



## **December 2025 - "The DW Digest" Newsletter**

*Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and name him Immanuel.  
(Isaiah 7:14b EHV)*

Sometimes it's hard to be merry at Christmas. Geopolitical conflicts, financial fears, personal problems, seasonal sickness and depression can hit us all at once. When that happens, how can we be joyful?

By focusing on who Jesus is.

The prophet Isaiah called him "Immanuel," which means "God with us." Think about what that name tells you about your God.

He is not far away - oblivious to all that you experience. No, your God partook of your humanity to reconcile you to himself. To be your Saviour, he experienced temptation, anxiety, and being sinned against. He felt human suffering, pain, and death. Yes, your God experienced it all – only without falling into sin.

Why?

To save you from the hell you deserved because of your sins. He lived the perfect life you failed to live so you could be righteous by faith. He suffered the punishment you deserved so you could live forever with Him in heaven. Jesus reconciled you to God. Through repentance and faith, you are united with God and receive everlasting life as a gift.

"Immanuel" is a beautiful description of Jesus – not only as we meditate upon His past work but also as we consider what He is doing now.

Do you remember what Jesus promised his disciples before His ascension? "*Surely I am with you always until the end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:20, EHV)

Jesus is still "God with us" today. He sees what you are experiencing and understands your fears and hurt. He is present to comfort you with his forgiving love. Where? In the places He promised you would find Him: His Word and Sacraments. Through these means of grace, Jesus invites you to leave your sins and worries at His feet and trust in Him. He will provide everything you need for life and keep His promise to work in all things for your good. How can you be sure? His life, death and resurrection prove it!

With everything going on in your life, you might not feel all that merry this Christmas. You might even feel lonely. Whenever that's the case, remember Jesus' other name: Immanuel – God with us. Turn to Him in repentance and faith, trusting His promise to be with you and bless you. Find your joy in Him.

*Prayer:* Thank you, Jesus, for being my Immanuel. Forgive my sins and comfort me in my sorrows. Let the peace of your forgiving presence still my anxious heart. Send your Spirit to keep me focused on your Gospel so I can rejoice in the wonderful hope and peace your birth brings me. In your name, I pray, Amen.

### **Voters' Meeting on Sunday, December 14, 2025**

Our next quarterly voters' meeting is scheduled for after next Sunday's worship (at about noon). Physical attendance is highly encouraged. Please let me (Pastor) know before the meeting if you need to attend via Google Meet so I can set it up.

### **Carols and Candlelight at St. Paul**

Come on out for a beautiful evening of traditional Christmas hymns, hot chocolate, apple cider and baked goods. St. Paul is hosting its 2nd annual Carols & Candlelight, where we spend the evening singing Christmas hymns of the congregation's choice. All are welcome! Please invite your friends and family to this remarkable event.

*Where:* **St. Paul Lutheran Church**, 210 Wilbrod St, Ottawa  
*When:* December 19, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

### **Christmas Schedule at Divine Word and Our Shepherd**

#### ***Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>***

**10:30 a.m.** – Children's Christmas Program at Divine Word, Nepean.

**3:00 p.m.** – Children's Christmas Program at Our Shepherd, Poltimore.

#### ***Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>***

**10:30 a.m.** – Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service at Divine Word, Nepean.

**3:00 p.m.** – Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service at Our Shepherd, Poltimore.

**7:00 p.m.** – Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service at Divine Word, Nepean.

#### ***Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup>***

**11:00 a.m.** – Christmas Day Worship at Divine Word, Nepean

## **Sunday Bible Class**

We just started a Sunday Bible class series in September, following the new WELS catechism. Even if you are a long-time member, this class will be great for you to review basic biblical doctrine and discover how all the passages in the Catechism can help you answer many of the questions your non-churched friends ask you about your faith. Consider taking part in person or online every Sunday at 9 a.m. Because of the way this class is structured, it is not too late to join.

## **In-person Worship Attendance**

*September* – An average of 46 for regular Sunday worship and 31 for communion

*October* - An average of 47 for regular Sunday worship and 34 for communion

*November* – An average of 38 for Sunday worship and 27 for communion

## **Daily Prayers**

I continue sending out daily devotions, links to other devotional sites (included in Monday's messages), Bible classes, Communion registration reminders, and announcements.

If you or someone you know is not receiving the daily prayers and would like them, please let me know their email address, and I will add them to our email list.

*Note:* Please let me know before unsubscribing if you do not wish to receive the Daily Prayer. The 'Unsubscribe' feature at the bottom of the daily email would remove your name from all congregational emails, including urgent ones.

## **Evangelism Notes**

*By: Jordan Alves*

The Christmas parade was on November 16th and was a huge success. We had 50+ visitors at the open house, some who came to the church before the float got back from the parade. Councillor David Hill attended the open house and was able to speak to some of the members and visitors. Thank you to all of the members who helped with the planning and all who participated to make this event a success.

## **Youth Education Report**

*By: Jason Pfothenauer*

The Divine Word Sunday School includes three to five individuals at several age levels. The group is preparing a wonderful Christmas program that it will share with the congregation on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. Thanks to the dedicated teachers for all their efforts.

## Elders' Notes

*By: Jeremy Doherty*

Follow-ups to letters that have been sent out will occur in the early new year.

The Board of Elders will be looking at a new program to provide additional structure to our work of encouragement and follow up with members who have strayed.

This quarter, there have been 14 contacts with individuals/families; some have had no reply.

As an update on the Constitution and Bylaw template revision from WELS, from District President Seifert:

*Dear Jeremy,*

*Thanks for reaching out. I'm sure that I sound like a broken record when I say, Almost there! The new samples are now in the hands of our district constitution committee. When congregations embark on modifying or revamping their governance structures, this committee works closely with them. The committee has been hard at work studying the samples and preparing some accompanying materials. The public release is now just a matter of weeks. The chairman, Pastor Nathan Strutz, is copied. He may be able to offer more details. Thank you for your patience, Jeremy!  
Pastor Seifert*

## Updates from the Board of Stewardship and Treasurer / Financial Secretary.

*By: Jim Neubauer*

### I. E-Transfer Process

We continue to use the e-transfer process in 2025. More than 15 people use the e-transfer process and send offerings weekly or monthly. Let me know if you would like to use this process. The etransfer email is [divinewordetransfer@gmail.com](mailto:divinewordetransfer@gmail.com)

### II. Regular Offerings and Budgets

**Regular Offerings:** Please find below the financial summary as of Dec 7, 2025, of all regular offerings collected to date being applied toward our Current Church Offering Income budget requirement of \$142,500 for 2025, increased from \$134,630 for 2024.

As of March 16, 2025

Offerings Received – \$31,995

Offerings Budgeted - \$28,630

As of June 15, 2025

Offerings Received – \$72,267

Offerings Budgeted - \$65,769

As of Sept 21, 2025  
Offerings Received - \$102,654  
Offerings Budgeted - \$104,134

**As of Dec 7, 2025**  
**Offerings Received - \$135,800**  
**Offerings Budgeted - \$134,300**

After 49 weeks, we are approximately **\$1500 ahead of** the weekly budget projection. This number is where I would expect us to be at this time in the year. With only 3 budget weeks left and 5 services, I expect that we will be approximately \$3,500 to \$5,000 ahead of this year's budget. This is going to be very helpful in meeting next year's budget.

So overall, I am increasing our rating from a B back to an A for the first 49 weeks.

As always, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

### **Thank you**

I want to thank all the volunteers quietly working in the background at church by doing things like helping with social media, building the float, walking in the Christmas parade, providing dinners and snacks, setting up the altar, watching over our finances and member offerings, keeping on top of administrative paperwork, teaching our children, making necessary facility repairs, maintaining the property in order, beautifying the sanctuary, helping me organize for services, giving fellow members an encouraging note or call, inviting people to worship, and upholding DW's ministry in prayer. Know that your work is not in vain. I thank God for all of you and all that you do.

### **Are You Struggling?**

Are you or someone you know struggling spiritually? If so, do not hesitate to contact me (Pastor). *Our conversation will be kept confidential.*

### **Pastor Sullivan's Contact Information**

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**Primary (Mobile) Phone Number:** (613) 255-2317

**Home "Internet" Phone:** (512) 887-8982

***Feel free to use my mobile phone number as the primary way of contacting me.*** If you see "Texas Caller" or a number with a "512" area code on your Caller ID, it is probably me calling from my home Internet number. Do not be afraid to answer the phone.

May the LORD continue to bless you.

In Christian love,  
Pastor Michael Sullivan