# CHAPEL OF THE CROSS

LUTHERAN



FAITH · HOPE · LOVE

# Welcome to Chapel of the Cross - Lutheran!

#### To Our Visitors

We offer you a very warm welcome to Chapel of the Cross - Lutheran! We are happy to have you worshipping with us and hope that your worship here today and the Word of God that is shared will assist you in the week ahead. If you are looking for a church home, we hope that you would prayerfully consider making Chapel of the Cross that home. May God bless your week!

# **Nursery**

If you need to take your infant or toddler out of the worship service, the nursery is available for your use. The worship service is broadcast to the nursery. An usher will be happy to show you where it is located.

# Sunday School and Bible Study

We have an exciting Sunday School program for children age 2 and up. We also offer Bible studies for youth and adults at 9:45 a.m. Sunday School rooms are in the Lower Level. Check the Chapel Weekly handout for Bible study locations. An usher will be happy to take you to the appropriate place.

# **Holy Communion**

Holy Communion is celebrated regularly and often here at Chapel of the Cross. If you have questions about Holy Communion and what we as a church believe about it, please speak with the Pastor before the service. Children are invited to come forward with their parents for a blessing.

# **Sound Enhancement Devices**

If you are hearing impaired there are sound enhancement devices available. Please ask an usher for a personal receiver.

# The Mission of Chapel of the Cross

Chapel of the Cross - Lutheran exists to show the love of Jesus to the people of North County and beyond so that all may have a living relationship with Christ.

# Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 20 & 21, 2025 5:00 p.m. & 8:30 a.m.

*Please note: The 8:30 a.m. worship service is live streamed and recorded.* 

## **AS WE GATHER**

Though Matthew is already telling of the birth of Jesus Christ, it is not yet the account we look forward to hearing on Christmas Eve. But this one, lighter on details, is heavy with the promise Jesus' birth fulfills. This Sunday, we hear of Joseph's own angel visit, of the name that shall be given to this child, and of His birth to save His people from their sins. All of this is prefigured in the voice of the Advent prophet Isaiah and framed in the essential message of the church by the words of Paul. Each of the readings appointed for today remind us that God has it all figured out, and even though it all unfolded in time before us, it was appointed by God from the beginning of time. As we remember again all that happened, we also happily remember that God still has it all in hand and that Christ is not only the fulfiller of the past but also the author of the future.

#### **PRELUDE**

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

setting by Robert Buckley Farlee

# WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND EXCHANGE OF PEACE

It is important to recognize that some people are especially susceptible to viruses that can be spread by contact and that some immune systems are very sensitive. Please understand that some may choose not to shake hands during the Exchange of Peace, but might simply greet you with a verbal greeting, a wave, or a smile.

#### **№** PREPARATION **№**

The congregation turns and faces the cross as the procession approaches the altar reminding us that Christ leads us into the presence of God.

#### Please stand

#### ENTRANCE HYMN

339 Lift Up Your Heads, You Everlasting Doors

1 Lift up your heads, you everlasting doors,

And weep no more!

O Zion's daughter, sing,

To greet your coming King;

Now wave the victor's palm

And sing the ancient psalm:

"Lift up your heads, you everlasting gates!"

Your King awaits!

2 Who is this King of great and glorious fame?

What is His name?

Lord God of Sabaoth,

Of whom the prophets wrote,

Whose chosen, humble steed

Declares Him king indeed!

Hosanna, Lord! Messiah, come and save

From sin and grave.

3 Who may ascend Mount Zion's holy hill

To do God's will?

The One whose unstained hands

Can meet the Law's demands,

Whose purity within

Reveals One free from sin.

Come, praise this King who claims the cross as throne—

Praise Him alone!

4 "Worthy is Christ!" The Lamb who once was slain

Now lives to reign.

He rules our earthly ways

As Lord of Ancient Days-

O join the endless song

Sung by the ransomed throng:

"Worthy is Christ!" The Lamb be praised again!

Amen! Amen!

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#### INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ♥ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

#### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love,

People: and with Him is redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Silence for self-examination.

Pastor: Holy and gracious God,

People: I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I

know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but

some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask

forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may receive Your grace and

rest in peace.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His

sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the

name of the Father and of the ♣ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

name of the Father and of the \$ 500 and of the 1

People: Amen. Thanks be to God!

# LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Pastor: Paul wrote, "We have received grace and apostleship to call people from

among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith"

(sung) O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,

Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Pastor: David wrote, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and

all who live in it."

Let us pray, O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering all things:

People: Come and teach us the way of wisdom.

(sung) O come, O come, Emmanuel,

And ransom captive Israel,

That mourns in lonely exile here

Until the son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

# PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you. **People:** And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that

the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one

God, now and forever. Amen.

#### ₩ WORD ₩

#### OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 7:10-17

("The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.")

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights."

<sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. <sup>16</sup> But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. <sup>17</sup> The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah--he will bring the king of Assyria."

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 24

Pastor: The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live

in it;

People: for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Pastor: Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?

People: He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul

to an idol or swear by what is false.

Pastor: He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his

Savior.

People: Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O

God of Jacob.

(continued on next page)

Pastor: Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the

King of glory may come in.

People: Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD

mighty in battle.

Pastor: Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the

King of glory may come in.

People: Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty-- he is the King of

glory.

EPISTLE Romans 1:1–7

(Long promised by God, the Savior, Jesus Christ, has come.)

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God-- <sup>2</sup> the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures <sup>3</sup> regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, <sup>4</sup> and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. <sup>5</sup> Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. <sup>6</sup> And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

**ANTHEM** (8:30 a.m.)

"Rejoice All Ye Believers"

Eugene Butler

Rejoice, all ye believers and let your lights appear.

The evening is advancing and darker night is near.

The bridegroom is arising and soon He draweth nigh!

Up! Pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry!

The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near. Go meet Him as He cometh with hallelujahs clear. The marriage feast is waiting, the gates wide open stand. Up! Up! Ye heirs of glory, the bridegroom is at hand!

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear, Arise, thou sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere. With hearts and hands uplifted we plead, O Lord, to see The day of earth's redemption that brings us unto Thee.

Please stand

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL Matthew 1:18–25

("The birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.")

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

(continued on next page)

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

#### HYMN

900 Iesus! Name of Wonderous Love

- Jesus! Name of wondrous love, Name all other names above, Unto which must ev'ry knee Bow in deep humility.
- 2 Jesus! Name decreed of old, To the maiden mother told, Kneeling in her lowly cell, By the angel Gabriel.

- 3 Jesus! Name of priceless worth To the fallen of the earth For the promise that it gave, "Jesus shall His people save."
- 4 Jesus! Name of mercy mild, Given to the holy Child When the cup of human woe First He tasted here below.
- 5 Jesus! Only name that's giv'n
  Under all the mighty heav'n
  Whereby those to sin enslaved
  Burst their fetters and are saved.
- 6 Jesus! Name of wondrous love, Human name of God above; Pleading only this, we flee Helpless, O our God, to Thee.

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## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Please stand

#### NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all

people according to their needs.

+++ Special Intercessions +++

Each concluding: Pastor: Lord, in Your mercy, People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves and all for whom we

pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

# **OFFERING**

During the offering, please sign the Record of Fellowship found at the end of each pew



Scan to give online

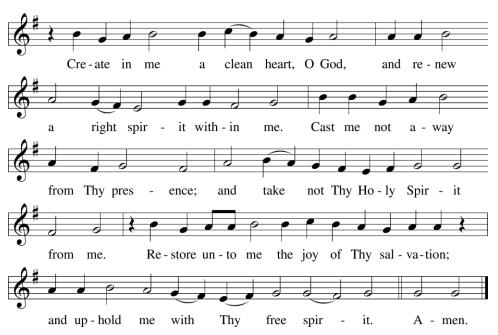
"Savior of the Nations, Come"

setting by Charles W. Ore

Please stand

# **OFFERTORY**

956 Create In Me



Text and tune: Public domain

#### **▼ SACRAMENT ▼**

In the Lord's Supper we receive Christ's body and blood in and with the bread and wine. The two great blessings of the Lord's Supper are the forgiveness of sins and strength to live an improved Christian life. In response to the Lord's command we are to examine ourselves privately prior to partaking of the Sacrament. There are three basic questions on which we should examine ourselves, all of which we should be able to answer in the affirmative if we are to partake of the Sacrament worthily: 1) Am I truly sorry for my sins? 2) Do I believe Jesus Christ is my Savior? 3) Do I promise with God's help to live a Christian life? If you agree with the above statement, we invite you to the Sacrament.

#### **PREFACE**

Pastor: The Lord be with you. **People:** And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

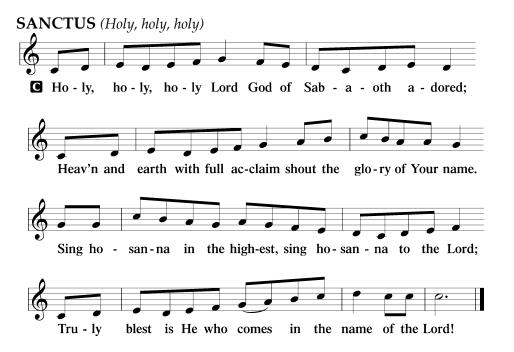
People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **People:** It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all

places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You

and singing:



#### LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

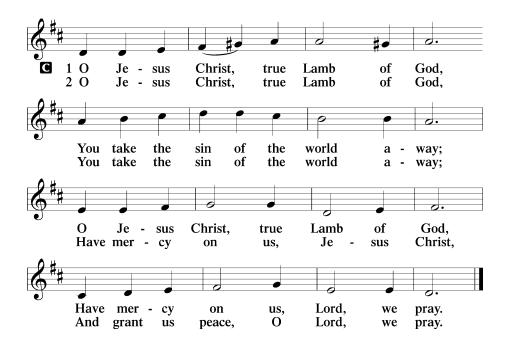
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

## PEACE OF THE LORD

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

# **AGNUS DEI** (Lamb of God)



If you wish to take communion in the pew, please raise your hand when the communion assistant comes down the aisle.

When the wine is distributed, individual glasses will be offered first, then the common cup. Communicants may take whichever is preferred. If taking the individual glass, please keep the glass visible so that the communion assistant with the common cup will know who has already communed.

Non-alcoholic wine is available in the center of the communion tray for those who have a sensitivity to the alcohol in wine.

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

343 Prepare the Royal Highway

1 Prepare the royal highway;
The King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
A level road appear!
Then greet the King of Glory
Foretold in sacred story: Refrain

ref Hosanna to the Lord,
For He fulfills God's Word!

2 God's people, see Him coming: Your own eternal king! Palm branches strew before Him! Spread garments! Shout and sing! God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you! Refrain

Then fling the gates wide open
To greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
Its tribute too should bring.
All lands, bow down before Him!
All nations, now adore Him! Refrain

4 His is no earthly kingdom;
 It comes from heav'n above.

 His rule is peace and freedom
 And justice, truth, and love.

 So let your praise be sounding
 For kindness so abounding: Refrain

Text: © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. Used by permission: Chapel of the Cross no. VVPKL-GBOIT-LYVDV-EKAFZ

- 1 Let the earth now praise the Lord,
  Who has truly kept His word
  And at last to us did send
  Christ, the sinner's help and friend.
- 2 What the fathers most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired, What they longed for many\_a year, Stands fulfilled in glory here.
- 3 Abram's promised great reward, Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord— Him of twofold race behold— Truly came, as long foretold.
- 4 As Your coming was in peace, Quiet, full of gentleness, Let the same mind dwell in me Which is Yours eternally.
- 5 Bruise for me the serpent's head That, set free from doubt and dread, I may cling to You in faith, Safely kept through life and death.
- 6 Then when You will come again As the glorious king to reign, I with joy will see Your face, Freely ransomed by Your grace.

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## SILENT PRAYER

You may pray the following prayer as we give thanks to God for His good gifts:

I thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You have permitted me, unworthy as I am, to partake of this Your most holy body and this Your most precious blood. I pray that it may be to me for the forgiveness of all my sins, for strength in resisting temptations, for service in Your kingdom and finally for the glories of life that has no end. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Please stand

#### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,

People: for His steadfast love endures forever.

Pastor: Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the

feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through

Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the

Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

#### BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ♣ give you peace.

People: Amen.

Please turn towards the cross as it is carried out of the church, and remain facing it until the hymn is completed. This symbolizes our following Christ into the world as we leave.

## **RECESSIONAL HYMN**

362 O Sing of Christ

- O sing of Christ, whose birth made known
  The kindness of the Lord,
  Eternal Word made flesh and bone
  So we could be restored.
  Upon our frail humanity
  God's finger chose to trace
  The fullness of His deity,
  The icon of His grace.
- 2 What Adam lost, none could reclaim,
  And Paradise was barred
  Until the second Adam came
  To mend what sin had marred.
  For when the time was full and right
  God sent His only Son;
  He came to us as life and light
  And our redemption won.
- 3 He came to that which was His own,
  But He was not received;
  Yet still through Him God's glory shone,
  And some His name believed.
  To these He gave the right to be
  The heirs of heav'n above,
  Born not of human ancestry
  But born of God in love.

4 Lord Jesus Christ, You deigned to dwell
Among us here on earth
As God with us, Emmanuel,
To bring this holy birth.
Though rich, You willingly became
One with our poverty,
That we might share Your wealth and name
For all eternity!

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#### **POSTLUDE**

"O Sing of Christ"

setting by Brad Hall

Prepare for next weekend's worship by reading: Isaiah 63:7-14; Galations 4:4-7; Matthew 2:13-23 Find a devotional guide on the readings at https://chapelofthecross.org/devotions

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# Serving at Chapel

Preacher: Theodore Laesch

Liturgists: 5:00 p.m. Ellory Glenn

8:30 a.m. Theodore Laesch

Lector: 8:30 a.m. Sandy Otto

Acolytes: 8:30 a.m. Emma Runser

Singers: Lynda Christian

Denise Koch

Organist & Accompanist: Kathleen Stahlhut

Elder of the Week: David Stahlhut

# Chapel of the Cross - Lutheran

11645 Benham Road, St. Louis, MO 63136 (314) 741-3737 www.chapelofthecross.org Email: office@chapelofthecross.org

# Worship and Christian Education

Saturday - 5:00 p.m. Sunday - 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Worship Service broadcast on KFUO 850 AM Sundays at 4:00 p.m. Live internet streaming at www.chapelofthecross.org Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

Holy Communion is celebrated the  $1^{st}$  and  $3^{rd}$  and  $5^{th}$  Sundays of the month at 8:30 a.m., the  $2^{nd}$  and  $4^{th}$  and  $5^{th}$  Sundays of the month at 11:00 a.m., and the  $1^{st}$  and  $3^{rd}$  and  $5^{th}$  Saturdays of the month at 5:00 p.m.

Sunday school for children, Sunday Bible classes for adults and youth – 9:45 a.m.

# **Chapel Ministry Staff**

	Home Phone	<u>E-mail</u>
Theodore Laesch, Pastor	314-355-0688	pastorlaesch@chapelofthecross.org
Ellory Glenn, Specific Ministry Pastor	314-369-8014	ellory.glenn@chapelofthecross.org
Charles Wallace, Vicar	985-852-7958	vicarchuck@chapelofthecross.org
Bill Rusnak, Director of Adult Ministry	314-200-9797	bill.rusnak@chapelofthecross.org
Clifford Bischoff, Pastoral Assistant	314-921-1107	pastorbischoff@chapelofthecross.org
Mary Laesch, Children and Family Ministry Coord.	314-355-0688	family@chapelofthecross.org

#### **Missions**

Chapel of the Cross supports the ministry of the English District and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as well as the Lutheran High School Association. We also assist the following ministries and organizations:

*Friends of New Americans	*Shoebox Ministry	*Helping Hands Food Pantry
Lutheran Chaplains	Lutheran Heritage Foundation	Lutherans for Life
Concordia Seminary	Friend of Moms	Day 3 Seeds
KFUO Radio	L.A.M.P. Lutheran Assoc. of Missionaries & Pilots	

Chapel of the Cross - Lutheran is affiliated with the English District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

<sup>\*</sup> indicates special emphasis in 2025