

# TIDINGS OF JOY

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2025

Inside this issue:

Staff	2
Birthdays	2
Anniversaries	3
Advent	4
Looking Ahead Dec. Bible Readings	5
WELCA	6
Dec. Concert	7
Fight Hunger Sunday	8
Outreach Update	9
Blood Drive	10
JOY Blog	11
Angel Tree, Home Communion	12
Poinsettias	13
Fun	14
Eirinn Abu	16
JOY Calendar	17



LOVE, LISTEN, LEARN, LEAD



**Dear JOYful Family,**

We hear negativity and complaining all around us.

“My electric bill went up \$20 this month”. “My neighbor hasn’t trimmed his hedges since God knows when.” “Can’t they wait twenty more minutes in the morning before they walk their yapping dog and wake us up?” (Have you ever known dogs to “wait”?)

When our faithful members bring food to WearGloves or Interfaith, they find people who are JOY!Ful. Because they are being fed in body and spirit. They are people who have next to nothing, except for the fact that they seem more aware of God’s graceful agency in their lives. They are never negative or bitter. That explains why missionaries in the poorest countries on earth don’t mind giving up a few creature comforts that we Americans take for granted.

In this time of giving, we hear the Christmas angels with their “Tidings” of great JOY! We respond with our yearning for the Lord Emmanuel to abide with us. To drown out the soul-sucking noise and narrative of blame and division. Our spirits are striving and searching for hope and truth. The future is described by Jesus as a time of great anguish and trial, much like the

*Continued on Page 3*

SCAN FOR ON-LINE  
GIVING



***Our mission is to share the Good  
News of grace and love with all  
through worship, service, and  
fellowship.***



## MEET OUR STAFF

### CHURCH STAFF & OFFICERS

Pastor-Art Wuertz

Administrative Assistant-

Zsuzsanna Jobbagy

Director of Music-Silas Daniel

Choir Director-Linda Aker

Handbell Director-

Melissa Daniel

Sexton-Carson Faris

Treasurer-Terry Owen

### CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS:

President-Ray Ihlenburg

Vice President-John Voyles

Secretary-Linda Aker

Treasurer-Terry Owen

### OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Karin Campbell

Richard Cognetti

Carson Faris

Don Fields

J.R. Frederiksen

Hank Groth

Doug Juhl

Paul Spellman



<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>
<b>12/2</b>	<b>Lee Stewart</b>
	<b>Gail Schoenwisner</b>
	<b>Rich Cognetti</b>
<b>12/5</b>	<b>Robert Irish</b>
<b>12/07</b>	<b>Dot Sweeney</b>
<b>12/09</b>	<b>Linda Neblock</b>
	<b>Betty DeLong</b>
<b>12/10</b>	<b>Ray Ihlenburg</b>
<b>12/15</b>	<b>Bob Rowland</b>
<b>12/16</b>	<b>Linda Jacobs</b>
<b>12/17</b>	<b>William Berlin</b>
	<b>Diana O'Neill</b>
<b>12/18</b>	<b>Karl Gunther</b>
<b>12/20</b>	<b>Paulette Kuzmanovich</b>
<b>12/23</b>	<b>Jim Russo</b>
<b>12/24</b>	<b>Sally Wheeler</b>
<b>12/26</b>	<b>Jack Mixdorf</b>
<b>12/27</b>	<b>Joyce Ryan</b>
	<b>Charlotte Schmidt</b>
<b>12/28</b>	<b>Melanie Chaney</b>



*Continued from Page 1*

pain of childbirth. Deception, troubling events, persecution, hatred and dread will all be the norm, in order to get to that great and promised day when our Lord returns with a shout of victory and triumph. The final redemption will be the new reality!

In this spiritual community, we will have the blessed opportunity to usher in, with our loving hospitality, the greatest season of the church year. We all pray that our plans and hard work will lead to new souls checking us out and seeing the reason for the hope that the world doesn't see. While we certainly want these new folks *here*, It also has to begin out *there*. It's a time for "SCRUF" - Spiritually Curious, Religiously Unaffiliated Friends. (maybe that will catch on). It is exciting to think of the possibilities that the Holy Spirit might work in, among, and from us.

I will show up *any time, any where you want to meet up, hang out, and be led by the Holy Spirit in holy conversation and relationship cultivation!* *Pastor Art*



<i>DATE</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>YRS</i>
<i>12/16</i>	<i>Linda &amp; William Neblock</i>	<i>53 yrs.</i>
<i>12/17</i>	<i>Judy &amp; Joe Spillane</i>	<i>60 yrs.</i>
<i>12/21</i>	<i>Barbara &amp; John Marvin</i>	<i>47 yrs.</i>
<i>12/28</i>	<i>Tamara &amp; Wallace Thomas</i>	<i>40 yrs.</i>

## ***ADVENT WEDNESDAYS***

**DEC. 3RD, 10TH, & 17TH AT 5:30**

### **“MAKE READY FOR HOLY DISRUPTION”**

We await again the birth of Jesus and also  
for him to come again to fulfill all things.

“Get ready”, the world screams. Plan! Organize!

Shop ‘til you drop!

Preparing for Jesus doesn’t mean having  
everything under control.

Christ’s arrival disrupts injustice, sin,  
and brokenness in this world we are in.

Christ, come with holy disruption of what we can’t control  
and that we might struggle to accept.

## **JOIN ELCA WORLD HUNGER FOR ADVENT**

How are you and your family preparing for Advent? If you usually get an Advent Calendar for your grand/great-grand children, consider joining ELCA World Hunger for Advent. This Advent calendar is unique. Each day leading up to Christmas, pieces of the calendar are colored in and affixed to the backdrop (which is day 1). A few of the days is spent finding out about world hunger, its root cause. The others are part of the

An Advent Song that the Children can learn is included and printed here.

### **ADVENT SONG**

Tune: “Twinkl Twinkle Little Star”

Advent is a time to wait  
Not quite time to celebrate  
Light the candles one by one  
Till the advent time is done  
Christmas day will soon be here  
Time for joy and time for cheer.

Pick up a calendar and prepare your hearts and minds for Christmas!



# Looking Ahead



## 1. SUNDAY, JANUARY 4TH, -

REGISTRATION BEGINS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS CLASS 1/31 & 2/7

## 2. “JOY!Formation” for new folks/prospective members:

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20TH, 27TH, AND FEBRUARY 3RD  
AT 7:00 IN SWENSON HALL

## 3. SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH.

WE WILL RECEIVE NEW MEMBERS AT THE SERVICE OF THEIR CHOICE

## BIBLE READINGS FOR DECEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
DEC 7	ISAIAH	PSALM	ROMANS	MATTHEW
	11:1-10	72:1-7, 18-19	15:4-13	3:1-12
DEC 14	ISAIAH	PSALM	JAMES	MATTHEW
	35:1-10	145:5-10	5:7-10	11:2-11
DEC 21	ISAIAH	PSALM	ROMANS	MATTHEW
	7:10-16	80:1-7, 17-19	1: 1-7	1:18-25
DEC 24	ISAIAH	PSALM	TITUS	LUKE
	9:2-7	96	2:11-14	2:1-14[15-20]
DEC 28	ISAIAH	PSALM	HEBREWS	MATTHEW
	63:7-9	148	2:10-18	3:1-17



# WELCA

**The Annual WELCA Christmas Social  
will be December 6<sup>th</sup>.**

**Entertainment at 11 AM in the Sanctuary.**

**Lunch at 12N in Swenson Hall.**

**Tickets are \$10 and will**

**be available in the Narthex**

**Sundays, November 16, 23, and 30<sup>th</sup>,**

**Wednesdays 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>.**

**There are only 80 tickets. "Get yours early!"**

## **What Can I Give? By: Fran Peck**

**Published by Family Friend Poems December 2018 with permission of the Author.**

**I went to church on Christmas morn to hear the angels sing.  
My heart was lifted with every chorus; the rafters, they did ring.  
I sang along with joy in my heart, the greatest sound I've ever heard.  
From "O Holy Night" to "What Child is This?" I cherished every word.**

**I celebrated the King's lowly birth; I shouted and danced about.  
Then came along a "Little Drummer Boy," and I knew I was without.  
What had I given the babe this year? A panic crossed my mind.  
I tried to think of what I had given, but there was none to find.**

**Did I find a child and clothe him well? Did I seek a widow to bless?  
Did I go to someone sick in their bed and try to ease their death?  
Did I ask a sinner to say a prayer or tell him the Good News?  
Did I give a beggar something to eat or at least buy him some shoes?**

**I bowed my head as the drummer boy played; my tears started to fall.  
I didn't even give Him my best, let alone give Him my all.  
So this Christmas, Jesus, I bring you my drum, the very beat of my heart.  
I ask Your forgiveness, for things undone; it's the only place I can start.**

# Seasons of JOY

Concert Series

2025-26 Season

*A New Musical Adventure*

**A JOYful Celebration**

**Fifth Annual Christmas Concert**



Please join us for our annual Christmas concert! Featuring a host of talent from within the congregation at Joy, this is the December event you do not want to miss.

Songs, handbells, and an assortment of other instruments comprise a special Christmas program that has become a perennial favorite! In addition, we will have a couple of special guests to bring more Christmas cheer!

**December 21, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary  
at JOY Lutheran Church (7045 SW 83rd Place, Ocala, FL 34476)

Free Admission. Reception follows concert.



## FIGHT HUNGER SUNDAY

### FIGHT HUNGER 2 WAYS IN 1 DAY



ELCA  
World Hunger

**“It’s the most wonderful time of the year” as the song says. How very true that is. Thanksgiving has passed, but we wait with joy for the birth of our Savior. We have so many blessings to be thankful for. We can share our blessings with those who have so little. Being a part of our Fight Hunger Sunday program, you help feed people locally (non-perishable foods for the Inter Faith Food Bank) and internationally( by contributing to the ELCA World Hunger Program).**

**I truly believe there is another saying that you, our JOY family, live by faithfully and that is: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”**

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING GENEROSITY AND LOVE.  
YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE.***

**DECEMBER’s FIGHT HUNGER SUNDAY IS:  
December 28th**

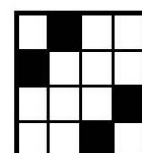
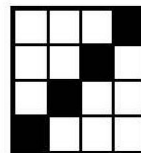
## COMPOUND WORDS

Combine the 3-letter words on the top with the 3-letter words on the bottom to form 20 new words. You can use each word only one time. For example: teapot.

tea	bat	boo	car	out
for	nap	man	fat	but
box	cot	dim	tip	arm
tip	red	car	bed	see
<hr/>				
ton	ton	top	kin	her
pit	eye	car	wit	pet
toe	wit	boo	age	bid
saw	ten	ton	pot	pan

#### COMPOUND

WORDS: teapot, forbid, boxcar, tiptop, bathed, napkin, cotton, redeye, booboo, manage, dimwit, carpet, carton, fatten, tiptoe, bedpan, outwit, button, armpit, seesaw.



## OUTREACH AND BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

**This year something happened on the way to the Memorial Garden for our annual blessing of the animals. For the first time, we had a love-offering collection. Why?**

**The funds were to be used for the benefit of those less fortunate. The ELCA Good Gifts Catalog's "Gifts that make a difference" highlight the many ways we can give a hand up, not a hand out, to assist people in being able to lead healthy, self-supporting lives.**

**The gifts range from vaccines, school supplies, safe water to "God's Global Barnyard".**

**The free will offering we received came to \$140.00. One of the "packages" is to provide a goat and a flock of chicks for people to raise. We were able to purchase 2 of these packages, and still had \$20 that they could apply wherever it is needed the most.**

**As you can see, there is no small gift. Every dollar is a step towards independence and self-sufficiency for someone.**

***Thank you to each and every one of you for making this possible.***



## ***THE BUS! THE BUS!***

Yes, it is that time of year when the ***LIFE SOUTH BLOOD MOBILE*** will be visiting our campus.



Mark the date and time:

***SUNDAY, December 7, 2025-7:00 AM—1:00 PM***

It is the season of giving, and once again you have the amazing opportunity to give the gift of life.

One pint of blood can save 3 lives!

It

does not take long, is practically painless, and all it costs you is a bit of your time.

Take time to give! Spread the word—let everyone know the Bus is coming here!

Invite them to worship with us, and help save lives all on the same day.

Walk-ins are always welcome.

Appointments are encouraged



## Daily Blogs - Sharing God's Love



God loves you! That's the message that is shared each morning in Joy's Daily Devotional Blog. For most of us, the blog comes directly into our email each morning. If you don't receive it, let Judy know at [spocala@gmail.com](mailto:spocala@gmail.com) and we'll add your email address immediately.

Who writes the messages? Your friends here at Joy contribute their thoughts each day. Right now, we have six members who write a blog each week, as well as others who contribute periodically when they can.

How about you???? What message could you share? We know many of you have personal experiences that would inspire others. And why not you? Don't be too shy. Sit down at your computer with a thought in mind and trust that the Holy Spirit will lead the way. Just keep it simple, keep it short. It's not a sermon, just a blog, a note to share with your readers.

Give me a call at 352-854-9437 if you want to talk about it. Or just do some writing and send it to my email, [spocala@gmail.com](mailto:spocala@gmail.com). I am confident there are some wonderful writers here at Joy that I just don't know about yet. What a delightful surprise that will be for me to receive!

Judy Spillane

## TIMBER RIDGE ANGELS

### *“It’s beginning to look like Christmas”*

Our Angel Tree has been set up in the Narthex. This year on the tree we have 45 angels, representing the wishes of the residents of Timber Ridge. Once you have made your selection, ***please sign your name and phone number next to the corresponding Angel number*** found on the sign-out sheet next to the tree.

Wrapped gifts (with the angel attached to the front) should be placed under the tree and “checked in” on the sheet.

Any questions can be directed to Terry and Susan in the office –352-854-4509

**GIFTS ARE DUE BACK BY DECEMBER 9, 2025.**

*Thank you for your support :  
Terry Owen, Susan Jobbagy*

## *Communion at home!*

*If you desire communion at home,  
Please contact the church office  
to schedule a visit.*

*Our office telephone #: 352-854-4509*

*Office hours are Monday-Thursday  
8:00 am—3:30 pm.*

*You can always leave a message . We will get in touch  
with you as soon as we can.*



Please Remember Orders are first come, first serve. (Only 60 plants are being ordered.)  
ALL ORDERS ARE DUE 12/10/25



## POINSETTIA PLANTS FOR JOY



*The Altar Guild would like to invite you to provide a lovely plant for the Christmas altar decorating again this year. Poinsettias will be \$ 13.00 each. Please enclose your check or cash, with this form in an envelope and return them by no later than December 10<sup>th</sup>. They will be available "By Order Only". (We are ordering 60 plants, on a first come, first serve basis. )*

*(Please **PRINT** all information below.)*

*# of plants ordered \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

*Given By \_\_\_\_\_*

*In Memory*

*of \_\_\_\_\_*

*Do you wish to take the plants home?*

*Circle One:        Yes                      No*

*The Poinsettias not taken home will be given to the sick and shut-ins of the congregation.*



*Wishing all of you a  
Blessed and Merry Christmas.*



## Who Said That?

**Directions:** Match the quotation with the person who said it. Write the number of the correct quotation in the circle beside each person's name.

1. "I have a dream ..."
2. "Give me liberty or give me death."
3. "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."
4. "Three may keep a secret, if two are dead."
5. "It ain't over 'til it's over."
6. "It has been my experience that people who have few vices have very few virtues."
7. "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."
8. "I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right."

- ☐ Yogi Berra
- ☐ Benjamin Franklin
- ☐ Albert Einstein
- ☐ Abraham Lincoln
- ☐ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- ☐ John F. Kennedy
- ☐ Patrick Henry
- ☐ Neil Armstrong



**Answers:** 1. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 2. Patrick Henry, 3. Neil Armstrong, 4. Benjamin Franklin, 5. Yogi Berra, 6. Abraham Lincoln, 7. John F. Kennedy, 8. Albert Einstein.

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT



Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2025

Scripture Reading: James 5:7-10

*Joy is the serious business of heaven. —C.S. Lewis*

The third Sunday of Advent is traditionally called Gaudete Sunday — from the Latin word for “Rejoice.” The days are shorter. The world grows colder. And we’re told to “Rejoice!” But why? Why should we rejoice now? The world is not at peace. Our hearts are often heavy. Our headlines are grim. So why this sudden celebration?

Because joy is not just an emotion. Joy is *resistance*.

In a world that runs on outrage, division and despair, choosing joy is an act of rebellion.

- Joy refuses to give darkness the final word.
- Joy pushes back against the lie that nothing will ever change.
- Joy says, “I see the brokenness ... and still I believe in beauty.”

This kind of joy isn’t naive or blind. It doesn’t ignore grief. It sings in defiance of it.

- Think of Mary, pregnant with uncertainty and scandal, who still sang her Magnificat.
- Think of Paul and Silas, singing hymns from a prison cell.
- Think of Jesus, who endured the cross “for the joy set before him.”

The third candle of our Advent wreath is rose-colored — pink. It stands out — a flicker of warmth in the cold. Lighting this candle is a declaration: “Even here, even now — I will rejoice.”

When we light the Candle of Joy, we’re saying: We will not let sorrow define our story, we will not let cynicism close our hearts, and we will not forget that Christ is coming — and is already among us. Joy is what happens when we believe that God is still at work — even in the silence.

So, this week, how might we practice joy as resistance? We might smile at someone who’s forgotten how, laugh in the middle of stress, give thanks even when waiting for answers or sing — not because life is easy, but because God is good.

Light a candle and refuse to let the darkness have the last word!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: O God, in the middle of our waiting, sing your joy into our hearts. Give us the strength to laugh again, to hope again, to sing again — even when tears still fall. We trust that joy is coming. In Christ, our Joy and our Light, we pray. Amen.*

# A Beautiful Christmas



PERFORMANCES BY  
**EIRINN ABU and Friends**  
 PEDRO ALFONSO . MANNY LOPEZ  
 Special Guest Vocalist MELODIE JOY

**JOY** Lutheran Church  
 "PROVIDING DESSERTS"  
**MILANO**  
 ITALIAN GRILLE

**TUNNEL to TOWERS FOUNDATION Benefit Concert**

**TIME / DATE:** 7:00 PM DECEMBER 19TH

**LOCATION:** CIRCLE SQUARE CULTURAL CENTER OCALA  
 8395 SW 80th St. Ocala

**Dessert  
 reception**

**TICKETS: \$48.00 352-854-3670**





# DECEMBER 2025

SUN	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Bible Study with Charlie 1PM	2 Beginners' Bible Study 11 AM	3 Happy Hands 9AM Joyful Hands 9:30 AM Choir-3-4:30 PM Worship Svc 5:30 PM "Make Ready for Holy Disruption"	4 Stewardship 3PM  BCR 6:30 PM	5 Bell Choir 10AM  Holy Hiatus 7P	6 WELCA Prog. & Lunch 11 AM  Cleaning Service 2-4
7 ADVENT 2  WORSHIP SVC 8:15 & 11:00 AM  Christmas Eve Par- ticipants Mtg. 9:30 AM Life South Blood Drive 7a-1p	8 Stephen M. 9:30AM  Bible Study with Charlie 1PM	9 Beginners' Bible Study 11 AM	10 Happy Hands 9AM Joyful Hands 9:30 AM Choir-3-4:30 PM Worship Svc 5:30 PM "Make Ready for Holy Disruption"	11 Wear Gloves Lunch Outreach  BCR-6:30 PM-S  BCR-6:30 PM-S	12  BELL CHOIR-10 AM	13 Cleaning Service 2-4PM
14 ADVENT 3  WORSHIP SVC 8:15 & 11:00 AM	15 TIDINGS DEAD- LINE	16 Beg Bible Study 11AM  Council Luncheon 1PM	17 Happy Hands 9AM Joyful Hands 9:30 AM Choir-3-4:30 PM Worship Svc 5:30 PM "Make Ready for Holy Disruption"	18   BCR 6:30 P M-S	19 BELL CHOIR-10 AM  Cleaning Service	20  Concert Dress Rehearsal 2 PM
21 ADVENT 4  WORSHIP SVC 8:15 & 11:00 AM  Christmas Concert 3:00 PM	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE  SERVICE 4 PM and 6 PM	25 CHRISTMAS  OFFICE CLOSED	26	27  Cleaning Service 2-4PM
28  Worship Svc. 8:15 & 11	29 OFFICE CLOSED INTERFAITH DINNER	30 OFFICE CLOSED	31 OFFICE CLOSED Choir-3-4:30 PM  Worship Svc 5:30 PM	<p><b>PLEASE observe the following deadlines for copy ready articles to be placed in the bulletin and the newsletter.</b></p> <p><b>Bulletin deadline is Monday 8:00 am Tidings deadline is on the 15th of the month. Thank you. Susan</b></p>		

Contact Us

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[www.facebook.com/joylutheranchurch.ocala](https://www.facebook.com/joylutheranchurch.ocala)



**DECEMBER 2025**

***Our vision:***  
***“Joy is a spiritual community sharing  
the love of Christ in a challenging  
world”.***

