

The Cardinal Chronicle

December 10, 2025



Upcoming Events

Dec. 13 - School Children's Christmas Service - 3:00 pm with Cookies & Cocoa fellowship after service

Dec. 17 - Combined Lutheran Pioneers/Youth Caroling for Homebound Members - 5:30 pm

Dec. 20 - Christmas Eve practices with Sunday School at church - 9:00 - 11:00 am

Dec. 23 - Last Day of Classes - Early Release at 1:00 pm

Dec. 24 - Children's Christmas Eve Service - 6:30 pm

Hot Lunch

Hot lunch this week will be Kraft mac n cheese, chicken nuggets, peas and a cookie provided by the Schimming family in honor of Josslyn and Jaxon's birthday.

Mission Offering

Progress:

Last week's chapel offering for God's Kingdom was \$58.51 bringing our total to \$827.84 for the semester.



Children's Christmas Service this Saturday

Just a reminder that our school Children's Christmas service will take place this **Saturday, December 13** at **3:00 pm**. Please have your **children to church by 2:40 pm in the church basement**. The children should wear church appropriate clothing for this service. It's a wonderful opportunity to invite your family and friends to hear the

wonderful message of Christmas night and our dear Savior's birth. The Cookies and Cocoa fellowship will follow the service in the church basement. If you are bringing cookies for the fellowship, you can drop them off in the church basement when you bring your child(ren). A freewill offering will be gathered during the service which will be donated to our first semester World Mission project that is helping supply sanitary bathroom conditions for families in African villages.

Church and School Christmas Eve Service Practices

The final practice for those children who will be participating in the Children's Christmas Eve service, along with the Sunday School children will be on **Saturday, December 20th** from 9am-11am. **Only the students attending the Christmas Eve service** need to come to this practice.

Pickup/Dropoff Update

The recent snow has added just a bit more friction to our school pickup. Something that a number of families are experiencing is when parking on the South side (closest to the church) of the parking lot, they have to walk across the parking lot to get to the door, often walking very close to moving cars and buses. Having more families utilize the "drive thru" would lessen the number of people walking through the parking lot, making it safer for all. If your child is able to walk in on their own, please consider driving around and pulling right up to the school to pick up or drop off your child.

Parent Conversations

In this month's Parent Conversations several authors share memories of children's Christmas services they experienced, with the one message that was shared through them all. The article is entitled: A Children's Christmas Service to Remember.

School Christmas Party and Pajama Day

Our last day of school before the Christmas break will be Tuesday, December 23rd. Children may wear their favorite pajamas on that day. We will have an all-school Christmas party with the school providing the main meal of pizza at no cost. We ask that parents from our Grades K - 8 families please help with snacks and treats for the party by going to the Sign Up Genius on our school website. Thank you to everyone who will provide these treats to make our party extra special. We will have an early release that day, with dismissal at 1:00 pm. The buses will be running and will pick up children at 1:00 pm.

Christmas Break

Our Christmas break will run from December 24th through January 2nd, 2026 with classes resuming on **Monday, January 5th, 2026.**

Tuition Payments

If you are making tuition payments for December, please have your payment to Mrs. Sargent no later than Friday, December 19th. Thank you for your help.

Hot Lunch Available Dates for Second Semester

Thank you so much to everyone who has signed up for hot lunch meals so far this year. We greatly appreciate your willingness to provide these special lunches to our students who really look forward to them. We do have three dates open yet for next semester: March 6, April 24, and May 1. If you are willing and able to help provide a hot lunch during the second semester, please go to the Sign Up Genius on our school website to choose a date. Thank you to everyone!!

Winter Weather Closings and Delays



Just a quick reminder in case of any winter weather school closings or delays, please note the following:

1. St. John follows the closings of both the Peshtigo and Coleman School Districts because of busing.
2. If both school districts are closed, St. John is also closed.
3. **If** the Peshtigo school district is closed, **but** Coleman is not, St. John **IS** closed.
4. **If** the Coleman school district is closed, **but** Peshtigo is not, St. John **IS** closed.
5. **If either** of the districts **is delayed**, St. John **is also delayed**.
6. Families will be contacted via SchoolMessenger as well to inform you of closings or delays. **Please make sure you have signed up for SchoolMessenger to receive those messages.**

Parent conversations: A children's Christmas service to remember

forwardinchrist.net/christmas-service-memories

November 30, 2025



I've sat through roughly one hundred children's Christmas services so far in my life. Each one has been special—honestly. The familiar parts are like an old friend—comforting and steadfast—while the new elements often leave me breathless. More than anything, though, my favorite part of each service is watching faith passed on from generation to generation. Like Mary, I treasure these things and ponder them in my heart.

If asked to recall a specific memory from a service in the past—the challenge I posed to this month's "Parent conversations" authors—I would struggle. I don't remember moments so much as feelings. A feeling of being loved and cherished when I hear that God came down to earth to save me. A feeling of awe and gratefulness for all that took place in order for me to spend eternity in heaven. A feeling of urgency to tell others this amazing, true story. God's Word always has an effect, doesn't it, and that is on full display at a children's Christmas service.

Nicole Balza

A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE TO REMEMBER

"Hey, remember that Christmas service when the AV booth started on fire?"

It's December 2021. After minimizing the service in 2020, we are excited to be back for a full Sunday school service! We're practiced up; we're dressed up; we're ready. We find our places in front of church.

As the director, I cue the sound tech volunteer for our recorded accompaniment . . . and nothing happens. *That's all right, no rush.*

As the silence stretches, I look back at the AV booth. The tech gives me a worried, "just a minute" signal. *Okay, take your time, I know technology doesn't always cooperate.* . . .

I smile and give the kids a thumbs-up to show everything's okay. We wait another few moments . . . still nothing, so I look again.

Then the sound tech says, out loud, "I'm sorry, we have to shut the system down."

We're ready to sing—but no music. Now what? I can feel the congregation getting concerned.

I take a breath and say to the kids, "Our music isn't working, but you don't need it. You know the songs. We're just going to sing without it, okay?" Most nod and smile. Challenge accepted.

And so we sing. No accompaniment, no fancy recordings, just the kids' voices.

"The Savior of the world is coming down!"

"Hark! The herald angels sing!"

"Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay . . ."

"Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

The congregation applauds.

Afterward I hear, "That was amazing! The kids sounded so good!"

And they did. I was so proud of them. A whole Christmas service a cappella? Extraordinary!

Afterward, I also heard: An old piece of sound equipment had started smoking. It wasn't *quite* on fire, but it was close. So yes, I remember the Christmas service the AV booth almost caught fire. It's one of my favorites.

Kristen Koepsell

That sound. I recognized it immediately. And I shuddered.

From my seat near the altar, I could see him bent over in the pew. The three kids on either side of him scuttled for safety.

The excitement of Christmas, the promise of Christmas presents, and an opportunity to be one of the featured worship leaders at the Christmas Eve service proved too much for my six-year-old friend's queasy stomach.

For a moment, the worship service stalled.

Then peace arrived. The overwhelming peace of the Savior's birth. Christmas "angels" swooped in from around the auditorium. One ushered children out of the pew. One rescued the boy, whisking him away for cleansing. One covered the mess with VoBAN.

Heaven's praise that "a Savior has been born" seemed destined to be outshouted that night. But our congregation's angels transformed it into a testimony of the way forgiven, grateful people unselfishly live out their worship.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven," those cherubs proclaimed with their reckless, selfless service.

That Christmas Eve, we certain poor shepherds experienced an extraordinary Noel. The angels we heard on high didn't just shout their praise because of God's Bethlehem miracle; they demonstrated it.

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

James Aderman

I've been blessed to experience the children's Christmas service, one of my favorite services of the year, as a child, teacher, parent, director, and accompanist.

Fondness for this service dates back to the wonderful ways my parents centered our young family's hearts on the coming Christ Child—nightly devotions around an Advent wreath; velvet pulled from my mom's sewing room dresser, then fashioned lovingly into each year's special Christmas dress; songs carefully memorized in English and German; and, in our Connecticut mission congregation, our own individual recitations perfected for our newborn King.

Recorded fragments of these songs and recitations for our faraway Wisconsin grandparents still remain, permanently documenting my younger brother's enthusiastic and innocent rendition of "Glory to the Burger King!"

Fragrant paper bags of candy, oranges, and nuts were our thanks, but the shining eyes of the congregation told us more. We, like the angels, but off-key and imperfectly, had proclaimed the great good news! "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11 King James Version).

Ann Ponath

Shortly before mid-November 2021, my father-in-law, Pastor Don Thompson, had a gallstone that moved and blocked a duct to his pancreas. By the time he started having symptoms, he was already very sick. He was diagnosed with pancreatitis and, within a couple days, was septic and in multi-organ failure. His organs never recovered, and he died Dec. 15, 2021.

As Don's death was getting close, my mother-in-law, Maxine, said that she kept thinking of the lyrics to "O Come, All Ye Faithful" with the phrases of "choirs of angels" and "citizens of heaven." Then she started singing it: "Sing, choirs of angels." We all joined in, "Sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!" and kept going.

Don died as we sang this hymn to him. Hearing is considered the last sense to fade before death, so I like to think that as Don took his last earthly breaths, he heard us singing to him about choirs of angels. Then, in the next moment, he was a heavenly citizen with those very choirs of angels, face-to-face with his Savior who paid for his and all humankind's sins.

Shortly after Don's funeral, we found ourselves watching our children's Christmas Eve service. As the children sang this classic Christmas hymn, tears filled our eyes again.

Friends, that's what makes the blessing of Christmas so special. There are tears of missing the wonderful people God has placed into our lives, whether it's a parent, grandparent, spouse, or whomever it is, dear reader, you too are missing. Yet we also have tears of joy that God sent his Son, announced by angels, to this earth to make death but a door to heaven and to give us a citizenship that will never spoil, fade, or perish. My friends, sing with the choirs of angels that a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ, our Lord.

Clark Schultz

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