



HOLY SPIRIT HAPPENINGS

Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
A Welcoming Christ-Centered Community
December 2025



(780) 434-4012



church@holyspiritlutheran.ca



11223 - 51 Ave NW
Edmonton, AB T5H 0L5



Holy Spirit Lutheran Church

OFFICE HOURS

Mon - Thurs 9 am - 3 pm

Fridays 9 am - 1 pm

Church Office Closed:

Christmas Day through Jan. 2nd

STAFF

Pastor: **Liz Bell**

Office Admin: **Lori Zeiner**

Admin Assistant: **Darian Neufeld**

WORSHIP TIME

Sunday Mornings at 10:00 am

***In-person & live-streamed
on YouTube***

ALL ARE WELCOME!

HSLC is an affirming and inclusive
community, sharing together the joy
and work of God's Love



Upcoming Meetings

Dec 4, 6:30 pm - Church Council

Dec 9, 5:00 pm - Community Engagement

Dec 9, 7:00 pm - Administration

Dec 11, 10:00 am - Communications

Dec 11, 6:30 pm - Worship

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday Evenings, 7:00 pm - Travelling Advent

HSLC is partnering with three other Edmonton-area Lutheran churches for a series of midweek Advent services, with coffee and treats to follow. See page 4 for details.

December 1, 7:30 pm - Festival of Carols Concert

Join the U of A Mixed Chorus at the Winspear Centre to ring in the holiday season with a benefit concert for the U of A food bank! Tickets \$25, call the box office at 780-428-1414 or visit winspearcentre.com/tickets/events/other/2025/festival-of-nine-lessons-and-carols/ for more.

December 3, 12:00 pm - Yesterday's Youth Christmas Lunch

A catered Christmas lunch and carol sing. Tickets \$30, please contact Ellen or the Church office by **November 30th** to reserve your ticket.

December 7, 10:00 am - Sunday School Service

Our HSLC Sunday School will lead our second Advent service this year! Stay afterwards for a cookie potluck.

December 8, 7:00 pm - Malmo Christmas Choir Concert

A night of festive singing with our local community Christmas choir! Free admission.

December 11, 9:30 am - Bible Study

All are welcome to our Thursday morning Bible Study to socialize and to discuss the upcoming Sunday's lectionary.

December 24, 5:00 & 7:00 pm - Christmas Eve Services

HSLC will hold two candlelight services this Christmas Eve, with the HSLC choir performing at the 5:00 pm service.

December 28, 10:00 am - HSLC Christmas & Potluck

Come to celebrate the baby Christ! Potluck with cards & games to follow the service.

BISHOP'S MESSAGE



Dear siblings in Christ,

You know Advent is a season of waiting — but it's not a passive or idle kind of waiting! We are preparing for something world-changing! As candles are lit and prayers rise, we remember that Christ's coming is not only a story from long ago but a promise that continues to unfold right here and now — in our communities, our homes, and our hearts.

In these Advent days, I find myself thinking about all those for whom waiting is not a choice but a reality — those who wait for justice, for safety, for shelter, for dignity, for healing. The poor, the oppressed, the displaced, and the forgotten are close to God's heart. The winter's dark is challenging at times for mental health. The cold bites those without shelter. Weather can isolate us and intensify loneliness. Jesus' birth among the poor was not an accident of history, but the deliberate sign of a God who demonstrated how important it is to be present in our care for one another.

Here in our Synod, we know something about the challenges of waiting through the long nights of cold winter. Right here in our Synod, many congregations are anxiously waiting for a minister! We also know the deep

warmth that comes when people care for one another — when neighbours share, when communities open their doors, when churches reach out in support and the walls that divide us crumble. This is Advent hope in action.

Advent reminds us of the essential nature of our active response. Every turning year, we are reminded that following Jesus means not only believing but living as he calls us: to lift the lowly, to speak for the voiceless, to serve with compassion, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. We prepare the way of God each time we act with justice, mercy, and generosity.

This Advent, I invite you to take hope and turn it into movement. Let your prayers become courage. Let your worship become witness. Let your faith become the kind of love that makes a difference — for all people in need and for all creation.

No more waiting idly by, rise up, Advent calls!

With Advent hope and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bishop Trish".

— **Bishop Trish Schmermund**

COUNCIL & COMMITTEE UPDATES

Church Council Update

Wow! Things really never slow down at Holy Spirit! In the midst of being thankful for having so much, we have hosted the installation for Pastor Liz (YAY!), Pastor Elly McHan from Campus Ministry, the Choir Festival, and a very very successful Christmas Market! Through this all we have been supported by our Office (thank you, Pastor Liz, Lori and Darian!), and all of our committees...

And I really can't say enough to thank our committees. Worship Committee wears so many hats to prepare us for worship and to keep our space so welcoming and alive, in addition to supporting these extra events. Ministry has focused on welcoming and engaging new members who visit us. Stewardship have hosted Stewardship Sundays in addition to the campaigns to Disappear the Deficit, and now are helping with our new Mortgage campaign. Administration keeps the wheels spinning on the bus while seeking new ways to improve accessibility of our space. Lifelong Learning are actively providing new and exciting ways of learning about our faith including Children's Christmas Concert and new Bite-Size Bible study coming soon! Community Engagement continue to pour life and excitement into our church - and the Christmas Market was a huge job - and it was amazing! And through it all Communications has been sharing all our events and good news with advertising, signs and social media. And everyone is working together to make all this happen! Each and every one of the members can take a bow for all of the time and energy you are sharing with our community. Thank you all so much!

And we are now a "Friends of Creation" church - supporting efforts for a nature-based solution to combat climate change around Lake Chad. You will be hearing more about this.

In the next few months as we all celebrate Advent and the birth of Christ, Council will be preparing for another new year that includes our Mortgage to

Ministry campaign (your November Giving Statements will tell you more about this) the Annual Statement and Annual General Meeting.

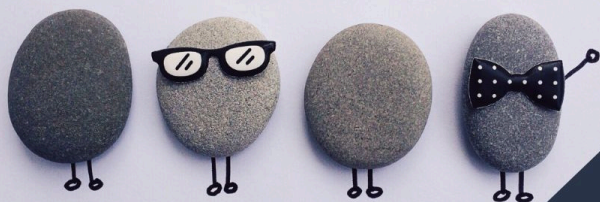
Blessings to you all.

— Karen Oko for Council

Christmas Market Photos



NEW MEMBER SUNDAY IN JANUARY



Talk with Pastor Liz,
call the office, or send us an email
if you are interested or
have questions about
membership at Holy Spirit!

#allarewelcome



Sunday, Dec 7 Sunday School Advent/Christmas Program

During Service on December 7, cookie potluck to follow

TRAVELLING ADVENT 2025

Join us Wednesday evenings throughout advent
at four Edmonton-area Lutheran churches
All are welcome

MIDWEEK SERVICES - stay for coffee & treats after worship

November 26	Ascension - 7 pm	8405 83 rd St NW
December 3	Trinity - 7 pm	10014 81 st Ave NW
December 10	Holy Spirit - 7 pm	11223 51 st Ave NW
December 17	Mt. Olivet - 7 pm	205 Fir St Sherwood Park

CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25 : Trinity - 11 am : 10014 81st Ave NW

Ministry Committee Update

Our committee has gone through a large transition in terms of our mandate and focus. We are now focusing on being the committee providing care and support to the congregation.

- We are continuing with the connect care team which calls members who find it too difficult to attend services or do not have online access to services. We call these people once a month approximately and pray, listen and give them an update as to what is happening at Holy Spirit and let them know we are thinking about them.
- We are starting a follow up process for new members to do a check in with them, speaking to them in person when we can and providing a card with encouragement to participate as they are able. We will be doing this going forward with all new members. We will be hosting New Member Sundays as well.
- We are still in charge of the Small Group Ministry that we started up again this past winter. We have not forgotten all of you that expressed an interest and participated. We will look to arrange an activity in the new year as we feel our focus is shifted slightly at present. This would be a good opportunity for new members to become involved and meet some new people. Details to follow.

- We will be starting a Caring Outreach program in 2026 for those who are going through a difficult time such as illness or grief. This program will include things such as adding peoples' names to the prayer list, sending out a card, or arranging a pastoral call or visit. Details to follow as to the process. We welcome anyone interested in this caring ministry to consider joining the committee.

—**Ministry Committee:** Janet A., Christopher S., Dianne L., and Dorothea C.



Holy Spirit is continuing our 'Giving Tree' tradition! If you'd like to participate, take a tag from our tree, buy the listed item, then bring it back (unwrapped) to put under the tree. These items are then given to people in need in our inner city.

This year, we are also choosing to sponsor a Christmas Hamper to go to a family in need, as well as some food items to provide a Christmas dinner! Holy Spirit has recently been contributing food and clothing through a social worker from the Francophone Family Resource Network Hub. The hamper will go to a set of twin brothers and their families, who are settling in Edmonton having fled the war in the Congo.

Thank you for your continued generosity!



Canadian Lutheran World Relief




Friends of Creation

HSLC Sunday School is fundraising with CLWR to restore the ecosystem of 60 acres in the Chad Lake Basin.

Help us raise \$3000!

Donate online or mark
CLWR Friends of Creation
on your offering envelope




To donate online, visit donate.clwr.org/fundraisers/holy-spirit-lutheran-sunday-school-in-edmonton-friends-of-creation-challenge.



Life Long Learning Events

Dec 7th - Sunday School children will participate in a Christmas skit during the service. All are welcome to bring cookies to share afterwards during coffee!

Dec 21st - Sunday School children are invited to sing verse 1 of "O Come, O Come, Emanuel" during the service with the choir. (There will be no Sunday School class on this day.)

Jan 4th - Bite-size Bible Study begins! We will experiment with six stand alone, 30-minute Zoom sessions, Sundays at 7 pm. Discussion questions will follow a brief "Bible Project" video. Please speak to Carola or Pastor Liz if you might be interested in being a co-host for a session. Skills needed: comfort facilitating the Zoom platform and/or the ability to lead discussion within a short time window.

Prayer Buddies - Thank you for praying for your child or teacher until May 2026! Let Kathryn Elford know if your child still hasn't connected with their special prayer buddy or if you would like one. Also, we could still use a few more faithful people of prayer for new children attending.

ENABLING MINISTRY

A Review of Disappear the Deficit

“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”

—John 16:20

After the pandemic in 2020, HSLC was called to change. For a time, we were not able to hold our services in our own building. Once we returned, many faces were gone from the pews, and after facing reduced giving, we reluctantly made the choice to reduce our ordained roster from two, to one. While this difficult decision was effective at improving our finances, we were still in the red: in December of 2023, a deficit of \$60,607 had been racked up. Due to the “Love Your Church” and “60 Ways to Save Your Church” campaigns causing immense levels of giving throughout 2024, this number shrank all the way down to \$5,981. But it still loomed over our heads, keeping our ministry from further expansion.

Already in the previous year, plans were in the works to fundraise our way away from stagnation, and in January of this year, Stewardship Committee announced the Disappear the Deficit Campaign. The goal was in the name: to make the deficit completely disappear. No more watching our pockets with every decision, worrying if this would add to that fussy number which refused to move out of the way.

While the Stewardship Committee pushed the campaign forward in announcements, fundraisers and pom-pom balls, support was quickly provided by Council and many others; but the most important support came from the congregation. From the inception of the project until March, the deficit number barely changed - at times, even dropping. Compared to the expected gradual increase in deficit, this was good news. But with unexpectedly low giving in Easter and the urgency of Disappear the Deficit’s message waning, the number began to creep its way up again.

The decline of the campaign’s success was not ignored. It was time to reinvigorate it, and this time as a joint effort with the Admin Committee. During the course of summer, a renaissance of the project was planned and announced: a Disappear the Deficit 2.0. New slides, new perspectives, and the same old mission: clear it up! This is the campaign which our committees have been pushing through Thanksgiving, when it was agreed that Disappear the Deficit had reached a natural close.

So, was it successful? At first glance, Disappear the Deficit might appear as a failure - we still have a deficit. On top of that, our deficit number has sat at around the \$16,000 mark this whole time (it is \$17,737 as of October). But that is still impressive. The past year or two have been times of crisis and fear in our church. In response, we gave beyond our usual levels of giving. It brought us out of a financially tumultuous situation, and allowed us to come back to something like normality again. Usually, our debt piles up as the year goes on, and hopefully clears up in December. Even though our deficit is still here, it has not significantly increased throughout this period - and if we experience typical Christmas giving, it may even “disappear” by the end of 2025.

The goal of Disappear the Deficit was never to save our church - it was to enable ministry, to let us be a thriving tree, where every day we extend God’s love outward without fear of our branches being cut off. Your giving has not only kept HSLC from being a stump of a church, but may someday allow us to extend our branches further than ever before.

Thanks to all who stewarded our church into a place where we can breathe. Through the Lord’s guidance, our grief has turned to joy.

With gratitude,

— **Stewardship Committee**

FROM MORTGAGE TO MINISTRY

Holy Spirit Lutheran Church is alive and vibrant! Look at all that happens here! In the past six months alone, we said Goodbye and Thank You to Pastor Prema, welcomed Pastor Liz to our family, had picnics in the park, installations, a choir festival, Christmas Market, and so much more. Our year has been busy, our attendance is up, and we are having more and more people viewing online (one week we had 94 people watching!). And through all this, our annual deficit hasn't increased. For this we are thankful.

None of this happens without you, the heartbeat of our church. Your faithful stewardship takes on many forms - time, talents and treasures.

As we close out 2025 and move into the new year, we are focusing our attention on a new goal—paying down the principal amount on our mortgage. Why is this important? This is a once-in-ten-years opportunity to significantly reduce our church's annual budget. The more we pay

down the principal on our mortgage, the more we free ourselves to sustainably do God's ministry in the years to come.

How does God want us to share our ministry? What can we do to support our community, to spread God's word, to enact justice, to live in the Spirit? We invite you to prayerfully consider how you might contribute to this effort to make better use of monetary stewardship, as we move **From Mortgage . . . to Ministry!**

Unlike typical mortgages, we are unable to make extra payments or affect the principal loan amount on our church mortgage in any way until it renews. And our next renewal date is March 1, 2026. Our balance will be about \$155,000. The more we pay down the principal, the more we save in the future.

For example:

- If we raise \$55,000 (reducing our mortgage principal amount to \$100,000), we can reduce our annual monthly payments from \$1500 to \$1000, leaving \$500/month to spend on other ministries and activities
- If we raise \$100,000 (reducing our mortgage principal amount to \$55,000), we will have \$1000 per month to spend elsewhere

There are tax benefits to additional charitable giving before the end of the year. You might consider a "50/50" approach:

- give to the mortgage campaign this December;
- in Feb/March 2026, give 50% of what you gave in 2025 (i.e., the amount you will get credited on your 2025 tax return), and get another tax credit for your 2026 taxes.

Whatever form your giving takes, thank you for being part of the vibrant, Christ-centred life of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church! Please contact members of the Mortgage committee, or Council, for more information.

—Karen Oke, Council President
on behalf of Congregational Council and the Mortgage Committee

TREASURER'S REPORT 2025














	Income	Expense	+/-
January	23,719	29,342	-5,623
February	27,306	27,849	-543
March	32,135	30,019	2,116
April	22,388	28,873	-6,485
May	29,934	29,629	305
June	28,975	29,545	-570
July	31,292	31,514	-222
August	31,757	35,457	-3,700
Sept	34,802	31,007	3,795
Oct	33,132	33,960	-828
Total	295,438	307,194	-11,756

BUDGET ACCOUNT POSITION AS AT OCTOBER 31, 2025

Budget Surplus (Deficit) as of Dec 31, 2024	-\$5,981
Current Year Surplus (Deficit) as of October 31, 2025	-\$11,756
Total Surplus (Deficit)	-\$17,737

THANK YOU
for your support
in our ministry together!

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Festival of Carols Concert 7:30 pm 9 am ESL Class 10 am Tai Chi 7:30 pm Malmo Comm. Choir	2 9 am ICANSA 4 pm Food Depot 4:15 pm Confirmation Cl. 6:45 pm Kickboxing	3  Travelling Advent Service 7 pm @ Trinity 9 am ESL Class 9 am ICANSA 12 pm Yesterday's Youth Christmas Lunch	4 9 am ICANSA 6:30 pm Council Meeting 7:30 pm Al-Anon	5 9 am ESL Class 5:30 pm Gym Rental	6 10 am Myeloma Alberta Support Society 1 pm ICANSA VR Training
7 Second Advent w/ Sunday School 10 am Service 7 pm Pickleball 7 pm Malmo Choir Rehearsal	8 Malmo Comm. Choir Concert 7 pm  9 am ESL Class 10 am Tai Chi	9 9 am ICANSA 4 pm Food Depot 4:15 pm Confirmation Cl. 6:45 pm Kickboxing 5 pm Community Engagement Mtg. 7 pm Admin Mtg.	10  Travelling Advent Service 7 pm @ HSLC 9 am ESL Class 9 am ICANSA	11  9 am ICANSA 9:30 am Bible Study 10 am Comm. Committee Mtg. 6:30 pm Worship Committee Mtg. 7:30 pm Al-Anon	12 9 am ESL Class	13
14 Third Advent Chrismon Service 10 am Service  7 pm Pickleball	15 9 am ESL Class 10 am Tai Chi	16 9 am ICANSA 4 pm Food Depot 4:15 pm Confirmation Cl. 6:45 pm Kickboxing	17  Travelling Advent Service 7 pm @ Mt. Olivet 9 am ESL Class 9 am ICANSA	18 9 am ICANSA 7:30 Al-Anon	19 9 am ESL Class	20
21 Fourth Advent 10 am Service 	22 9 am ESL Class 10 am Tai Chi	23 9 am ICANSA	24 Christmas Eve 5 pm Service 7 pm Service 	25 Christmas Day Office Closed 	26 9 am ESL Class	27
28 HSLC Christmas 10 am Service Games & Potluck 	29 Office Closed  9 am ESL Class 10 am Tai Chi	30 9 am ICANSA	31 9 am ESL Class 9 am ICANSA	 General Office Hours 9 am - 3 pm Monday - Thursday 9 am - 1 pm Fridays Call: 780-434-4012 email: church@holyspiritlutheran.ca 