has also been restoring some windows (shown to the right) that were constructed and installed by his own grandfather in 1909. This amazing multigeneration connection to a century-old window goes to show the durable legacy that these windows have to offer. It is inspiring to consider how these windows will bless not only us, but many others in generations to come.



The Fellowship Team is looking for members!



The kitchen at COJ is the heart of many joyous occasions, from Sunday refreshments to holidays, special events, and celebrations of all types.

We need your help. If you have a passion for cooking, serving, meeting new people, or just for lending a helping hand, we invite you to volunteer. Your commitment no matter how big or small will be greatly appreciated.

There is a sign up sheet on the table outside the Sanctuary.

Please take a look at it and see if there is an area where you could help the Fellowship Team.

Children & Youth Ministry

Sunday School Teachers Needed!



We are so thankful for the faith we are nurturing through our Sunday School program, however we are in need of more teachers. The good news is that the curriculum is already provided and you do not have to be a parent to help out. If you are wondering if this opportunity might be a good fit for you, please contact Shaila Shodean or the office. We would be happy to chat and provide you with training.



Sunday School is on break: Due to Children's Christmas Choir practice, Sunday School lessons will be on break until the new year. More info to come on these dates.

Practices for Children's Christmas Choir: For the first two Sundays in December, kids can join us after worship for Christmas Choir practice. An extra Saturday practice may also be scheduled—TBD.



Joyful Hearts Women's Ministry



**Joyful Hearts will meet on Saturday,
December 9th at 10:00am**

Joyful Hearts News

At the November meeting, 38 "Blessing Bags" were created for members of the congregation to hand out to those in need.

Joyful Hearts will hold a short meeting on **Saturday, December 9th**, and then have a Christmas cookie exchange. The short meeting will include voting in the 2024 officers: **Sandy Edwards**, President; **Barbara Reeves**, Vice-President; **Pat Shodean** and **Paula Thomas**, co-Secretaries; and **Suzanne Waite**, Treasurer.

Christmas Cookie Exchange



The cookie exchange is open to ALL COJ members. We ask that you bring 3 dozen cookies, you take two dozen home, and that will leave one dozen each to freeze for Christmas Eve refreshments. If you want to bring your recipe(s), that will be appreciated! Cookie boxes will be available for your treats.



Joyful Hearts collects toiletries for Albuquerque HealthCare for the Homeless

Joyful Hearts collects toiletries for *Albuquerque HealthCare for the Homeless* year round. We have a Collection Bin in the Fellowship Room for your donations. The homeless population is growing and there is always a great need for these items. If you travel, save the hotel *travel size toiletries. They can also be purchased at any store that has a *travel size section in their pharmacy area. Below is a list of needed items. You can go to <https://www.abqhch.org> to learn more about this worthwhile organization. Thank you for your anticipated generosity.



- ◇ **Shaving supplies**
- ◇ **Deodorants (male and female)**
- ◇ **Lip balm**
- ◇ **Sunscreen**
- ◇ **Travel size tissues**
- ◇ **Toothbrushes/toothpaste**
- ◇ **Band-Aids**

*We package these items into hygiene kits and the small size is needed to fit into the gallon Ziplock bag. **No mouthwash please.** If you have any questions, please contact Debbie at: dsciortino.rr@gmail.com

Joyful Hearts Women's Ministry



Fleece Navidad



Albuquerque
HEALTHCARE
for the homeless



On Saturday, November 18th, twenty COJ men and women gathered at 9am to assemble hat and scarf sets for Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless. We made a production line with knot tie-ers, fleece snippers and pom-pom makers. 150 fleece hat and scarf sets were made before noon.

A big THANK YOU to all who helped by; donating 75 yards of fleece, cutting fleece and assembling for a successful collection drive. We will deliver the hat and scarf sets, gloves, toiletries, art supplies and coffee very soon.



Our Church

Community of Joy Memorial Fund

The Memorial Fund is used to make needed repairs, updates, replacements or improvements that are beyond what is included in the annual budget. This year the Memorial Committee used this Fund to address some issues and make purchases that have been positive additions to our Community of Joy building by increasing accessibility and convenience. These items have included the **automatic door openers**, **sound baffles** in the sanctuary, a **storage shed**, **adjustable office desks** and a **video conferencing system** to use with Zoom.

Based on feedback and comments from church members, these purchases and installations have been favorably received. There may be additional items to be addressed when there is a need or request and funds are available.



The Memorial Fund comes from donations that people have made to honor or memorialize a spouse, parent, grandchild, sibling or any person who is of special importance to them. The names of the special person and the donor are recorded in the Memorial Book maintained by the Church Administrator, Earlene Shroyer. This book is available for viewing inside the church entrance.

Thank you for your support, thoughtfulness and giving to this important fund. If you have comments or ideas, you can bring them to anyone of the following committee members; **Bill Potabi**, **Sandy Edwards**, **Pat Shodean**, **Earlene Shroyer** or **Kristen Silence**.



We recently received gifts to the COJ Memorial Fund in memory of **Ben Huckleby**.

We thank **Debra Jelks** for her generous and gracious gift to our Memorial fund.

THANK YOU TO OUR NOVEMBER VOLUNTEERS!

Ushers:

Dennis & Kris Simpson, Lee & Jill Glauvitz,
Pat Shodean

Readers:

Charlie Fiedler, Josh Welbaum, Greg Edwards,
Deborah Williams

Communion Assistants:

Pat Shodean, Diane Brauer, Laura Reu,
Dennis & Kris Simpson

Kitchen Angels:

Dianne Hensley, Suzanne Waite

Altar Guild:

Kris Simpson, Pat Shodean, Diane Brauer,
Sandy Edwards, Debbie Sciortino

Communion Bread Baker:

Paula Thomas

Audio/Video Team:

Diane Brauer, Sandy Edwards, Zach Shotwell

Nursery Attendants:

Michaela Lovell, Ava Rousselle, Olivia Rousselle

Counters:

Pat Shodean, Greg Edwards, Barbara Reeves

Beyond Our Walls



Storehouse West is a food pantry and children's clothes closet that serves individuals and families who are residents of Sandoval County, New Mexico and meet the federal income guidelines for low-moderate income households. **Storehouse West** can supply registered households with an

emergency food package once a month and can assist with water and Waste Management bills once per year

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Storehouse West distributed more than 5,000 food packages in 2022, equaling almost 210,000 pounds of food. Community donations are an important part of our supply chain. This month the pantry has a short, but essential list that we need for our monthly food distributions.

PANTRY WISH LIST

- PEANUT BUTTER
- BREAKFAST CEREAL
- CANNED FRUIT
- RAMEN NOODLES

Nearly 100 pounds of food and 4 children's coats were delivered to Storehouse West during the month of November. Please continue to help those in our community who struggle to put food on their tables.

Monetary donations for on-going needs can also be made by check to **Storehouse West** and mailed to: **Storehouse West, 1030 F. Veranda Dr. SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124**



The Storehouse West Kids Clothes Closet would appreciate donations of children's coats. These could be left with the food donations.

AN EASY WAY TO SUPPORT COJ's GOOD SAMARITAN FUND

Smith's Inspiring Donations

This is an easy way to provide funds to Community of Joy's

Good Samaritan Fund.

If you are not already a Smith's Rewards Card member, you can register for one at <https://www.smithsfoodanddrug.com/i/community/smiths-inspiring-donations>

Then, link your account with **Community of Joy Church (MJ324)**.

Use your Smith's card every time you shop. It's as simple as that.



During the period of July 1—September 30, 2023 we earned \$38.21 for the Good Samaritan Fund!

2024 Offering Envelopes are Available NOW!

The 2024 offering envelope boxes are available now. If you already use envelopes, please pick yours up from the table in front of the sanctuary. If you'd like to have a box of envelopes, let Earlene know.

The use of the offering envelopes has several advantages. The envelopes eliminate a step that the counters must use in the offering counting process. Thus the process is easier and possible errors are eliminated. Also, the envelopes can serve as a reminder to your commitment to Community of Joy and God's work.

Pastor's Ponderings

Bearing Christ's Light Amidst the Darkness

Continued from page 1

And all the while, many of us people of faith wonder what we should do, besides pray. Of course, we can become more educated on the complex history of this conflict, and that's not a bad idea. But in truth, this probably won't have any great effect on things beyond our own sense of understanding. We can just try to tune it out, though tuning out the cries of hurting people never seems like a particularly Christ-like response to suffering. (BTW, Lutheran Disaster Relief is a great group to donate to, if you feel so called.)

Some choose to make big statements and pick a side. Indeed, it often seems like vehemently taking sides is hobby for some. I have to confess, for me, aside from the obvious tragedies of violence and loss, the saddest aspect of this conflict has been to see how quickly we rush into tribalism.

Because, as so many are quick to tell us, we must pick a side. And once we have done so, we must see that side as perfectly righteous and full of light, and the other as entirely depraved and full of darkness. We must never criticize our chosen tribe, and we must always criticize our declared enemy. We must decry every life lost on our side, and accept the other side's losses as collateral damage.



But of course, Jesus' own life reveals essentially the opposite mindset. In a time where many believed in a tribalistic God, who blessed one people at the expense of others, Jesus spoke of a God of universal love, who so loved... *the world*. And in a culture that demanded people pick sides between the righteous and sinners, Jesus blurred the lines and reached out to both.

And even though he was most certainly interested in caring for and spreading the Good News among his own people, he also took missionary journeys into the land of the Samaritans, who were the generally the hated cousins of the Jewish people. While there, he chose an ostracized Samaritan woman to become the first to whom he revealed his Messiahship. He also touched lepers, praised righteous Samaritans, and asked forgiveness for the very Romans who were crucifying him.

It's hard to say exactly what we should do in situations of great turmoil and complexity, and in truth, Jesus does not provide us with exact roadmaps. But what we can say is that bearing Christ's light always looks more like helping than hurting. It always looks more like healing than hating. And it always calls us out of our tribalism, and into a world of universal love.

As we meet situations of darkness, perhaps our main task is simply preserving within ourselves the spirit of universal love. Because out of that capacity to love, flows all else that brings life and healing.

In this season of Light and Darkness, may God's universal love shine brightly in you. In Christ, -Pastor Paul

**Join Us for Worship in the Sanctuary,
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.**