



Emmanuel

United Church of Christ

1306 Michigan Street
Oshkosh, WI 54902
920.235.8340
emmanueloshkosh.org

the lamplighter

Hearing Loop Installed in Sanctuary.
Switch Hearing Aid to Telecoil.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

with Communion

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

 **LIVE** 3:00pm | 5:00pm
STREAMING

Pastor Andi's Message

December 2025

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My 'Bible verse of the day' that popped up a week or so ago was from the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5. The specific verse was verse 10, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That has kind of been rattling around in my brain the last few days. Jesus lifts something we ferociously avoid as a blessing—being persecuted.

Now seriously, isn't that just like Jesus?! We spend all sorts of resources making sure we are never persecuted for our beliefs. Lawmakers try to pass laws protecting religious freedom. The effort to ensure we never feel any difficulty in exercising our personal beliefs, the laws passed oftentimes make life more difficult for others. And without meaning to we have begun to do the very thing Jesus called out the religious leaders about. Man-made doctrine becomes more important to us than the very commands of Jesus. We accept and reject things based on if they are conservative or progressive, rather than if they are Christ-like.

The bottom line is that we are not called to simply worship Jesus. We are called to try to be like Jesus. Sometimes that leads to hardship. Trust me, I don't like that anymore than you do. But evil and darkness are strong, and they fight for every foothold they get. When the light of truth calls out injustice, darkness fights back and tries to extinguish the light. The Beatitudes remind us of the characteristics that Jesus taught. Blessings come to those who are forced to be meek in this life, the downtrodden, hopeless, and oppressed who continue to keep the faith. Blessings come to those who work for justice and peace, who show mercy and remain pure in heart. It is important to note that the characteristics Jesus lifts are the very same ones that darkness and evil sneer at—showing mercy, being meek, working for justice for the 'least of these' in the world. Jesus followers care about the need around them while the darkness just laughs.

Jesus was no stranger to persecution. What we experience is more 'pushback' than 'persecution.' But if you ever hear a snide comment about being too willing to forgive, too generous with God's grace or your resources, too much of a rule follower, too upset about the injustice in this world, too worried about the hardships of others, too...good, just smile. You are choosing to not simply worship Jesus but be more like him. Jesus promises blessings in the next life, but we know that simply following and being more like Jesus brings ample blessing to this life. Do lots of good! Amen.

Pastor Andi

pastor.andi@emmanueloshkosh.org

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Ushers

You can sign up for ushering on our website in the “get Involved” Section. You can also call the church office if you are interested in ushering.

Please consider signing up!

December Usher Schedule

Sunday, December 7th – Ron & Sandra Golliher

Sunday, December 14th – Dan & Rene Rogers

Sunday, December 21st – Brad & Liz Schultz

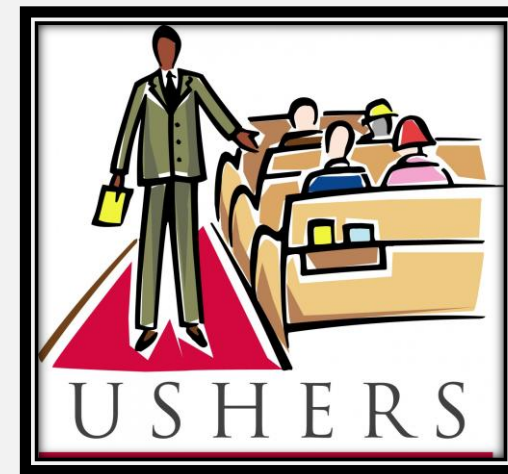
Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

3:00pm – Volunteers are Needed

5:00pm – Volunteers are Needed

Sunday, December 29th – Mike & Alice Peppler

Would you like to be an Usher? Please sign up online at Get Involved on our website, emmanueloshkosh.org.



Treasurer's Nook

December 2025

October cash flow is a negative for the month (\$1,965). With a year to date negative cash flow of (\$10,343).

Thank you to all that participated in the Raise Right program which will also have carwash cards for sale to help keep your cars clean through fall and the start of winter. Also, don't forget those gift cards and Vande Walles candy bars will be for sale once again for those stocking stuffers. Thank you to all that participated in our fund raisers this year. If you have any questions regarding the script program stop at the desk before the service on Sunday morning or give our office a call.

October 2025 Results

The Numbers	Monthly Budget	Monthly Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Actual
Direct Giving	17,079	17,906	172,235	159,871
Other Income	3,877	3,483	41,626	55,321
Total Income	20,956	21,389	213,861	215,191
Total Expenses	24,242	23,354	225,635	225,534
Cashflow/(Deficit)	(3,286)	(1,965+)	(11,774)	(10,343)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Rene Rogers

Rene Rogers
Treasurer

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RaiseRight – Gift Cards

RAISE RIGHT orders are due on Sunday, December 7th and Sunday, December 14th in time for the holidays!

We will notify you when your cards have arrived.

You can sit in your warm comfy house and have all your Christmas shopping taken care of by taking advantage of our Raise Right program. Pick up an order blank at the RaiseRight table located in the lower narthex. Fill it out. Turn it in by the 7th or 14th and your cards will be available the following Sunday from your order date. Emmanuel also receives a percentage from every card ordered.

Thank you to **Lisa Smith & Leanne Monroe** for managing the program. Thank you also to **Margaret Yoder & Sandra Golliher** for selling the cards on Sunday mornings.



Food Pantry

Food Pantry Update...

December 2025

During the month of October, we served 119 families. 208 adults and 176 children were served. 24 families were new to our pantry. Approximately 12,495 pounds of food was distributed.

The first week of November we had some big numbers. We started the month with 51 families coming to our pantry in one week! November was also our month for requesting food donations being placed by the altar to be blessed at Thanksgiving Eve worship. We had a generous amount of donations come in! Thank you to everyone who donated food for the food pantry. It was much needed and greatly appreciated.

We would like to thank our sister church **St. Paul** for collecting food for our pantry. Thank you also, to **Red's Piggly Wiggly, Festival Foods, 4Imprint, JJ Keller and Silver Creek Meats** for their continued support of our pantry.

We wouldn't even be able to operate a food pantry if it wasn't for our dedicated volunteers. Thank you to **Henry Caron** for his management skills in running the pantry so efficiently. Thank you to **Gail Hable, Ray Hitz, Jody Schaick, Sandy Folske, Sherry Pepler, Carol Wiechman, Debbie Kraemer, Meg Hable, Peter Smith, Rick Pepler, Lisa Smith, Kim Winter, Mike Winter, Jim Schaick, Dan Monroe and Brad Schultz.**

If you are looking for a place to volunteer, please consider our food pantry. We could always use the extra help!

When planning your holiday shopping, please remember our own Food Pantry!! The need for non-perishable food items to help fill the pantry shelves is ongoing. Your donations would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for helping us, help those in need in our community!



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Thank you

- Thank you to **Craig Geiger, Leanne Monroe, Jody Schaick, Brooklyn Schultz, Cory Schultz, Lisa Smith and Kim Winter** for running the projector and live streaming our worship services.
- Thank you to **Quinn Bursack, Deb Kraemer, Leanne Monroe, Linda Stowe and Milo Dehne** for leading us in worship as Liturgists.
- Thank you to **Ann Stark** for providing the children's activity bags.
- Thank you Ray!! 😊
- Thank you to **Dennis & Karen Chapin, Ron Golliher, Mary Dinkins, Marilyn Morrison & Val Basler** for providing the set-up and clean up of coffee hour every Sunday. We appreciate all that you do so that we are able to share in fellowship on Sunday mornings.
- Thank you to **Jim Schaick** for maintaining the grounds around the Church.
- Thank you to **Ray Hitz & Mike Winter** for putting up the outdoor Christmas lights.
- Thank you to **Dennis Chapin** for repairing the church pew.
- Thank you to **Leanne Bloedow** for maintaining the outdoor flower pots.
- Thank you to **Leanne Monroe and Kim Winter** for cleaning the carpeting as well as the church pews.
- Thank you to **Dan & Leanne Monroe & Jim Schaick** for doing the outdoor fall clean up.
- ***Thank you to Peter Smith, Lisa Smith, Margaret Yoder, Mary Dinkins, Carol Wiechman, Kim Winter, Lori Potratz and Dawn Davies for their time and hard work that went into making the soup and getting it ready for the Soup2Go Fundraiser for this year. We had a total profit of \$2140.00! Amazing!! Thank you to everyone who purchased and enjoyed the soup!***

Coming Up...

JOIN US FOR BIBLE STUDY THE 3RD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT NOON IN THE LOWER NARTHEX

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Chime Choir | 5:30PM

Confirmation | 6:00PM (No Class Dec. 24th & 31st)

Chancel Choir | 6:30PM

Advent Bible Study | 12:00p

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Tuesday December 9, 2025

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Church Council | 6:30p

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Oshkosh North Madrigals | 8:45a

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Sunday School Christmas Program | 9:00a

Sunday, December 14, 2025



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Sunday School

Dear Sunday School Families,

December is such a special time of year! As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we're reminded that God's greatest gift to the world was His Son — and through Him, we are each made special and loved beyond measure.

This month, our theme is "God's Most Precious Gift Is You."

Each child is an important piece of God's beautiful puzzle. Just like puzzle pieces, we are all different — but when we come together, we help show the full picture of God's love and plan. Let's focus on how we can use our unique gifts to share God's love with others.

Bible Focus Verse:

"You are the light of the world." — Matthew 5:14

We can shine God's love through our kindness, joy, and care for others.

At home connection:

Share God's Love Challenge ❤️

As a family, come up with one simple way each week to show God's love —examples: bake cookies for a neighbor, make Christmas cards, donate to a toy or food drive, or pray for someone in need.

Masterpiece Mirror 🎨

Let your child decorate a small mirror or a piece of paper with a mirror sticker in the middle.

Write around it: "I am God's masterpiece" — Ephesians 2:10.

Every time they see their reflection, remind them that God made them special and with a purpose.

As we celebrate this season of giving, let's remember that the most precious gifts can't be wrapped — they're found in the love of family and the joy we share together.

Please consider giving any personal care items towards our mission project.

Focus item for this month: toothpaste & toothbrushes

Reminders:

December 14th - Christmas Program

December 28th - No Sunday School

January 11th - Sunday School

Wishing you a blessed and joy-filled Christmas,
Blessings to you,

Emily Simons

Sunday School Superintendent

sunday.school@emmanueloshkosh.org

Church Council

Church Council Meeting Highlights

November 11, 2025

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Leanne. Opening prayer by Pastor Andi.

President's Report: Have sold 137 candy bars so far. Soup2Go made \$2140, all of which was profit because all materials were donated. Carpet Cleaning – all carpets done and they are now cleaning pew cushions. Blinds - Big double blind on the west side of the all-purpose room has a gear that is stripped, and Tom Polzin will fix when he has the part. Service call was free, but council voted to give a Kwik Trip card for the miles driven. Looking to get blinds for the 7 windows in lower narthex. Tom Polzin gave bid for vertical blinds. Council discussed looking into some we can purchase and install ourselves. Will revisit in 2026.

Secretary's Report: Report accepted as corrected (date missing).

Treasurer's Report: Reviewed October financial reports. We had a negative cash flow of (\$1,964.81) with a negative YTD of (\$10,342.92). Alliant Energy stock was down \$1.11 per share for the month. Majority of expenses for the month were Pastor's health insurance/pension, GuideOne Insurance, and payroll taxes. Report accepted as received. Food pantry budget allocation to cover the costs of maintaining freezers and such will be kept the same as last year.

Pastor's Report: I will be having my regular Communities of Practice meeting on the third Tuesday of each month through June, as well as my monthly clergy meetings that meet the first Thursday of each month.

I officiated at the wedding of Bob and Tammy (Ellis) Nienhaus on October 18.

Trunks for Treats on October 26 went well. We have decided that our notices to the public need to have an end time on them as we had people stopping by after everyone had packed up.

Memorial and Endowment met last month. We will be discussing their suggested allocations later.

Our All Saints service on November 2 had two people recognized, Lynda Mohr (from 2023) and Lee Burton. I think that is the smallest group for All Saints Day in my 15 years here.

Sr. High Youth group continues to meet the first Sunday of each month at 5:00pm.

I met with Connie Whittaker about her 6-month evaluation. I have not written those notes up and cannot share them with you until I send a copy to Connie. She is happy with her role. I am happy with her. I think it's all good.

November 13 I am officiating at Jim Peppler's funeral.

Tom Fritz will be preaching for me this week, both Thursday evening and Sunday morning. Despite my presence in the office yesterday, here tonight, and at the funeral Thursday, I am on 'vacation.'

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November 11, 2025

Continued

Pastor's Report: I am meeting with my clergy colleagues Friday in Plymouth.

November 25 I am starting an Advent Bible Study. We will meet for four consecutive Tuesdays at noon. The Sunday worship service will follow the topic discussed at Bible Study.

Thanksgiving Eve service is on Wednesday, November 26 at 7:00.

November 29 is decorating for Christmas.

November 29 I am officiating at Lee Burton's funeral.

The Oshkosh North Madrigal Singers are scheduled for December 14 at 8:45am. That is also the Sunday School program date.

Christmas Eve Services will be at 3:00 and 5:00, just as they were last year. We will need to make sure we have communion covered at both services—this includes an idea of who will be helping to serve. Candles in the aisle candelabras need to be switched out between services and lit before both services. Lori and I will make sure the refills for the aisle candles, as well as the personal candles, are ready and available for the service. I will need people who are willing to turn down the house lights at that part of the service.

Vice President's Report: Welcome Leanne Bloedow to fill the Deacon position!

Deacon's Report: Lori has some orders placed for wafers.

Trustee's Report: Luebke roofing - nothing obvious to repair as of now, 2 people's full day work bid would be \$2500 with no sure thing to repair (so no leak solved) - we're waiting until after winter. Rock Solid tuck pointing (gutter leaking out backside could be causing the problem), estimate for whole east side \$10,000 if they can bring a lift in, \$14,000 if they cannot. We need more bids - they aren't doing anything until spring. Ron Golliher was seeing if this Friday would work for fall cleaning. Leanne M. asked if we are winter ready for furnace, filters, fire extinguishers.

Old Business: AT&T update—nothing is working right so we're still with Spectrum. Hope for that to be fixed soon. GuideOne asked Lori about roof and general facility for the renewal Jan 1st. We're waiting to see the new bill.

New Business: Council approved the Memorial and Endowment Fund annual income approval. We won't be doing a pizza/pizza coupon sale this year. Did a preliminary look at the 2026 budget. Bid for new windows in the lower narthex from Omni Glass \$10,400 (\$1485 per window). Will discuss at a later time.

Annual Meeting is set for Feb. 8th after worship.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. Next meeting is on December 9th, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

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We are still collecting metal tabs from beverage cans for the Ronald McDonald House in Wisconsin. You can bring them in and drop them off in the office or in the little white church in the upper narthex. Thank you to **EARL & LAURIE DORST** for picking up and delivering these to St. Paul.



Do you have a concern you would like offered up in prayer? You can enter your request on our website at emmanueloshkosh.org. You can also call the church office at 920-235-8340 any weekday morning.



Are you having a procedure or surgery in the near future? Please contact the church office (920-235-8340) and let us know. Pastor Andi would like to make sure she is there for you and your family. If you mention it on a Sunday morning, she might forget. Due to HIPAA the hospital is not allowed to call and let us know if you are a patient or not. Thank you for your help!



As pre-worship time gets increasingly hectic, a reminder that if you have a prayer concern that is very important for you to share, please write it down and give it to Pastor Andi at least 10 minutes before worship begins, or place it on the pulpit. Thank you!



VandeWalle's Candy Bars are on sale!!

We will be selling VandeWalle's candy bars in the lower narthex on Sunday mornings. **The price will be \$2.00 per candy bar.** While supplies last, the flavors available are Milk Chocolate, Dark Chocolate, Chocolate Truffle, English Toffee, Peanut Butter Meltaway, Mint Truffle, Caramel Nut and Caramel. If you would like to help sell the candy bars on Sundays, please contact the church office. You can also purchase candy bars weekday mornings in the church office. These make great stocking stuffers!

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CELEBRATION OF LIGHTS AT EAA CAMPGROUNDS



This year Emmanuel will be collecting food for our pantry at Celebration of Lights (COL) **Sunday, December 21st thru Friday, December 26th.** Some of the nights we will be asked to supply volunteers to man 3 huts. The hours will be from 5:15pm until 9:00pm(ish) depending on the number of cars going thru. COL would like to have the huts covered for the whole night instead of splitting shifts. However, if you are unable to cover a whole shift we can make arrangements for you to split the time. Call the church office if you are able to help. Thanks!



THE CHRISTMAS FUND

Please use the Christmas Fund envelope in this Lamplighter for your donations to help ensure more retired and active United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need. Last year, over 1,800 congregations joined together to secure the physical, financial, and spiritual health of those engaged in the life of the Church. Please remember to put your name on the envelope to insure proper credit to your account.

CHURCH STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFTS

We are once again offering the opportunity to express our thanks to the staff at Emmanuel by participating in the "Free Will White Envelope Offering". Please include your name on the outside of the white envelop in this Lamplighter for proper credit to your account. Please list the names of the employees on the outside of the envelope and how you want the gift divided. If there are no names listed, the gift will be divided equally among all the employees of the church.

The employees are as follows:

Pastor Andi

Mary Dinkins

Lori Holland

Connie Whittaker

Pastor

Minister of Music

Administrative Assistant

Custodian

It is the wish of the Church Council, that this will give you a way to express your thanks for their help, support, caring and spiritual strength throughout the year.

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Peace Light

*Share the love. Spread the light.
Join us in December as we share the
Peace Light's message of love and unity.*



4800 Fahrnwald Road, Oshkosh

www.jesuitretreathouse.org

Candlelight Mass

Tuesday, December 2nd at 5:00pm

Ecumenical Prayer Service

Sunday, December 7th at 2:30pm

Pastor Andi will be helping at the Sunday service.

Since its origin in the grotto of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem,
the Peace Light has been carried across the world
as a symbol of peace, hope, and friendship.

This continuous flame reminds us that Christ's light still shines
in the darkness, passed person to person, heart to heart.

Jesuit Retreat House is a designated "Keeper of the Light," maintaining the flame and making it available to others.
Those who wish to take the Peace Light with them must have their own way of safely transporting the flame.

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Lay Visitation Team:

Pastor Andi
Earl & Laurie Dorst

Connie Whittaker
Carolyn Rukas

Leanne Monroe
Quinn & Bruce Bursack

Kim Winter
Mary Dinkins

Sandy Golliher

The purpose of the Lay Visitation Team is to provide spiritual and pastoral care to those members of Emmanuel who are unable to attend services, such as the homebound, hospitalized, or grieving.

The Lay Visitation Team meets once a quarter following worship service on Sunday. If you know of any members that are unable to attend church service and would benefit from the care the team provides, please feel free to reach out to one of the Lay Visitation team members so we can ensure those requesting visits are attended to.

Connie Whittaker,
EUCC Lay Visitation Team Coordinator

**2026 GIVING ENVELOPES
WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE OF YOU
STILL RECEIVING ENVELOPES
THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
IN THE UPPER NARTHEX**

MEET OUR 2026 CHURCH COUNCIL

President – Leanne Monroe Vice President – Dan Rogers
Treasurer – Rene Rogers Secretary – Zach Wolf
Trustee – Craig Geiger Trustee – Tom Stark
Trustee – Jim Schaick Trustee – Noah Wilson
Deacon – Debra Kraemer Deacon – Earl Dorst
Deacon – Laurie Dorst Deacon – Leanne Bloedow

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As we turn another page in our calendars, It's time to think about Emmanuel's upcoming "Giving Tree."

This special tree was originally called "The Bunny Tree"...then "The Mitten Tree" – sponsored by Daughters of Sarah. Renamed as the "Giving Tree," it will be located in the lower narthex, and again be collecting warm weather items for members of our community in need for the upcoming winter weather and will be given at Christmas.



If you knit, warm scarves are always appreciated. Men's items most often needed are warm socks and/or gloves and hats. (Hint: Goodwill stores have brand new packs of thermal socks on sale) Colorful scarves, mittens/gloves were given to a local school last year, where they were given to children who had none. Father Carr's Place To Be has been a recipient of women's and children's items over the years, but wherever they go, our gifts are always very much appreciated.

It's time to plan ahead! Items can be dropped off with The Tree Gals...Carolyn, Marilyn or Valeria at Sunday's Fellowship Hour...put in the Lower Level Narthex closet...or give them to Mary Dinkins or Lori in the office. They will be put under tree as soon as it's up!!

Thank you in advance for your help in making the holidays a little brighter (and warmer) for our neighbors!!



**PIZZA RANCH FUNDRAISER
1051 W. WASHBURN STREET
OSHKOSH
ON
MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2026
FROM 4 – 8PM**

Emmanuel will receive 10% of the proceeds from 4 -8pm

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POINSETTIA & EMMANUEL CHURCH DONATIONS

We are offering the option of ordering a **Poinsettia** or making a **donation to Emmanuel Church** in honor or memory of a loved one this holiday season.

If you are ordering a Poinsettia orders have to be in by DECEMBER 7TH with your payment.
If you are making a donation to Emmanuel please have your donation in by December 14th.

Please **PRINT** your information clearly. Thank you!

If you are ordering a Poinsettia, please make sure you are able to pick it up after Christmas!



Please Print	
In Memory of:	
In Honor of:	
Given by:	
Poinsettia (How Many): _____ (\$12.00 ea.)	Amount:
Emmanuel Donation Amount:	

Poinsettia deadline is December 7th.
Emmanuel Donation Deadline is December 14th.

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If you have any questions or concerns for the Church Council, Memorial and Endowment Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee, please find the contact information below:

Church Council

Leanne Monroe	Zach Wolf
Rene Rogers	Dan Rogers
Debra Kraemer	Earl Dorst
Linda Stowe	Laurie Dorst
Craig Geiger	Noah Wilson
Tom Stark	Jim Schaick

Memorial/Endowment Committee:

Jeff Stark	Ann Stark
Deb Bartel	Sherri Annis
Sandy Golliher	Margaret Yoder
Emily Reyes	

Pastoral Relations Committee:

Sandra Golliher	Kay Lund
Julie Barthels	Lori Potratz
Faith Lueck	

Please consider volunteering for any of these committees, please contact the church office 235-8340 if you are interested.

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