

Rejoice Lutheran Church

1155 County Rd 75
PO Box 307
Clearwater, MN 55320
320.558.6851

rejoice@rejoicelutheranchurch.org

Worship Schedule:

Sunday:

9:30 am in-person worship
& online

Communion: January 12 & 26

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REJOICINGS



2025

Sunday Worship Service

Worship is in person at 9:30am on Sundays
at Rejoice Lutheran Church and livestreamed
on the Rejoice YouTube channel:
[RejoiceLutheranClearwater YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRejoiceLutheranClearwater).

Join us in Fellowship Hall for coffee & treats after worship.

January Events

- Jan. 5: Epiphany Sunday
- Jan. 8: Girl Scouts at 5:30pm
- Jan. 16: Young at Heart
- Jan. 19: Church council meeting
- Library meetings will be held at 9:30am Monday mornings
- Stitch & pray meets Wednesdays at 1pm
- Mondays at 7:00pm, Alcoholics Anonymous gather at Rejoice

Rejoice Church Council Update

Your church council met on Sunday, December 15. We start every meeting by reading our congregation's core values and asking ourselves "What is God up to here at Rejoice?". We see and hear God working through so many people in our congregation who embody our core values and for that we are thankful. Think about where and how you see our core values at work: Courageous Service, Extravagant Hospitality, Transformational Worship, Compassionate Justice, Joyful Generosity, and Purposeful Community.



The council reviewed the Fall Festival Financial Recap. After all expenses, the Fall Festival raised \$20,419.37. We will tithe 10 percent of these profits to the Southwest Minnesota Synod and the remainder will go to our General Fund.

The new financial software, Church Trac, is working very well and all are finding it easy to learn and user-friendly. If your offering/pledge is automatically withdrawn from your bank account, please plan to change that to the new system and to match the pledge you made in our recent stewardship drive, in the new year. Please watch the Friday update and Sunday announcements for more information about changing to the new system.

The council reviewed and approved the proposed 2025 church budget. The budget prioritizes faith formation for all ages including Sunday School, Confirmation, Vacation Bible School and Adult Education, as well as mission and outreach to people in our community who are not yet a part of our Rejoice community. Look for the proposed budget when the Annual Report is published and available in January and please plan to attend the Annual Meeting on February 2 to vote on the budget.

Thank you to the Nominating Committee for their hard work! The council reviewed the positions for which there is not yet a nominee for the 2025 Annual Meeting election. Those positions are: Education chair on the church council and three delegates to the Southwest Minnesota Synod Assembly. The Education chair represents the Education committee on the church council and would involve two monthly meetings (committee meeting and council meeting). As noted in the previous paragraph, the council has made faith formation a priority for the coming year and our congregation needs a leader in this position. Have you ever wondered about the work of the Southwest Minnesota Synod to which our congregation belongs? Then the two-day Synod Assembly is for you! The Assembly meets at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter in early June. If you are called to fill any of these positions, please contact Doris Scharmer or Pastor Karleen so your name can be placed on the ballot for the Annual Meeting.

We are gathering information about proposed costs of an outdoor worship space and memorial garden. We have been informed that our liability and building insurance policies will not be renewed in the new year. This is related to factors in the insurance industry which are outside of our control and our loss history which includes a roof replacement due to hail damage a few years ago. Finding a new carrier for our insurance needs will be a priority for the Property committee this month.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Chwalek
Council President

From Pastor Karleen Jung:

“We need more families! How can we bring more children into our midst? How can we ‘grow young?’”

As a pastor and former church musician, I’ve heard these or similar cries from congregations for decades. If you read my newsletter article in December, you understand that the declining number of families in churches is, in large part, simply a phenomenon of population changes.

However, in the past 20-25 years, there’s been growing research by seminaries and denominations to ask some of these questions and respond to some of these congregational cries. In my own studies and work in my previous synod, along with a lot of guidance from colleagues more expert in this field, I’ve read a number of books on this research. But, perhaps the best, so far, is a book written by Dr. Kara Powell and her colleagues at the Fuller Youth Institute, which is a center at Fuller Seminary, my alma mater. This center has been responsible for much of the research on these questions of how we gather and engage our young people.

So, as we begin the new year, for this month and for the following 7 months, we will work through their most recent book, *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*. Again, it’s the best I’ve read so far.

Chapter 1 - *What Congregations Are Doing Right*. There’s an important quote in the opening pages from Max DePree, that “the first job of a leader is to define reality.” That challenging reality, which I touched on in December, is that most churches aren’t growing and they aren’t getting younger - for a number of different reasons. Church attendance is declining. The number of people who identify as “religiously unaffiliated” jumped by almost 13% from 2007-2021. Fewer people identify as Christian. This is happening across denominations. While a few are holding steady, the vast majority are experiencing decline, even more after the pandemic.

This decline is happening in even greater numbers among young people. In the 2015 census, adults from 18-29 comprised 17% of the population, but only represented 10% of church attendees across the country. Everywhere we look, congregations are aging.

So that’s the hard news. But, there are churches out there that are doing things right. They are *growing young* because they are “engaging young people ages 15-29 and growing - spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and sometimes also numerically.”

We’ll start with what *doesn’t* matter: 1) size of the congregation, 2) a trendy location or region, 3) an exact age, 4) a popular denomination or lack of denomination, 5) being “cool” or “hip”, 6) a big, modern building, 7) a big budget, 8) a “contemporary” worship service, 9) a watered-down teaching style, or 10) a hyper-entertaining ministry program. These things really make no difference to younger people or help a congregation *grow young*.

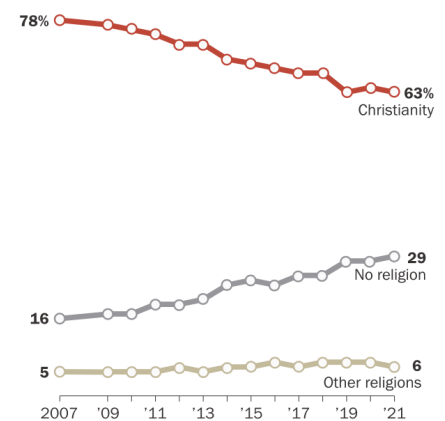
However, here’s what the research showed about what a church needs to produce better engagement with young people, about what appears to be working in those churches that are *growing young*. These are the key commitments they have made, which we, too, might make:

1. *Unlock keychain leadership*. Instead of centralizing authority, empower others, *especially* young people.
2. *Empathize with today’s young people*. Instead of judging or criticizing, step into the shoes of this generation and realize that their reality is not the reality of 20, 30, 40, or 50 years ago. Things are different now for young people.
3. *Take Jesus’ message seriously*. Instead of asserting formulaic gospel chains, welcoming young people into a Jesus-centered way of life. Worry less about doctrine and more about following Jesus.
4. *Fuel a warm community*. Instead of focusing on cool worship or programs, aim for warm peer and intergenerational friendships. Build relationships *across* the generations.
5. *Prioritize young people (and families) everywhere*. Instead of giving lip service to how much young people matter, look for creative ways to tangibly support, resource, and involve them in *all* facets of congregational life.
6. *Be the best neighbors*. Instead of condemning the world outside church walls, enable young people to neighbor well locally and globally. Our younger generations have the deep desire to help others, particularly out in the world..

Over these next several months, we’ll dig more deeply into each one of these. I hope you’ll consider buying and reading the book alongside me.

In U.S., roughly three-in-ten adults now religiously unaffiliated

% of U.S. adults who identify with ...





Church Council Team Updates & Info

From the Social Concerns Team: Your social concerns ministry has been busy raising funds to support our various projects, such as God’s Work, Our Hands, which includes snack bags for Pathways for Youth and the backpack program that helps families struggling with food insecurities. We also spend a great amount of time carefully selecting ministries that we can support each month with our noisy offering. The January 19th noisy offering is for Children’s Haven in Reynosa, Mexico, a ministry that Rejoice sponsors through our men’s group

From the Personnel Team:

Office update: Heather Conklin is our new office/social media employee and started working in December. Sara Nelson and Pastor Karleen will be working with Heather training her in this position. We are blessed that Heather has experience working in churches, coordinating volunteers, providing supportive care, and managing a retail department. She and her family live in Clearwater. Her Rejoice email address is info@rejoicelutheranchurch.org.

New office hours are:

- Monday: 9:30am – 2pm (Rejoice volunteers)
- Tuesday: 10am – 2pm (Heather)
- Wednesday: 10am – 2pm (Heather)
- Thursday: 10am – 2pm (Heather)
- Friday: office closed

Music coordinator update: Janelle Rudningen has been our music coordinator for the past few years and has done an awesome job. She recently let us know that she is resigning from the position. If you know someone who would be interested in the position and would be a good fit, please let us know.

Thanks!

Linnea Lindquist, Lori Lanes, Dick Chwalek, Scott Scharmer (personnel team)



Photos wanted: Rejoice members and frequent guests are invited to provide a family photo (4" x 6" max.) for an album so that Pastor Karleen can get to know church members and other attendees. Pictures will be in a general (but not exact) alphabetical order. Post-It notes will be provided to identify those pictured. This is completely voluntary. Pictures can be updated with family changes (e.g., new baby, marriage).

CELEBRATE

EPIPHANY SUNDAY

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5TH

Join us on the first Sunday of 2025 as we hear the story of the Magi and their journey to meet Jesus. We'll bless the church, distribute Star Words for the year, and feast on King's Cake in Fellowship. It all begins at 9:30a!



Young at
Heart

THURSDAY, January 16, 2025

Doors open at 10:30

Lunch at 11:30 & program follows lunch

Camino Pilgrimage

Come hear about the life of modern day pilgrims! El Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St. James, is a network of pilgrimage routes in Spain that lead to the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela. What was believed to be the tomb of St. James was discovered in Santiago in the 9th century and several pilgrimage routes developed as Santiago became a major Christian site. Today, the Camino de Santiago is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's a place of spiritual growth for many, and is also popular with hikers, cyclists, and tour groups. Susan and Dick Chwalek completed the French Route of the Camino in fall 2024. Join us on January 16 to hear about their journey!

CREATIVE SOULS RETREAT at Green Lake Bible Camp, February 7-9, 2025

Escape the cold and snow and enjoy a cozy weekend of creating! Crafters of all skills and projects are invited to a weekend of dedicated time to create and work on projects. No need to think about meals or dishes, because we have those covered. When you need a break, there is space for taking a brisk walk, reading a book, or even enjoying a nap. Join us for a weekend filled with whatever your creative soul needs! Register before the deadline - Tue, Jan 28! Visit gllm.org for more information and to register today!



A CINEMATIC JOURNEY TO A DEEPER SPIRITUALITY

REEL SPIRITUALITY

**JOIN US FOR OUR FIRST ONLINE
GATHERING!**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23RD

6:30P

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR DETAILS AND
SIGNUP



January 2025 Church Calendar						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 1pm Stitch & pray	2	3	4 9am 7 th Day Adventists
5 9:30 Worship-Epiphany 10:30 Fellowship	6 9:30am library meeting 7:00pm AA meeting	7	8 1pm Stitch & pray 5:30p Girl Scouts	9	10	11 9am 7 th Day Adventists
12 9:30 Worship & communion 10:30 Fellowship	13 9:30am library meeting 7:00pm AA meeting	14	15 1pm Stitch & pray	16 11:30am Young at Heart	17	18 9am 7 th Day Adventists
19 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Church council	20 9:30am library meeting 7:00pm AA meeting	21 10a Women's Bible Study	22 1pm Stitch & pray	23 6:30p Reel Spirituality	24	25 9am 7 th Day Adventists
26 9:30 Worship & communion 10:30 Fellowship	27 9:30am library meeting 7:00pm AA meeting	28	29 1pm Stitch & pray	30	31	

Can you help on Sundays?

If you can help by being an usher, greeter, serving coffee and treats after church, please sign up by writing your name down on the chart located on the table in the back of the sanctuary or by calling the office at 320-558-6851. If you would like an email reminder, please also include your email address. Thank you!

January 2025 2024 Worship & Volunteer Calendar				
	5 th	12 th	19 th	26 th
Greeter				
Ushers	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Reader				
Communion setup				
Fellowship				

January Celebrations

Birthdays

1/3	Karie Monk-Gohman	1/14	John Gohman	1/27	Quinn Holm
1/6	Violet Johnson	1/19	Patti Jagodzinski	1/28	Owen Holm
1/7	Ken Maehren	1/19	Tyler Charboneau	1/29	James Kirchenbauer
1/9	Bryce Van Nurden	1/21	Dianna Jussila	1/30	Linnea Lindquist
1/10	Cheryl Zimmerman	1/23	Craig Reid		
1/12	MJ Sims IV	1/26	Aubree Allen		

Anniversaries

1/19 Brian & Lindsey Sand

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(near the water tower)
PO Box 307 (mailing)
Clearwater, MN 55320

Non-Profit Org
U.S. POSTAGE
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Office Hours

Mon 9:30a-2p
Tue-Thu 10a-20

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Web

www.rejoicelutheranchurch.org

Staff

Pastor

Rev. Karleen Jung

Office Administrator

Sara Nelson

Office/Social Media

Heather Conklin

Music Coordinator

Janelle Rudningen