

Rejoice Lutheran Church

1155 County Rd 75 NW
PO Box 307
Clearwater, MN 55320
320.558.6851

rejoice@rejoicelutheranchurch.org

Sundays @ Rejoice

Worship is in person at 9:30
am at Rejoice Lutheran
Church and streamed on our
YouTube channel
[@RejoiceLutheranClearwater
MN](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRejoiceLutheranClearwaterMN)

*Please stay and join us after
worship for coffee & treats in the
Fellowship Hall.*

Inside this Issue:

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Council President Report
Financial Update
Kardia Group
Children, Youth & Family News
Young @ Heart
Upcoming Events
Calendars & Celebrations
and more!



DECEMBER Events

- ***Kardia* ❤️ Group**, Saturday, Dec 13 @ 10a in the Library.
- **Women's Bible Study**, Tuesday, Dec 16 @ 10a at Clearwater *Caribou*.
- **Men's Bible Study**, Wednesday, Dec 17 @ 8a.
- **Young@Heart**, Thursday, Dec 18 @ 10:30a.
- **Reel Spirituality**, Thursday, Dec 4th @ 6:30
- *Every* Sunday after worship in the Education wing: **Community Food Rescue**.
- Mondays @ 9:30a: **Library Meeting**.
- Mondays @ 7pm: **Alcoholics Anonymous**.
- ***Caribou* & Conversation** at the Clearwater *Caribou*, every Tuesday @ 11a, *except* the 3rd Tuesday of each month.
- **Yoga** every Wednesday @ 10a.
- **Stitch & Pray** meets Wednesdays @ 1p.

From the Pastor...

Stepping Into Advent

Insisting on Hope

Dear Members of Rejoice,

Most mornings, as I begin my day with a large cup of coffee in hand, it's become my practice to intentionally pause before the hustle begins. In that quiet time, whether through reading scripture, listening to a devotion on my phone, or journaling, I am able to center myself, to remember who I am - first, one of God's beloved and, second, your pastor. This daily practice is what grounds me and gives me courage for the day ahead.

Courage is a theme we will be exploring deeply this season. The story of Jesus begins in Luke's Gospel with this nearly unnoticeable detail: "In the time of Herod..." It immediately reveals to us the fearful world Jesus entered—one filled with oppression, instability, and uncertainty. Yet, the constant message we hear throughout the birth narrative is the whisper of angels delivering a surprising command: "Do not fear."

Blessings, Pledges, and Gratitude

Before we enter this sacred season, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your own courageous response to our stewardship campaign, "God Provides Blessings." Your generous financial pledges are a testament to your trust in God's provision and your commitment to the life of our congregation. They are an expression of your hope. Thank you for your commitment to our mission in the year ahead.

And, if you haven't yet submitted a pledge, please know that it is absolutely *not too late*! Your commitment is essential for our ministry planning. Pledge forms are available on the usher table or you can easily submit your pledge online through our Church Connect page (rejoice.churchtrac.com) or app.

The Call to Insist on Hope

The new church year begins with the First Sunday of Advent on November 30th. Our series through this season and into Epiphany is titled, "What do you fear? Insisting on hope this Advent."

This series takes seriously the angels' message and trusts that Christ's birth truly is good news of great joy for all people. When Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi are called into God's redemptive story, they don't deny their fears. Instead, they move through them, asking questions

and holding fast to courage. Over these next weeks, we will be invited to identify where fear is present, both in the biblical story and in our own lives, while, at the same time, finding our way toward hope. Over these next several weeks, we will explore what it means to acknowledge fear without letting it rule us.

We believe God entered a frightened world to bring good news. Our hope is not flimsy or fleeting; it is gritty, resilient, and endures - no matter what we fear or face. Because that hope comes from our reliance on the steadfast grace, faithfulness and love of God.

Interactive Faith: Wednesdays in Advent

To experience this theme in an inter-generational way, we are launching Wednesdays in Advent - a special test program on December 3rd, 10th, and 17th.

Each Wednesday evening will offer dinner, faith formation and conversation, and worship. This program is designed to be inter-generational and interactive, with storytelling, reflection, and art-based activities for children, families and all who wish to participate.

My prayer for us is that we may catalyze our fears into love and action, insisting on hope this Advent season and into the new year.

Pax,

Pastor Karleen

From the Council President...

Your church council met on Sunday, November 16, 2025.

Your church is buzzing with energy as we enter the Advent season! Come to church on Wednesday evenings in December for supper, conversation and worship starting at 5:30 pm. Consider joining the Isaiah 1:17 group which will meet at church on December 9 at 6:30 to learn about the verbs in this verse and how we can put them into action in our community. Stay tuned for information about the showing of "Sugarcane" on January 24, 2026.

The Nominating Committee is completing their work. Please prayerfully consider their request to fill leadership positions here at Rejoice. A full report from the committee is expected in December.

The council approved the Child Safety and Protection Policy and adjustments were made to the Wedding and Funeral Policies based on changes to Building Use Manual.

We are happy to report that Heather Conklin has rescinded her resignation and will remain in her position in the Rejoice office!

Pastor Hollie Holt-Woehl will be with us February 1, 2026 to share about our synod’s relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and specifically our conference’s connection with the Durban Circuit. The Durban Circuit is in need of funds to repair the Dean’s home and your gifts will be matched by the conference committee.

The Finance Committee is hard at work preparing the 2026 Budget which the council will approve in December and the congregation will review and vote on at the Annual Meeting on February 1, 2026.

Our Fall Festival cleared just over \$28,000 and we continue to be about \$48,000 over budget in the general fund and about \$6000 behind in the mortgage fund. Please consider an extra gift at Christmas to help your church balance the budget at year’s end. Thank you!

Mark your calendars for the noisy offering in 2026!

- Jan 18: Children’s Haven International
- Feb 15: Green Lake Lutheran Ministries
- Mar 15: Clearwater-Clear Lake Food Shelf
- Apr 19: Rejoice Library
- May 17: Vacation Bible School
- June 21: Great River Faith in Action

- July 19: Good Samaritan Fund @ Rejoice
- Aug 16: Pathways4Youth/God Work, Our Hands
- Sept 20: Weekend Food Backpacks
- Oct 18: ELCA World Hunger
- Nov 15: Lutheran Disaster Response
- Dec 20: Rivers of Hope

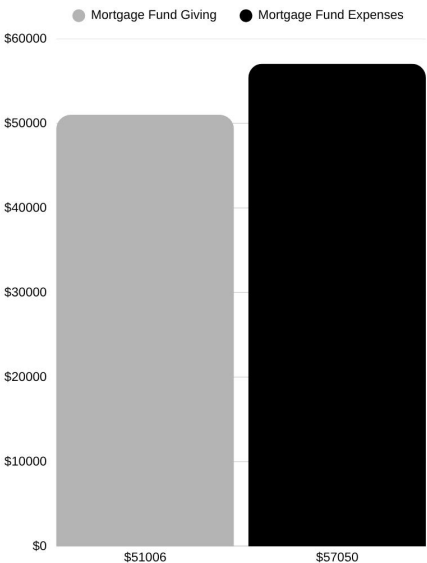
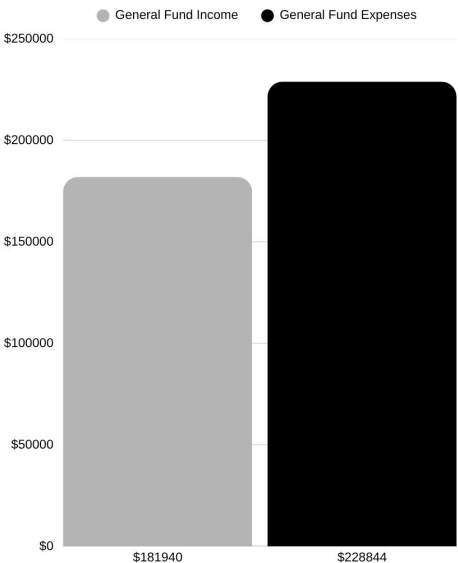
Submitted by
Susan Chwalek
Council President

From the Church Treasurer...

We are in the final month of giving and stewardship drive 2025. We’ll continue to provide an update of Rejoice’s finances on a weekly basis through the end of the year in the bulletin & weekly update.

As of October, our General Fund giving was \$20,822.02 behind budget after the addition of Fall Festival income.

Over the past three months, General Fund giving has averaged just



over half what is needed to meet our budget (\$20,685.42/mo) while our expenses are on budget.

Our Mortgage Fund giving is \$6,043.78 short of what's needed to meet our monthly payment. In total, we are averaging a shortfall of about \$5,428 per month and significantly more in the past three months (\$10,459 per mo).

Thank you for your continued financial support & prayerful consideration as we close 2025. If you have any questions regarding financial matters here at Rejoice please feel free to contact me any time!

Mark Ahrenholz

Church Treasurer



What do you fear?

INTERGEN WEDNESDAYS IN ADVENT

5:30p InterGen Dinner

6:00p InterGen Faith Formation

6:30p InterGen Worship

...beginning Wednesday, Dec 3rd



Christmas Eve Worship

4:00p Family Worship with Candlelight

5:15–6:15p Christmas Cookie Reception

6:30p Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols with
Communion

Mark your calendar and plan to attend!



December 18, 2025

**St. Cloud Area Senior Fun Singers
are coming and so is Santa!**

As part of our ongoing efforts to bring fresh and enjoyable activities to the Y@H group, I've been busy researching new programs to engage and entertain.

This week, I had the pleasure of reconnecting with an old friend, thanks to a serendipitous call to the Becker Senior Center. The person I was about to contact turned out to be someone I hadn't seen in years—an Airstream friend from long ago!

After catching up, she shared some fantastic program ideas that have been well-loved by the Becker group, and I'm excited to bring one of them to you.

On Thursday, December 18, we will be treated to a special performance by the St. Cloud Area Senior Fun Singers.

This talented vocal chorus, made up of individuals aged 55+, brings joy to the community through their music ministry. With the Whitney Senior Center serving as their rehearsal home, the Fun Singers practice weekly from September through May, and then perform at nursing homes, retirement centers, and community events.

Their repertoire is diverse, covering everything from beloved show tunes, patriotic anthems, and big band hits, to pop songs and Christmas Favorites. The Fun Singers' goal is simple: to lift spirits and create a sense of fellowship through music. Whether performing for an audience or singing alongside their fellow members, the singers find great joy in sharing their passion for music with others.

We are thrilled to welcome this group for what promises to be a heartwarming and enjoyable performance. Please join us in making them feel at home and celebrating the power of music to bring people together!

Please give Heather a call at Rejoice Lutheran Office and let her know you will be attending 320-558-6851 We look forward to seeing you there!

Bring a friend! - Linda Agre.

Join the *new* Isaiah 1.17 Justice Group!

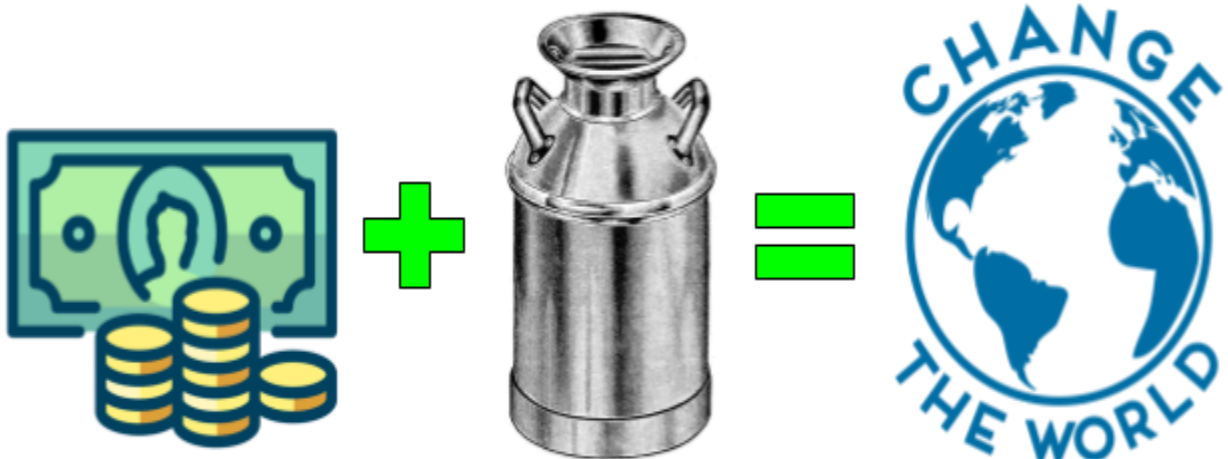
Are you ready to **move through fear** and step into your role as one of God's **active people of justice** in our world? A new group – called **Isaiah 1.17** – is forming for anyone interested in learning about and participating in local justice initiatives. We recognize that taking on issues of justice can feel daunting, but we believe we are called to action, not anxiety. Our inspiration comes straight from the biblical call to action in Isaiah 1:17, which urges us to be active participants in a better, fairer world.

We're putting the emphasis on the powerful verbs of the passage: **learning** to do well, **seeking** justice, **relieving** the oppressed, **defending** the fatherless, and **pleading** for the widow. This group is where we will find the resources, community, and courage to put our faith into action.

Join us on Tuesday, December 9th at 6:30p as we begin our focus on the first verb – learning about what God's justice is and considering what it means for us in our present community. See you there!



December Noisy Offering will support



Rivers of Hope

Kardia Group

**Next Meeting:
Sat, Dec 13 @ 10a**

What is Kardia?

Kardia is a new support group for anyone whose heart is hurting.

Whether you're experiencing grief, sadness about the state of the world, fear, anxiety, or another deep sorrow, this is a place for you. The name "Kardia" is a Greek word for heart, and we believe that by sharing our burdens, we can find comfort and strength together. It's an opportunity for a safe, confidential, and welcoming space in which to share our struggles and support one another in a compassionate environment.



Kardia

A monthly group of conversation, prayer and spiritual practice for those whose hearts are hurting.



Did you know... that our building is designated by Wright County Emergency Preparedness as a short-term shelter site in the event of a disaster in which residents might be displaced from their homes? We could also be used as a refuge during a huge snowstorm that closes I-94 and strands drivers. This is one more way that our church, through our Building & Property Committee, is serving the greater Clearwater community!

WONDER WOMAN 1984

An ancient Amazonian princess and a Reagan-era entrepreneur in early midlife struggle with the tension between getting what each wants for themselves and what the world most needs.

Winner of Favorite Movie by Nickelodeon Kid's Choice Awards and Outstanding Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Motion Picture by the Screen Actor's Guild.



REEL SPIRITUALITY

A CINEMATIC JOURNEY TO A DEEPER SPIRITUALITY

Thursday | 6:30 PM
December 4, 2025*
Online

*Date change!



Scan the QR code or go to
our ChurchConnect page
(rejoice.churchtrac.com) to
register.



This Advent, we take seriously the angels' message and trust that Christ's birth truly is good news of great joy for all people. Our series - which will take us through Christmas and up to Epiphany Sunday in the new year - looks closely at the fear and terror looming in the background during King Herod's time. It invites us to consider the fears we hold now.

Fear can divide and paralyze us and even be used as a tool for oppression. But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge it without letting it rule us? Can we catalyze our fears into love and action? What if naming it helps us see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work? Identifying where fear is present can allow us to find our way toward hope, with the voices of the angels in our ears!

Pick up a weekly devotion for the series and watch our weekly eNews for more details, plus additional resources each week. We hope you'll plan to join us this Advent season as we lean into our fear and *insist on hope!*



Christmas Poinsettias

Help us beautify our worship space for the Christmas season! Poinsettia plants are now available to order at a cost of \$14 per plant (8") provided by *Dan & Jerry's Greenhouse*.

Two Ways to Order:

In Person: Complete a Poinsettia Order form, enclose your payment and return to the Poinsettia Order Box

Online using the QR code or through our [Church Connect app](#)

Flowers decorating the sanctuary will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin and available for you to pick up after the 6:30p service Christmas Eve.

The deadline to order is
Sunday, December 7th.

Thank you!



Are you
interested in
learning more
about becoming
a member at
Rejoice?

—◆—
*Join us after
worship on*

**Sunday,
Dec. 7th**
to learn more!



Have you downloaded our Church App yet?

Read step-by-step instructions [here](#), then scan this QR code or click this [link](#) to download the app. **Beginning December 1st, you'll receive an Advent "Word of the Day" and Breath Prayer for your daily**

practice. Through the app, you can also see upcoming events, sign-up to serve in worship, order poinsettias, give once or set up recurring gifts, view a church directory, and so much more!

Don't delay! Do it today and keep connected @ *Rejoice!*

How can you serve your community at Rejoice?

Each Sunday, we need volunteers to help usher, greet, set up or serve communion. We need folks to prepare and serve goodies for fellowship.

We need the help of EVERYONE—Many hands make light work!

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to sign up. You can also do this on our Rejoice app or *ChurchConnect* page at rejoice.churchtrac.com.




Thank you!

Thank You's...

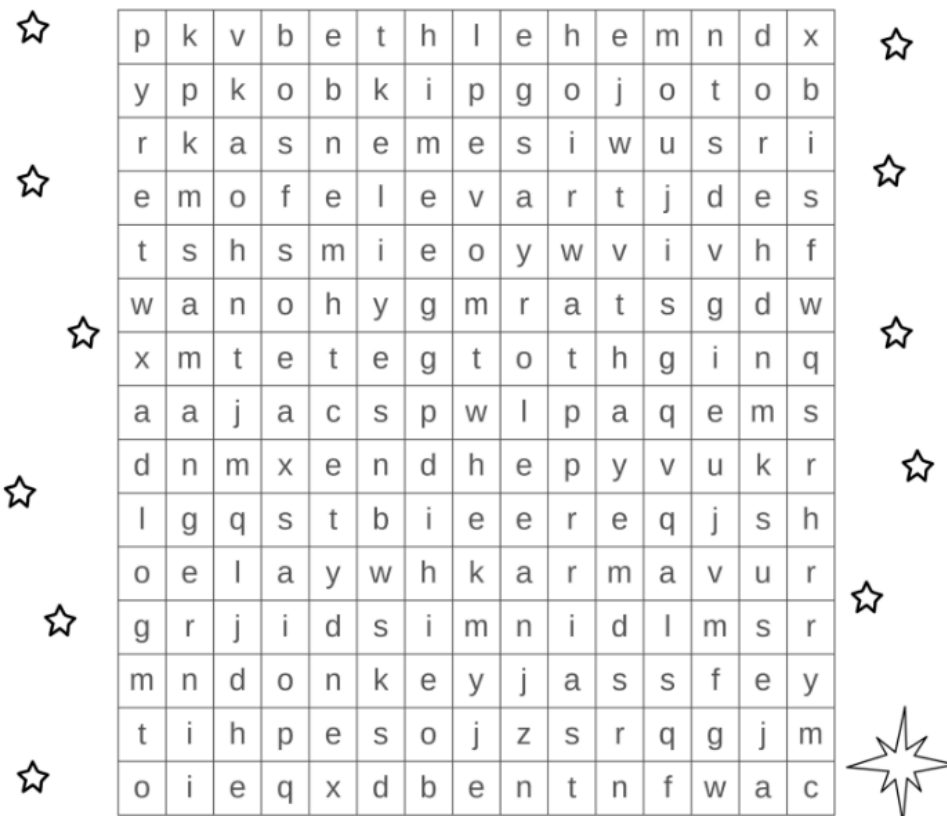
- To **Paul Amundson**, for shampooing the carpet in the church narthex.
- To **members of our Stitch & Pray group**, who lovingly knit and crochet throws and other handmade items for those in need and for baskets for the newly baptized.
- To members of the **Personnel Committee**, who have worked so hard this year to ensure the recruitment of talented staff and smooth transitions.
- To **Kathy Langva and others**, for their quiet, behind-the-scenes work to ensure that our sanctuary beautifully reflects the seasons.
- To **Grace & Kent Asheim, Becky Bryzinski, Mary Wilson** and others who weekly prepare backpacks of food for our Backpack Ministry in conjunction with Clearview Elementary. This year we are serving 12 families!
- To the rest of our members, ministry teams, the Church Council, volunteers, staff for living out God's vision of *shalom* in our broader community.

🎉 December Celebrations* 🎉

Birthdays		
12/2 Marilyn Koontz 12/4 Jake Sanders 12/4 Lydia Rausch 12/7 Blayne Leuthard 12/10 Pat Dahle	12/10 Deena Monk-Kobow 12/11 David Kirchoff 12/15 Donna Brown 12/18 Natalie VanNurden 12/20 Madeline Johnson	12/21 Becky Brzinski 12/22 Alex Hard 12/22 Kent Asheim
Anniversaries		
12/29 Lee & Rosemary Monk 12/29 Carryl & Carolyn Bissell		
<p><i>*If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please let the Church Office know! Or scan the QR code and update your information in our system. Thank you.</i></p> 		

NATIVITY WORD SEARCH

Can you find all the words related to Jesus' birth?



Words:

donkey	Herod
wisemen	star
travel	myrrh
Jesus	shepherds
manger	gold
Bethlehem	frankincense
Mary	Joseph
sheep	night



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
November Worship Sign-Ups	December Worship Sign-Ups					
Advent 1	Pastor's Day Off	11a Caribou & Conversa	10a Slow & Steady Yoga	6:30p Reel Spirituality		9a 7th Day Adventist Wc
9:30a Worship	9:30a Library	6p Caribou & Conversat	1p Stitch & Pray			
10:30a Food Rescue	10a Homeschool Meetup		5:30p Advent InterGen P			
10:30a Sunday Sizzle Fel	7p AA		6p Advent InterGen Faith			
11a Bible 101			6:30p Advent InterGen V			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
December Worship Sign-Ups						
Advent 2	Pastor's Day Off	11a Caribou & Conversa	10a Slow & Steady Yoga	6p Worship & Music Me		9a 7th Day Adventist Wc
Poinsettia Order Deadlin	9:30a Library	6p Caribou & Conversat	1p Stitch & Pray			10a Kardia Group
9:30a Worship	7p AA	6:30p Isaiah 1.17 Group	5:30p Advent InterGen P			
10:30a Fellowship			5:45p Community Org E			
10:30a Food Rescue			6p Advent InterGen Faith			
10:30a New Member Inf			6:30p Advent InterGen V			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
December Worship Sign-Ups						
Advent 3	Pastor's Day Off	10a Women's Bible Stud	8a Men's Bible Study	10:30a Young @ Heart		9a 7th Day Adventist Wc
Noisy Offering: Rivers of	9:30a Library		10a Slow & Steady Yoga	7p Longest Night Worsh		
9:30a Worship w/Holy G	7p AA		1p Stitch & Pray			
10:30a Fellowship			5:30p Advent InterGen P			
10:30a Food Rescue			6p Advent InterGen Faith			
			6:30p Advent InterGen V			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
December Worship Sign-Ups						
Advent 4	Pastor's Day Off		Christmas Eve	Christmas Day (Holiday)	Day After Christmas (Hol	9a 7th Day Adventist Wc
9:30a Worship	9:30a Library		4p Family Worship w/Ca			
10:30a Fellowship	7p AA		5:15p Christmas Cookie			
10:30a Food Rescue			6:30p Candlelight w/Les			
11a Council Meeting						
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
December Worship Sign-Ups						
Christmas 1	Pastor's Day Off		New Year's Eve (Holiday)	New Year's Day (Holiday)		9a 7th Day Adventist
9:30a Service of Lessons	9:30a Library		10a Slow & Steady Yoga			
10:30a Food Rescue	7p AA		1p Stitch & Pray			
10:30a Sunday Sizzle Fel						

Rejoice Lutheran Church, ELCA
1155 County Road 75 NW
PO Box 307 (Mailing)
Clearwater, MN 55320

Office Hours

Mon 9:30a-2p

Tue-Thu 10a-2p

Telephone

320-558-6851

ChurchConnect

rejoice.churchtrac.com

Website

rejoicelutheranchurch.org

Staff Pastor

Rev. Dr. Karleen Jung

Office Administrator

Kris Maehren

Office/Social Media

Heather Conklin

Music Coordinator

Sue Oelke