

† **Eighth Reformed Church** †
Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21, 2025 - 9:30 am
Order of Worship

Prelude

Greetings and Announcements

Call to Worship/Advent Reading Kevin & Arlene VanHeukelom

Leader: We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ. Advent means coming.

People: The kingdom of God is near.

Leader: Be alert at all times; make your hearts ready.

People: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Leader: The crooked shall be made straight.

People: and the rough ways made smooth;

Leader: and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

People: Let us bear fruits worthy of repentance;

Leader: for one is coming who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

People: He will bring down the powerful from their thrones, and lift up the lowly;

Leader: he will fill the hungry with good things, and send the rich away empty.

People: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Leader (prayer): Who are we, Lord God, that you should come to us? Yet you have visited your people and redeemed us in your Son. As we prepare to celebrate his birth, make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your word, and move us by your Spirit to bless your wonderful works. We ask this through him whose

coming is certain, whose day draws near, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*Opening Hymn # 273 *Good Christian Men, Rejoice*
Hymn # 262 *Away in a Manger*

Prayers of the People
Hymn of Preparation # 277 *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:12-17 (page 1689)

Message: “Needing Christmas”

*Hymn of Response # 250 *O Little Town of Bethlehem*
Offering and Offertory

*Doxology # 815, Offertory Prayer

*Benediction

*Closing Hymn # 260 (vs. 1) *Worthy, You Are Worthy*

Postlude
(*Please stand if you are able.)

Welcome!

Welcome to worship at Eighth Reformed Church on this Fourth Sunday of Advent. We pray that the little Child of Bethlehem will find a welcome in your heart and in your life, and that you may know the wonder of being loved unconditionally, cherished unceasingly, and saved everlastingly. Our prayer is that your time here will be uplifting and joyful. If you are visiting with us today, please sign our guest register in the narthex, and if you are looking for a church home, we hope that you will return to worship with us again.

This Week's Events

Today:

9:30 a.m. Worship, followed by coffee downstairs.

11:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal.

No Adult Sunday School.

No Young People's Sunday School.

Wednesday:

9:30 a.m. Coffee & Donut Fellowship Time.

Christmas Day:

9:30 a.m. Christmas Morning Worship.

Opportunities for Worship and Service This Week

Pastor: Pastor Mark Bergsma

Organist: Paul Kerkstra

Pianist: Sharon Byington

Song Leader: Ron Engels

Greeters: North door: Fred Diekman

Organ door: Todd Riemersma

Elder (post service): Pete Rusticus

Valet/Lift: Rob Pols

Parking Lot Guard: TBA

Ushers: Ted Nelson, Larry Rudnik

Sound: Scott Diekman

Radio: Scott Pastoor

YouTube: Dawn Blocher, Nathan Wolfe, Doug VanderMeer

Praying with Pastor: Jeff VanMeekeren, Larry Rudnik

Volunteer Deacons: John Stapel, Larry Roelofs

Coffee & Cookie Donators/Servers: Judy Bergsma

Opportunities for Worship and Service Next Week

Pastor: Pastor Garrett Sweeney

Organist: Paul Kerkstra

Pianist: Shirley Lohman

Song Leader: Pete Rusticus

Greeters: North door: Fred Diekman

Organ door: Todd Riemersma

Elder (post service): Tim Tacoma

Valet/Lift: Jodi Bultema

Parking Lot Guard: TBA

Ushers: Ted Nelson, Larry Rudnik

Sound: Scott Diekman

Radio: Kevin VanHeukelom

YouTube: Dawn Blocher, Nathan Wolfe, Doug VanderMeer

Praying with Pastor: Jeff VanMeekeren, Larry Rudnik

Volunteer Deacons: John Stapel, Larry Roelofs

Coffee&Cookie Donators/Servers: Marsa Barclay, Joy Hendricks

Church News and Future Events

Bulletin Announcements: Marilee Takken, the secretary, is in the office Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Please have all announcements to her by 10 a.m. on Wednesday. If you leave a note for her, please put it in the black mailbox on the wall across from the church office door. Thank you.

This Morning's Activities:

- Coffee Fellowship Time will be held downstairs.
- There will be NO Adult Sunday School or Young People's Sunday School. Classes will resume Jan. 4th.
- The choir will rehearse at 11:00 a.m. in the Choir Room.

With Grateful Hearts, we extend a big thank you to Jake and Launi VanderHart for organizing the Christmas Gift Bags for our shut-ins. We also thank all who lovingly delivered them and shared Christmas greetings. Your kindness brought joy and reminded our church family of the true spirit of Christ's love.



Christmas Morning Worship: Please join us this Thursday, Christmas Day, at 9:30 a.m. as we gather to celebrate the true meaning of this special day – the incredible gift of Jesus. Pastor Mark Bergsma will lead us in worship, there will be a Carol Sing-a-Long around the piano, and an offering will be received for Voice of the Martyrs. We are also blessed to have the service broadcast over JETHRO and streamed live on YouTube. Come and share in the joy, fellowship, and wonder of Christ's birth. (An offering for Voice of the Martyrs will also be received on December 28th.)

Check your church mailbox for a new directory update sheet which lists all the additions and corrections to our 2025 church directory. This is a cumulative list so you can discard all the other update sheets you have received.

The Mitten Tree will be up through Sunday, December 28th, to receive all things that offer warmth to those in need.

Pastor Harry and Beth are currently in Ontario with family through Tuesday, the 23rd. If you have a concern, please reach out to your Care Group elder or deacon. Any requests for the Prayer Chain should be directed to Tim Tacoma, 616-262-9972, except during office hours when Marilee can be contacted directly.

Dear Congregation, It's that time of year when we ask you to pray about names to submit to fill elder (1) and deacon (1) positions for 3-year-terms. As you do, please consider the guidelines on the bulletin insert. Names may be submitted in the offering plate or given to current consistory members no later than January 11th. Be sure to ask the person before submitting their name to see if they are willing to serve. No one is EVER obligated to serve in this capacity. Our retiring deacon is Larry Palma and Pete Rusticus is our retiring elder. Consistory will review the names submitted. After that, they will be submitted for the casting of lots at our Congregational Meeting on February 15th (held during Sunday School time downstairs in the Fellowship Hall).

Church Offering Envelopes & Giving Receipts: Offering envelopes for 2026 will be placed in mailboxes next Sunday, Dec. 28th. If you would like to begin using envelopes in the new year, please see Marj Hendges or Shannon Wagoner. If you would like a giving receipt from 2025, contact Marj as well.

Congregational Devotional Project Reminder! We hope you are starting to write your devotionals for 8th Reformed Church by the 8th Reformed people! All ages are invited to give their input to make a new daily devotional in the coming year. You may submit something short or long, a poem, a song, or a truth from God's word couldn't go wrong! You may submit as many devotionals as you like! Please put them in Sue Tacoma's mailbox or send to her email at sktacoma@yahoo.com. We would like your entries submitted by the end of this year, if possible, so that the devotional can be printed and distributed sometime next spring. Please attach your name to anything you submit. If you have any questions, see Sandy Workman, Mary Roelofs, or Sally Herrema.

Free Devotional and Reflection Books are available on the table in the hallway. Help yourself! ~Library Committee

Our Monthly Missionary: Please pray for Hannah Kummer as she serves as a social worker with Mediterranean Hope, a ministry of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI). She helps migrants and refugees in Italy and beyond and mobilizes the church and community to welcome sojourners.

Important Information Regarding Church Cancellations: In the event that Eighth decides to cancel services and/or activities, please tune your TV to Channels 8 (WOOD) or 13 (WZZM), check your email for a Prayer Chain announcement, or go to Eighth Reformed's Facebook page. If you can't access any of this information, call either your elder or deacon on your Care Team and they will know. (To sign up for the Prayer Chain, please see the sign-up sheet in the hallway or call the church office.)

Prayer Concerns and Praises

We extend our condolences to Tom and Linda Rose in the passing away of Linda's sister, Paula England, on December 8th. Her funeral service was held this past Friday, the 19th.

May the hope, peace, and light of Christmas surround and comfort this family during their time of loss.

- ❖ Tom Beaty is experiencing problems with his balance.
- ❖ Pastor Harry and Beth's friend, Carl Ahlquist, who is in prison, is having some urinary tract challenges. He does not have many he can share his concerns with, so we're asking you to be his prayer partners. He would also enjoy some Christmas cards if you feel led to send one:

Carl Ahlquist #189181
Jackson Cooper Street Facility
3100 Cooper St.
Jackson, MI 49201

- ❖ Mel VanderWest and Don Wynalda are under Hospice Care.
- ❖ Those dealing with Chronic Conditions: This week we remember JoAnne Sleeth and Brett Roberts (son of Karen Roberts).
- ❖ Those who are Homebound or in a Care Facility: This week we remember Glenn Bartman and Gladys Kessel.
- ❖ Those Dealing with Health Issues: Ron Engels, Ron & Jenny Benedict, Judy Wynalda, Arvilla DeVries, Betty Holmes, John Stapel, Brian Herweyer (Tim Tacoma's brother-in-law), Donna Miller (Rick Miller's mom), Bob Dickerson (Pastor Mark & Judy Bergsma's son-in-law, Adam's, father), Elaine Yskes (Pastor Mark & Judy Bergsma's son-in-law, Josh's, mother), Lorraine Strating, Jim VerStrate, Tom Noble (Keith Warren's friend), Robert DeYoung, Brenda VanBeek (Joe VanBeek's sister), and Kathy Misiak.

Notes of Appreciation

Thank you everyone for all the birthday cards and wishes. I'm so blessed by everyone!
~Barb Dreyer

Thank you for the prayers and cards I received following the loss of my sister, Gayla. Each one was very much appreciated.
~Marsa Barclay

Dear 8th Reformed Church Family, I was surprised and curious when a package was delivered to my new apartment last week. When I opened the box I saw the most beautiful handmade, delicately detailed, finely sewn colorful quilt. I was overwhelmed by this extremely generous Christmas gift from you. Words cannot adequately express my sincere appreciation to you and my admiration to the talented quilting ladies that made it (from an anonymous donor). Thank you, thank you, thank you.

~Your Brother in Christ, Karl Steininger