



JANUARY 2026



VICAR'S NOTES

It's January, Christmas is over, right? Walmart has moved on to Valentine's Day. Many have already discarded their Christmas tree at the curb for pickup. Decorations are back in the garage or at a storage facility. We may still be deciding what New Year's resolution could be.

January 6th is Epiphany. The Greek word *epiphany* means "appearing." There is an interesting story here. After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Jews were scattered across the world. The Kingdom of Judah was now part of the Assyrian Empire. Now the East has come to Judah. Stargazers seeking the infant king whose birth star they have seen, they go to Herod's Jerusalem palace to inquire about a royal birth in Judah.

The Magi came from the east, during the time of King Herod, and they inquired, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." The prophet Micah had given this prophecy seven centuries earlier. "*But you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rules of Judah; for our of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.*" (Micah 5:2). Matthew's gospel reveals the "other Christmas" "The Visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1–12), the Feast of the Epiphany has often been described as a "Christmas of the Gentiles." And that featured story does indeed anticipate the mission to the Gentiles at the conclusion of the Gospels (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16; and Luke 24:46–47). The appointed Old Testament (Isaiah 60:1–6) and Epistle (Ephesians 3:1–12) further substantiate this mission emphasis, so beautifully expressed in the Nunc Dimittis: "For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, *a Light to lighten the Gentiles*, and the glory of Thy people Israel." The gifts of the Magi are the confession of the Gentiles that the little Lord Jesus, "the Babe, the Son of

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Mary” (*LSB Hymn 370*), “the Child with His Mother” (Matthew 2:11), is King and God and Sacrifice. The gold confesses that He is King, the frankincense that He is God, and the myrrh that He is to be sacrificed, put to death, and buried for the sins of the whole world.

As we learned from John the Baptist, John spoke of Jesus: *“I baptize you with water, for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”* Jesus came teaching love, compassion, and forgiveness.

The Lord God is manifested in the Incarnate Son.

The Feast of the Epiphany centers on the visit of the Magi from the East. In that respect, it is the 13th day of Christmas. Where Christmas has focused on the incarnation of our Lord, that is, on God becoming flesh, the season of Epiphany emphasizes the manifestation or self-revelation of God in that same flesh of Christ. For the Lord Himself has entered our darkness and rises upon us with the brightness of His true light. *“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”* (Isaiah 60:1–2). Paul states clearly to the people in Ephesus: *“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who carried all things.”* (Ephesians 3:8–10). As the Magi were guided by the promises of Holy Scripture to find and worship the Christ Child with His mother in the house (Matt. 2:5–11), so does He call disciples from all nations by the preaching of His Word to find and worship Him within His Church (Isaiah 60:3–6).

The first Christmas was for the Jews, the circumcised, the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But this “other” Christmas is for the Gentiles, those who were once not God’s people, but who now, by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, are now the people of God.

Yours in Christ,
Vicar Collins

Bible Studies



Sunday Morning Bible Study: Please join us after the morning service (and after a cup of coffee – approximately 10:30 a.m.). We are currently studying the Gospel of John.

Table Talk: Table talk is a very informal Bible study held on Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM. Participants come with any sort of question. We work to answer those questions from God's Word and from our Lutheran Confessions. In doing that we all learn more about God's Word and its application in our lives. We are currently studying Philippians and possibly Ephesians. All are welcome. Please consider joining us!

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sunday School has resumed at Redeemer Lutheran Church. All of us here at Redeemer joyfully welcome all children every Sunday, during Divine Service.

If you have any questions, please contact Yvonne Brussel at 516-476-8241 or at yayabrussel@yahoo.com.



PROPERTY APPRECIATION DAY --JAN 17TH

We sure could use some help on our Property Appreciation Day every month. There is outside work to do and cleaning and dusting that needs to be done inside the Church. If you can help, please come by the Church and we will put you to work. Please search your heart to see if there is anything you can do to help maintain and beautify the Lord's home and property.

Property Appreciation Day is the THIRD SATURDAY of every month

SERVING THE LORD

Vicar Collins Sita

Secretary Michelle Kluver

Organist

Choir Director

Newsletter Pat Finkenbine

School Admin Wendy Horvath

Child Care Director Brandi Fordham

School Admin Asst

OFFICERS

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Vice President Mike Nagel

Treasurer Lucia De Marco-Kruse

Acting Secretary Lori Wasson

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Head Elder

Christian Ed. Catalina Bakas

Human Care Cathy Mielke

Outreach

Assimilation

School Board

Stewardship

Youth

Financial

Secretary Sherrie Keese

Property Mgmt.

GROUPS/GUILDS

Altar Guild Catalina Bakas

Coffee Hour

***The deadline for the February 2026 Newsletter is January 18th.
PLEASE have all your submissions sent to patchas123@gmail.com
OR drop them off at the church office by the date indicated above. Thank You!***



"And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new. Also, He said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true'" (Revelation 21:5).

In January there is a great deal of "new" talk. Parties are held to ring in the "new" year. "New" year's resolutions are made to set a "new" course of life in the "new" year. There is date forgetfulness as checks and other forms are filled out without using the "new" year on the dateline.

We use all this "new" talk because there is very often so much wrong with the old in us. We think back to the "new" resolutions from the previous year that only lasted a few weeks. That "new" person did not shed any pounds and instead, picked up a few. The "new" habits of going to the gym were soon replaced by even more time on the couch binging on Netflix. The "new" person who does not lose their temper, use sarcasm as a lethal weapon and spend more money than necessary, but who worships, prays and serves the Lord and the neighbor, never seemed to stick around. We need "new" talk because the Old Adam is alive and well within every one of us.

But this promise of "new" is a matter of stewardship. It is the Lord Himself who makes the promise of all things being new. These words recorded by St. John are not pious wishes or hopeless promises. They do what they say. YOU, that one baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection, are NEW! These words are indeed trustworthy and true. This "new" comes to you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes free of charge, even without our prayer.

This stewardship of "new" is not a vague, someday kind of stewardship either. You are NEW now! Forgiven. Reborn from above. The old is gone, nailed to Calvary's cross and buried and rotting in a tomb that was only borrowed by Jesus for His resurrection rest. The Gospel is what makes us NEW every morning. Remembering your baptism, you are new. Confessing your sins and receiving absolution makes you new. Hearing the Gospel filling your ears makes you new. Feasting on Christ's body and blood in the Holy Supper makes you new.

These mercies, totally undeserved as they are, are entrusted to us to steward TODAY even as we long for the Last Day. But we know how often we fail in this stewardship. We hoard God's creation as if it belongs to us. We belittle and devalue our neighbor because they look or sound or act in a way that we do not like. We seek to make the Holy Word of God softer and more palatable for those, or even ourselves, who refuse to confess sin as sin and repent. We value our comfort over truth, our reputation over faithfulness and our treasure over making sure that people get to hear of the Jesus who has done so much for the world and us.

We, as stewards of the Gospel, need to be made new every day. This is exactly what the Lord does. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel last year, so He gives us a new year. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel yesterday, and He gives us a new day. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel in the last few minutes, and yet in mercy our newness comes with each tick of the clock! Because that is how the Lord works.

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As we see this working of all new things in us, it then calls us to be stewards of this newness to the world. This starts right in our own homes. It radiates out to our neighbors. It beams out from our congregations. This newness is teamed at the circuit, district and Synod levels all to shine the newness of the Gospel to those who need it.

Your new talk starts in the newness of the Gospel. Steward this treasure in this new year and this new day. It starts with a new you in Jesus. This is indeed trustworthy and true."



CHURCH OFFICE UPDATES

Questions/Answers: If you have any questions, corrections, additions to the bulletin, or if you have another problem I could help with, please contact me (*Michelle, Church Secretary*) - I am blessed to be a part of Redeemer Lutheran and am very happy to help!

"Who is..." Article:

- ♦ Tentatively starting in January 2026, we will have a new "Who is..." article in the Bulletin to help us get to know our fellow congregants and volunteers! If you know anyone you would like to recognize, please send an email to church.secretary@redeemerfl.com.
- ♦ **Thessalonians 5:11-12** ¹¹ *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.* ¹² *Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you."*

Church Secretary Contact Information: Michelle can be contacted in person at church, via email at church.secretary@redeemerfl.com, or by phone at 941-475-2410. Office hours are (usually) Tuesday through Friday from 8:00am to 2:00pm.

MORE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH REDEEMER

Facebook: Did you know Redeemer has its own Facebook page? Recently Paulette Sita has taken over keeping it updated with all the latest Redeemer news! To take a look, just search "Redeemer Lutheran Englewood" in your Facebook app or your web browser. ***Our Sunday Services are broadcast live on Facebook every week!***

Website: We have our own website, which, along with our monthly newsletter, is beautifully maintained by Pat Finkenbine. The website can be found by googling "Redeemer Lutheran Englewood" or going to RedeemerFL.com.



Church: www.redeemerfl.com
Child Care: www.redeemerfl-cc.com
School: www.redeemerfl-school.com



Redeemer Lutheran Church of Englewood
Redeemer Lutheran Child Care
Redeemer Lutheran School

UPCOMING EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS — JANUARY 2026

01/07/26 12:00 p.m. Wed. Elders' Meeting (Narthex)
01/13/26 12:00 p.m. Tue. Joint School Board and Council Meeting
with Jennifer Tanner
01/14/26 12:00 p.m. Wed. School Board Meeting (Report for Council)
01/17/26 10:00 a.m. Sat. Property Appreciation Day
01/20/26 12:00 p.m. Tues. Ladies' Luncheon
01/21/26 12:00 p.m. Wed. Church Council Meeting
01/25/25 10:30 a.m. Sun. Quarterly Voters' Meeting



Healing Prayers for members:

Catalina Bakas, Wayne Buel, Ed & Jan DeTrow, Lana Garay, Judy Guastella, Jane Harty, Wendy Horvath, Sherrie Keesee, Joyce Krug, Jerry Lindberg, Chuck & Elaine Malecki, Cathy Mielke, Tom & Sue Poyer, Randy Schaub, Jim & Bonnie Schluentz, Bob Varone, and Pauline Vickey.

Prayers for Friends and relatives:

Mike Bakas, Karen Bartram, Joseph Caivano, Michelle Cote, Pat Finkenbine, Paulette Gaines, Glenn Galway, Mikayla Hacksunda, Renee Hickman, Ann Ledesma, Connor & Cerena Morrell, Esther Murphy, Merry Sammons, Desiree Schultz, Karen Wasson-Geis.



Financial information is available to
all members upon request.

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!" Psalm 98:4

K & 1 — K-1 has had a productive December! They have begun learning about the birth of John the Baptist and will be finishing the week learning about the birth of Jesus. Last week we invited our VPK class next door to join us in Gingerbread Day. They were able to make ornaments, trap a Gingerbread Man, play with homemade playdoh, make a small gingerbread house, and make reindeer food! Having VPK join us is a great tradition that we look forward to each year. We are looking forward to a New Year that will start off with Arctic Animals, each child will write a report and bring in their animal. We ended our 2nd quarter learning about Christmas around the world. This week we will end in Italy! *Mrs. Cataloni*

2 & 3 — This month, students demonstrated strong performance in mathematics, particularly in mastering multiplication and division skills. In addition to academic progress, students engaged in creative arts and crafts projects focused on a Christmas theme, which included designing self-portraits as elves and constructing snow globes. The curriculum incorporated lessons on religious studies, focusing on the biblical account of Jesus healing the blind. *Mrs. Awadallah*

4 & 5 — What's Happening in 4th/5th grade? For December we spent a lot of time working on fractions (improper, proper and mixed numbers). 4th grade had an opportunity to partake in the learning of fractions and how to simplify and add/ subtract them. This year we were able to work with the other grade levels to enjoy Gingerbread Day. The students made gingerbread houses and were also guides for the younger students in the activities. Hard to believe Christmas break starts next week! We hope you and your family have a very Merry Christmas and a beautiful start to the New Year..... see you then! *Mrs. Hart*

6 — Our sixth-grade class has had a wonderful year so far, filled with curiosity, growth, and many new learning experiences. Students have been working hard across all subject areas, and it has been exciting to see their confidence and skills continue to develop. In math, students have been strengthening their number sense by learning how to multiply and divide fractions and decimals. They have practiced applying these skills through word problems and real-world examples, helping them better understand how math connects to everyday situations. In writing, students have been focusing on composing strong, well-organized paragraphs. This includes using correct punctuation, proper capitalization, and clear sentence structure. We have also been working on proper essay formatting, helping students prepare for longer writing assignments with confidence. In science, students have been exploring the hidden treasures of the Earth. This unit focuses on important fuels such as coal and petroleum, how they are mined and refined, and how we use them in our daily

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lives. Students have also been learning about caves, including the different types of caves, how they form, and the unique life found within them—such as troglodytes. In history, our focus has been on colonial heritage. Students have learned about Spain and France in the New World, England and the Bible, Roanoke: The Lost Colony, and Jamestown: the first permanent English colony. We have also discussed the Pilgrims and explored the role of churches and schools in the Southern Colonies.

Mrs. Longenecker

7 & 8 Dear Redeemer Congregation, my class wishes to extend a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year, first and foremost. In our classes they have been busy. In Math the class has been introduced to Algebra II and Geometry. In English combined with History the class has written a Paper on a Holocaust Survivor that they have learned about in History class. The class has been extremely interested in learning about the Holocaust; some have personal experience with relatives that were affected by this horrible tragedy. In Science I broke out our Robot kits to let the class have some fun before break. In Bible the class has been doing an advent Book on Jesus and his amazing birth and life for us. With Blessings from 7th and 8th grade good tidings everyone, with love *Coach Don*

Up Coming Dates:

1/12 -1/16 MAP Testing

1/19 No School

2/11 Early Release

2/16 No School





We're gathered for something simple, yet very meaningful—a Book Share Box that represents generosity, learning, and community. This box is more than wood and paint; it is an invitation. An invitation for our children to discover new stories, for families to share resources, and for neighbors to give freely and receive with gratitude.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to Jerry Lindberg, who so generously donated his time, talent, and heart to create this beautiful Book Share Box for Redeemer Lutheran School and Child Care. Jerry's craftsmanship and kindness will bless countless children and families for years to come.

At Redeemer, we believe that nurturing young minds goes hand in hand with nurturing young hearts. God's Word reminds us in Proverbs 22:6:

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."



Books open doors to imagination, understanding, and faith—and this box reflects our mission to serve, teach, and share God's love in practical ways. It's not just a new addition to our campus, but a spirit of sharing. Take a book, leave a book, and most importantly—share the joy of reading.

Mary and Joseph reminding us of the true meaning of Christmas—Christ's birth—during the Rotonda Christmas Parade in Englewood, Florida.



**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH,
SCHOOL & CHILD CARE**

6970 Mineola Rd.
Englewood, FL 34224

ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED - OPTION 1

January
2026

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH,
SCHOOL & CHILD CARE**

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REDEEMER REPORTER

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WORSHIP SERVICES:

Divine Service: 9:15 am

Bible Study: 10:30 am



The Redeemer Lutheran Church, School & Child Care Family are called into the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by His command (Matthew 28:18-20) to:

- ♦ *Disciple all nations, that is, all people;*
- ♦ *Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;*
- ♦ *Proclaim the Gospel and teach His Word in its truth and purity; and*
- ♦ *Never be ashamed of the Gospel—it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16)*