



# CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH

402-733-3294

[ctklc-bellevue.org](http://ctklc-bellevue.org)

7308 South 42nd Street, Bellevue, NE 68147

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

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Christ the King Lutheran Church  
7308 South 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Bellevue, Nebraska 68147  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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## Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar!

**Christ the King's Annual Meeting is scheduled for  
January 26, 2026 at 11:15am**

*In case of inclement weather the meeting will be postponed to February 1, 2026.*

# Grace and Peace

A message from Pastor Bryan

## “Get ready because Jesus is coming soon!”

It’s a phrase Christians have heard for two thousand years. Across that time, countless people have tried to calculate when Jesus would return—often with great confidence and detailed charts—and every single prediction has missed the mark. Every one. So what do we do with that? If Jesus did not return “soon” by our clocks, does that mean we no longer need to get ready?



In the first generation after Jesus’ death and resurrection, readiness was a constant theme. The early church lived with the expectation that Christ could return at any moment. And yet, even in that short span of time, the gospel spread rapidly. Within a decade there were already believers in Rome, and communities across the empire were hearing the story of the teacher from Nazareth whose ministry had stirred hearts and challenged powers. His followers repeated his parables, shared his teachings, and retold what they themselves had witnessed. The Good News of Jesus was transforming lives.

These early believers watched for signs of his return. They remembered his warnings not to be caught idle or unprepared. So when they experienced turbulence—when Claudius expelled Jews and Christians from Rome around AD 49, when Nero’s persecution fell in AD 64, when Paul was executed around AD 66, and when the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed in AD 70—they asked: *Are these the signs? Is this the moment?*

But he did not return then. Which forces the same question we face: **What does “soon” mean, and how do we live in readiness when “soon” stretches across generations?**

It’s in this context that the Gospel writers begin to set pen to parchment. And as Advent approaches, we turn especially to Luke—because Luke gives us the story of Mary, Joseph, the manger, and the shepherds. But that is *not* where Luke begins. Before Bethlehem, Luke begins with a purpose:

“I made a careful study of everything and then decided to write and tell you exactly what took place.” Luke wants to help his readers understand how to live faithfully between Christ’s first coming and his return. His opening chapters—before Jesus is even born—are all about readiness. Advent echoes those same themes.

So what does it take to be ready? What should people do to prepare for the coming of Jesus? Read the Bible more? Pray more? Those are good gifts, and they shape us. But here is the truth we often overlook: **You could read Scripture and pray 24 hours a day and still never “do enough” to make yourself ready.**

And strangely, that’s the bad news—and the good news. Because readiness is not about accumulating spiritual accomplishments. It is not about frantic effort or checking off religious tasks. It is about the orientation of the heart and the posture of a life. If you want to know what it means to be ready, Jesus already gave the simplest and most challenging summary:

**Love God. Love his people.**

When we love God and love the people he places around us, we are already living the kind of life Jesus will recognize when he comes again. And when our days are shaped by love—love expressed through prayer, Scripture, mercy, generosity, forgiveness, grace—then it doesn’t matter if Jesus returns this year, in twenty years, or in two centuries.

Because readiness is not about prediction; it is about transformation. It is about living now in the light of the kingdom that is coming. And when we do that, we are already joining Jesus in his work of bringing God’s kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.

# Worship

## Poinsettias for the Sanctuary

It is once again time to place our orders for Christmas. Poinsettias to decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas. The price is \$12 per plant. Elaine Vaag is taking orders after Sunday morning services and online at [office@ctklc-bellevue.org](mailto:office@ctklc-bellevue.org) thru December 15.

Please let us know if you want your poinsettias designated for a special memorial or remembrance of someone.



## Youth-led Advent Worship

Sunday, December 14



This year's youth-led Advent service features something for everyone. Our young people are excited to share some of what they have been learning in Christian education and have a really cute earworm of a song to share with you. Special music, some cute skits, you won't want to miss it! Plus! bring some cookies to share for after worship.

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

December 24

12:00pm, 5:00pm and 11:00pm



No, not a typo. We have been talking about the timing of Christmas Eve worship for a couple of years now. To respond to thoughts from people who travel, who don't like to drive when it's dark, with family celebrations that have been set for years and who say the 11pm has become too late, we are adding a service at noon. It will be the same service, candles and all. We aren't changing the sign out front just yet, but feel free to tell your friends you might want to invite. The message of God's grace which truly gives us reason to celebrate this season can be told at any time of day.



## Mid-Month Breakfasts

Served 9am-10:30am  
December 13 and  
January 10

Start your weekend off with a nice breakfast and conversation with friends at church. There is always hot coffee and good conversation.

## Chili Bowl Qualifier

11:15am January 11, 2026

- Each entrant will make a crockpot of chili.
- Judges will pick one winner from the following categories: "Mild", "Hot", and "Unusual".
- A "People's Choice" winner will be selected by those present. "Voting" will be done by people placing money into a voting receptacle for each entrant. There is no limit to the amount of money one may use to influence the outcome of the election.
- In the Chili Bowl the winners for each category will compete head to head; people's choice winners may be considered for any category.



## Congregational Lunch

January 25, following worship

Join us after worship for a Congregational Lunch featuring a Baked Potato and Salad Bar. A variety of toppings and sauces will be available for a variety of palates including our little ones who haven't made the jump to an adult meal.

## Have you made your PLEDGE for 2026 yet?

All good gifts ultimately come from God! All that we have comes from God's bountiful hand. It is so easy to forget that all-encompassing truth. Sometimes, we come to the place in our lives where we begin to believe that we are responsible for the things that we enjoy, that somehow the blessings which come into our lives "just happen" or come from nowhere. The Bible tells us that God owns everything and God provides gifts to all. According to the Scripture, God gives the seed, rain, health, life, strength, riches, grace and eternal life. God even gives us the ability to acquire wealth and the ability to enjoy it as special gifts.

As Christmas approaches and you think of all God has done for you, would you please prayerfully consider your participation in funding the regular operating expenses of the congregation? No, we can't match God's good gifts to us, but we can give to him who has so graciously given to us because we love him and because we want others to come to know him through this ministry.

We will be submitting a report to the council on our stewardship efforts in December so if you have any questions or would like to discuss your pledge, please email Laurel Wiegand at [lwiegand65@hotmail.com](mailto:lwiegand65@hotmail.com) or call 402-547-7978. We need your loving, generous, prayerful support.

## Electronic Giving

### Open your heart without opening your checkbook

*Electronic Giving (Direct Debit)* is the term used to describe automatic methods for making contributions on a regular basis without the need to write checks, carry cash or prepare envelopes.

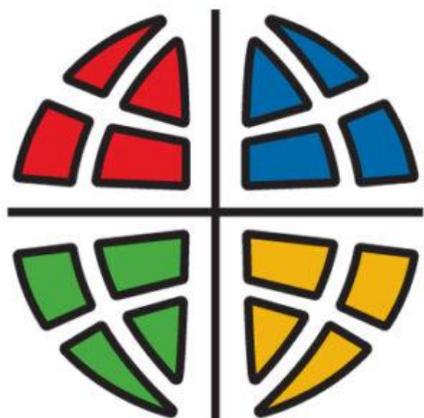
Christ the King offers the ability to give electronically. You can choose to give weekly, bi-monthly, monthly or in any way the Lord leads you. Many of our members enjoy the convenience of making utility or other payments electronically; why not give to the Church electronically?

If you have a bill paying feature on your checking account at your bank you can ask your bank to send your contribution in the same way they pay your bills. Or, if you don't, the church has a service that is simple, secure, and easy to set up.

This will help us in our giving when we miss a Sunday and help us to prioritize the Church in our finances and be good stewards of what God has entrusted us. It will also help us in being consistent and obedient in keeping with our commitments that we have made to the Lord.

Three benefits to *Electronic Giving*:

- 1) You are taking a step of faith – When you sign up to give electronically, you are deciding in advance to faithfully give.
- 2) You will simplify your life – You won't have to remember whether you gave this month or need to send in an offering by mail when you are on a trip.
- 3) You will be helping the church – Every person who gives through electronic giving makes our record keeping much easier and saves us from paying check deposit fees and it evens out cash flow.



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### **ELCA Church Wide Assembly 2025**

*Laurel Wiegand*

Matt and I attended the 2025 ELCA Church Wide assembly in July. I'd like to share our journey to attend.

In February of 2024 Pastor Bryan suggested I consider attending the 2025 Church Wide Assembly (every 3<sup>rd</sup> year) as the synod hasn't received many applications. So, I ask, "where is it?" He says Phoenix AZ, the last week of July. Well, that answers the question of why there weren't an abundance of applications! My name was selected during the Nebraska Synod Assembly in the spring of 2024.

Why does the synod select people so early? The ELCA arranges travel and hotels for all voting members as well as the entire church council and a large number of staff. There were over 800 voting members in attendance each day. Starting six months prior to the assembly all the reading materials start to be distributed covering all the business that has been changed and recommendations for upcoming changes. This CWA both the Presiding Bishop and the Church Secretary were to be elected so nominations needed to be sent in. In the two months leading up to the CWA there were online video meetings to cover the backgrounds of many of the documents that were going to be discussed. Each of these hour-long meetings allowed us to hear from the writers of the documents and ask questions. This is all material that is not presented at the assembly.

The CWA staff does a fantastic job of providing all the information to arrive at the assembly on time and ready to go. Technology was a great help. All the documents were loaded on Ipads (there was an hour-long online tutorial on how to use it in the weeks leading up) which CWA supplied so we all had the same technology and versions of the documents. Visitors could download an app to their phone or tablet to follow along. The CWA was live streamed on YouTube, and many of the sessions are still on the site.

The days were long usually 9-9. We were warned ahead of time to exercise in the morning as there wouldn't really be breaks during the day to get it in and there would be a lot of sitting. That was no lie! Each synod sits together at tables. Nebraska is its own Synod, and we had about 20 people sitting together each day. If you haven't looked at the ELCA synod map you should. You can find it at <https://www.elca.org/about/synods>.

The sizes and groupings are very interesting. Each day was a mix of reports and presentations along with voting on various updates and changes. The first three days were rounds of voting for Bishop (every 6 years) and the next three days were voting for Secretary. There was a break for lunch and dinner. During the breaks the staff was updating and reviewing documents to keep everything flowing.

There was a Worship eservice each day, but not at the same time., nor the same type. There were prayers and hymns during the meetings to provide time for reflection on upcoming votes or debates.

The music and prayers were very diverse. Some were what I recognize as traditional Lutheran, others were more indigenous, some sounded spiritual, some like a renaissance fair, and some were slow chants like monastery. They were woven into the meeting as various topics were discussed. Although the Secretary was installed during worship, the Bishop was installed 4 October 2025 in Chicago.

An interesting area of discussion was focused on Youth and Young Adult voting members and activity in the church. This group is defined as under 30. The ELCA is trying to involve more youth in the various councils and meetings. The youth of the ELCA are very diverse, and the most vocal are non-traditional. The way for youth to shape the church they want to be part of is to be involved in the gatherings and guide the future events.



There is a lot of information about the Nebraska synod (<https://nebraskasynod.org>) and the ELCA (<https://elca.org>) organizations on their websites. There are several online bible studies or discussion groups if you are looking to deepen or expand your knowledge. With a small congregation like ours, having access to the online information allows you to learn beyond our walls and be part of the larger ELCA or Lutheran community.

**Upcoming events**

- Nebraska Synod Assembly 2026 May 29 - May 31, Younes Conference Center, Kearney, NE
- WELCA Triennial Gathering, July 16-19, 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa
- ELCA Youth Gathering 28 Jun-2 July 2027 Minneapolis MN
- CWA 2028 26 June-1 July Des Moines, Iowa

If you would like to represent Nebraska Lutherans at the CWA as a voting member, you must apply to be added to the ballot for the spring 2027 Nebraska Synod assembly by February 2027. Anyone under 30 can apply to attend as a youth representative voting member. If elected the ELCA pays all expenses. <https://nebraskasynod.org/about-us/nominations/>

# Mission and Service *Reaching out in the community*

Check out the Reverse Advent Calendar on the following page!

It's a whole month of items that will go to the food Pantry at Iglesia San Andreas in South Omaha. San Andreas' food pantry is well run by Pastor Omar and the volunteers of this Nebraska Synod ministry. Use the calendar as a tangible devotion as you do your regular or holiday shopping. It's an easy thing to do and will go a long way to help this ministry thrive. Our collection point will be in the entryway.

## Youth and Family *Events for specific age groups*



### Young Adults *Post-High School*

#### Christmas Gathering

**– Friday, December 19, 6:00pm**

Somewhere in Pastor Bryan's house (13503 South 22<sup>nd</sup> Street) lies a box holding gifts — but the code is hidden. Your task is to follow the clues, solve each puzzle, and uncover the combination. Everything you need will be there in the room. With your brains, suitable holiday themed sustenance, and each other you will not only have a good time, but could walk away with something to help make your spirits bright. See you there.

## Youth and Family

### St. Nicholas Party

**– Saturday, December 6, 11am**

This is always a great time! There will be games, stories; we might even dip pretzels! This is always a great time!



### Mid-Break Gathering

**– Sunday, December 28, 1pm**

Christmas Day may be over, but the celebration keeps going! Join us at Pastor Bryan's house (13503 South 22<sup>nd</sup> Street) as we help the Wise Men follow the star all the way to Jesus. Your job is to solve puzzles, find clues, and unlock the final treasure box.



# REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR



As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, let's also prepare gifts of nourishment for our community.

 <p>30</p> <p>1 quart of oil</p>	 <p>1</p> <p>2 lb bag of rice</p>	 <p>2</p> <p>3 cans of tuna</p>	 <p>3</p> <p>2 lb bag of flour</p>	 <p>4</p> <p>2 lb bag of pinto beans</p>	 <p>5</p> <p>3 cans of chicken</p>	 <p>6</p> <p>1 box of shelf stable milk</p>
 <p>7</p> <p>2 lb bag of pinto beans</p>	 <p>8</p> <p>4 lb bag of sugar</p>	 <p>9</p> <p>1 lb box of pasta</p>	 <p>10</p> <p>1 jar pasta sauce <i>(not glass)</i></p>	 <p>11</p> <p>1 quart of oil</p>	 <p>12</p> <p>2 lb bag of rice</p>	 <p>23</p> <p>3 cans of tuna</p>
 <p>14</p> <p>2 lb bag of flour</p>	 <p>15</p> <p>2 lb bag of pinto beans</p>	 <p>16</p> <p>3 cans of chicken</p>	 <p>17</p> <p>1 box of shelf stable milk</p>	 <p>18</p> <p>1 can of formula</p>	 <p>19</p> <p>4 lb bag of sugar</p>	 <p>20</p> <p>1 lb box of pasta</p>
 <p>21</p> <p>1 jar pasta sauce <i>(not glass)</i></p>	 <p>22</p> <p>1 quart of oil</p>	 <p>23</p> <p>2 lb bag of rice</p>	 <p>24</p> <p>3 cans of tuna</p>	 <p>25</p> <p>2 lb bag of flour</p>	<p>These are the most requested items at the San Andreas Food Pantry. Join us in sharing hope this season by collecting these items and bringing them to church!</p> <p>Everything on this calendar is about \$67</p>	

# December 2024 & January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	2 9am Quilting	3 9am San Andreas Pantry Set-up	4 12pm Fitness Club	5	6 11am St. Nicholas Party
7 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11:15am Fellowship 11:20am Christian Education	8 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	9	10 9am San Andreas Pantry Set-up	11 12pm Fitness Club	12	13 9am Mid-Month Breakfast
14 9am Adult Study 10am <b>Children's Christmas Worship</b> 11:15am Fellowship	15 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	16 9am Quilting 11:30am WELCA	17 9am San Andreas Pantry Set-up	18	19 6pm CTKYA Xmas Gathering	20
21 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11:15am Fellowship	22 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	23	24 <b>Christmas Eve</b> 12pm <b>Worship</b> 5pm <b>Worship</b> 11pm <b>Worship</b>	25 <b>Christmas Day</b>	26	27
28 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11:15am Fellowship <b>Youth Mid-break Gathering – 1pm</b>	29 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	30	31	1 <b>New Year's Day</b>	2	3
4 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11:15am Fellowship 11:20am Christian Education 2-4pm PLAN	5 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	6 9am Quilting	7 9am San Andreas Pantry Set-up	8 12pm Fitness Club 5:30 – 7:30pm Plan Auditions	9 5:30 – 7:30pm Plan Auditions	10 9am Mid-Month Breakfast 2-4pm PLAN
11 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11:15am Fellowship <b>Chili Cook off</b> 2-4pm PLAN	12 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	13	14 9am San Andreas Pantry Set-up	15 12pm Fitness Club	16	17 2-4pm PLAN
18 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11:15am Fellowship 11:20am Christian Education 2-4pm PLAN	19 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	20 9am Quilting 11:30am WELCA	21 9am San Andreas Pantry Set-up	22 12pm Fitness Club	23	24 2-4pm PLAN
25 <b>Annual Meeting</b> 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11:15am Cong. Mtg. 2-4pm PLAN	26 12pm Fitness Club 5:30pm T.O.P.S.	27	28 9am San Andreas Pantry Set-up	29 12pm Fitness Club	30	31