



## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"We invite all to share the joy of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ."

Our guiding principles are to:

- "Reflect God's love by being inviting, non-judgmental, compassionate, and respectful;
- Work to be dependable and responsive in our community and global efforts;
- Adapt to the changing needs of our congregation;
- Joyfully proclaim the story of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ."

### Ministry Team

**Robert Neubert**

Pastor

**Dr. Denise Reed**

Worship Musician

**Frank Kenny**

Administrative Assistant

**Sandy Young**

Administrative Assistant

Phone: 503-397-0090

E-mail:

1stlutheransh@comcast.net

## FROM PASTOR ROBERT

Siblings in Christ,

The Nativity scene is an iconic image that is almost instantly recognizable by both Christians and non-Christians due to the millions if not billions of product representations of the image sold in nearly every store during the fall and winter holiday season. Whether it is a reverent depiction of our savior's birth or cartoon bears reenacting it, the image is instantly recognizable and as a result has lost the subversive nature of its setting which made it popular in the first place.

The Gospel according to Luke was written and distributed about sixty years after Jesus' death and in that time the Roman empire had come down hard upon the Jewish people due to a revolt that occurred between 66-73ce. This revolt resulted in the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and nearly one third of the Jewish population losing their lives. They were repeatedly told both before and after this revolt that the Emperor of Rome was the Son of God, and that continued disobedience would result in their destruction. In contrast, in the Gospel of Luke God declares that his Son was actually Jesus, a man who many might recognize as a possible prophet who was killed by Jewish and Roman authorities many years earlier. On top of that the Son of God was not born in a palace but was instead born in a barn. This occurred after a poor young couple was forced out of their home in order to take part in a census being conducted by the Roman Empire. Upon their arrival in the husband's hometown the couple are then rejected by its residents even though the woman is clearly pregnant and would soon be giving birth, thus they were forced to find shelter amongst livestock. This message of God's presence and love being with those abused by those with power resonated with those early readers, just as it continues to do today amongst those who find themselves tossed around by the whims of those in power.

The Nativity is meant to be a powerful message conveying the idea that God is not with those who build their success upon the failures of others, or use their power to abuse. Instead God is with those at the bottom, those who for any number of reasons have lost their way, or have too many obstacles placed before them and are thus unable to find success. As followers of Jesus we are called to serve the victims of power abuses (the Roman census), the refugees (Mary and Joseph denied a room at the inn), the homeless (forced to make their bed in a barn), the 4 out of every 10 children born into low income households here in the US alone (Jesus born in a manger).

( Continued on page 5 )

## OUR CHURCH COUNCIL

**Cathy Bowcock (2027)**

503-397-0599 (H) 503-369-9985 (C)  
[cbowcock7@gmail.com](mailto:cbowcock7@gmail.com)

**Kate Freitag, Secretary (2026)**

503-704-5624  
[kate\\_freitag@hotmail.com](mailto:kate_freitag@hotmail.com)

**Geri Logan (2025)**

503-397-4666 (H)  
 503-936-8254 (C)  
[gerilogan2@gmail.com](mailto:gerilogan2@gmail.com)

**Mike McCoy (2027)**

503-438-0356  
[golflion49@gmail.com](mailto:golflion49@gmail.com)

**Tim Meyers (2025)**

503-621-3891  
[meydontim@yahoo.com](mailto:meydontim@yahoo.com)

**Ben Ruff (2026)**

971-203-1675  
[benjaminruff@protonmail.com](mailto:benjaminruff@protonmail.com)

**Rodney Sherpe, President (2025)**

503-543-2251  
[stjohnsladyhawks@yahoo.com](mailto:stjohnsladyhawks@yahoo.com)

**Audrey Webster, Vice President (2025)**

503-397-5866  
[abw1@comcast.net](mailto:abw1@comcast.net)

Appointed, non-voting:

**Jon Vingerud, Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary**

503-397-1838 (H) 503-703-7465 (C)  
[jonvingerud@comcast.net](mailto:jonvingerud@comcast.net)

**Cathy Bowcock, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary**
**Barbara Gordon, Financial Secretary**

503-407-9044 (C)  
[bdbg@comcast.net](mailto:bdbg@comcast.net)

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



The First Lutheran Church Council met on December 8 2024. The meeting was called to order by President Rodney Sherpe. Devotions were given by Audrey Webster.

**November Minutes:** The council reviewed the minutes from the November meeting, a motion was made to accept them and the motion passed.

- ◆ **Financial Report:** Jon Vingerud submitted the financial report. A motion was made and seconded to approve the report. The motion was approved unanimously. Jon also provided a draft of the proposed budget for 2025 for the council to discuss.
- ◆ **Pastors' Report:** Pastor Robert shared he has been making visitations to Avamere. He recommended that that church members also reach out and visit or send cards to members there.

- ◆ **President's' Report:** Rodney Sherpe thanked the Council for their work during the past year.

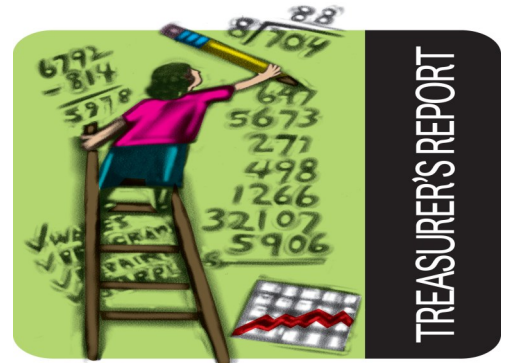
**Committee Reports:**

- ◆ **Properties:** Several companies looked at the roof and provided estimates to do the necessary repairs. Council discussed options and provided concurrence for Mark Hagelberg to move forward with MCE for \$7,700.
- ◆ **Community Meals:** Cathy Bowcock mentioned that a Turkey dinner will be held the last Tuesday of November. There will be a Christmas dinner as well. They are still looking for cooks.
- ◆ **Social Media:** Mike McCoy shared that he got reports that the volume on YouTube worship wasn't very loud. He reported that Jerry Johnson is working on a microphone that can be used for choir.

## TREASURER'S UPDATE

Information as of December 31, 2024

	Dec 31 Actuals
General Fund (GF) Income	\$200,515
General Fund (GF) Expenses	\$200,741
Expenses exceeded Income	\$ 226



Thank you – Thank you – Thank you!

We ended 2024 by using only \$226 of our General Fund Reserves.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Jon...

## CHURCH COUNCIL Cont.

- ◆ **Fellowship:** Tim Meyers had no report from Fellowship but is still in conversation with Tom Prevish from St. Frederic Catholic Church regarding a 2025 reconciliation service.
- ◆ **Old Business:**
- ◆ Update regarding stair railings to altar. Tim stated they anticipate the work to happen the end of January. The Memorials Committee approved funds for this project.
- ◆ Mike McCoy updated the council on proposed telephone upgrade.
- ◆ Update on permanent nametags. Nametags are made. Mike McCoy is proposing to put a metal plate on the wall by the ADA doors in the narthex. He will follow up on this.
- ◆ Update regarding church directory. Kate reported that there will be a meeting of those involved in the project and that it will probably be after the new year and then the compilation of the directory can begin.

### **New Business:**

- ◆ A discussion was held on anticipated needs for the Annual Meeting ( budget approval, report deadlines, etc Council committees will need to provide their reports
- ◆ Pastor Robert shared that there is group who works with developmentally disabled children who has requested to use our space to hold an event. Council discussed this and after the group provides information requested, they agreed to proceed with moving forward on it.

### **Review of the January 2025 Calendar**

- ◆ January 2025 calendar was reviewed with a suggestion that committee report deadline be put on the calendar.

### **Adjournment and Closing Prayer**

- ◆ The meeting was adjourned by Vice President Audrey Webster.



## SERVING IN JANUARY

### January 5

Ushers: The Sundeen's  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: Kate Freitag  
 Lay Reader: Beth Hunnicutt  
 Communion Server: Caroline DuBois  
 Comm Prep. Caroline DuBois  
 Comm. Clean-up: Donna Meyers  
 Tech: Teri Sherpe  
 Altar Flowers: Poinsettias  
 Coffee Fellowship: Jerry & Judy Ann Johnson

### January 12

Ushers: Tim Meyers & Kathy Bauska  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: Frank Kenny  
 Lay Reader: Sandy Young  
 Communion Server: TBD  
 Comm Prep. Candice and Peach Becker  
 Comm. Clean-up: Donna Meyers  
 Tech: Kitty Heide  
 Altar Flowers: Don & Rose Jensen  
 Coffee Fellowship: The Sundeen's

### January 19

Ushers: Terry Rude & Ben Ruff  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: Kate Freitag  
 Lay Reader: Linda McCoy  
 Communion Server: Linda McCoy  
 Comm Prep. TBD  
 Comm. Clean-up: TBD  
 Tech: Kitty Heide  
 Altar Flowers: TBD  
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD

### January 26

Ushers: Mike & Linda McCoy  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: Frank Kenny  
 Lay Reader: TBD  
 Communion Server: TBD  
 Comm Prep. Candice & Peach Becker  
 Comm. Clean-up: Geri Logan  
 Tech: Kitty Heide  
 Altar Flowers: TBD  
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please take a look at the sign-up sheets. They are waiting for you to put your name on them. Prayerfully consider reading the scriptures, setting up or cleaning up communion, serving for communion, providing altar flowers and hosting the ever-popular coffee hour. Your help makes our worship service inviting and meaningful.

**THANK YOU!**



## CELEBRATING

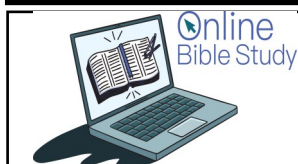


- 6 Caroline Niemi
- 7 Doug Christophersen
- 15 Joe Stroup
- 21 Frank Kenny, Christina Vingerud
- 26 Harold Gullickson



- 10 Scott & Kathy Bauska
- 14 Troy & Maria Weiss

## ZOOM GUILD



Zoom Guild meets on Monday, January 13 at 11 a.m. on Zoom.

## CONTEMPLATIVE GROUP

The Women's Contemplative Group will be meeting on January 9, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome! Contact Mariel McMullen 503-396-1646 or [mariel.mcmullen@live.com](mailto:mariel.mcmullen@live.com)



## FROM PASTOR ROBERT—CONTINUED

Here in Oregon it is estimated that nearly 20,000 people experienced homelessness in 2023, which means that Oregon ranks 3rd in the highest rate of homelessness in the nation, and currently Oregon ranks number one in homelessness among women and children. In the US there are over 770,000 people who find themselves without a home on any given night and this does not include those who are relying upon family and friends to stay off the streets; throughout the world there are over 150 million people experiencing homelessness (roughly the same as the population of the United Kingdom and France combined, and 1.6 billion people lack adequate housing. Along with these statistics it is also important to note that over half of the people represented in these statistics are under the age of 18. All of this should help remind us that the Nativity Scene is more than just a cute decoration to put on a tree or decorate our home, it is a reminder of our calling as Christians to be with, and support those in need in the cold months ahead, and all year round.

Peace and Blessings, Pastor Robert

from the  
**PASTOR**



### DOG & CAT FOOD

SAFE of Columbia County will be starting to collect SMALL bags of dog and cat food . Many clients come with service animals or pets and need to be able to feed them. If you would like to donate some pet food, please bring it to the church and we'll make sure it gets to SAFE.

### NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Dear God, at the start of this new year, and the Epiphany season, shine your light on my path. Amen.

*A prayer to the God of my life.*

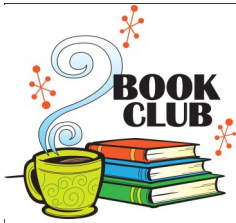


## "FLYING HOME"



*I. lovingly, want to thank all who worked and contributed to making the Quilt Drawing such a wonderful success. Thank you first, to Katy Garman who made the beautiful top "Flying Home" Thank You to Sue Christopherson, Shirley Frigaard, Beth Hunnicutt, Judy Ann Johnson, and Enid Schantz-Hagleberg who worked so hard hand stitching this beautiful quilt. I also want to thank Cathy Bowcock, who not only contributed a beautiful quilt for the Drawing, but was there as back up for the different Bazaars where we displayed the quilts. Thank you also to Beth Hunnicutt for her contribution for the third quilt top that we gave. All three of the winners were so thrilled. The gentleman who won "Flying Home" was beyond thrilled. That was so welcoming to us and made our endeavor more precious. I really want to give a Huge Thank You to Jean LeMont who arranged for us to display the quilts at the Elks Lodge Bazaar and at St. Frederic' Bazaar, and also sold tickets at these bazaars. Thank you to Caroline DuBois and Linda McCoy for helping sell tickets at St. Frederic's. We raised \$1,348 in drawing sales that are going to local charities. We are so blessed by our quilters! God Bless You All and Thank You, Geri Logan (The Quilter's Boss"...not really, just doing God's Work)*

## FLC BOOK CLUB



In January the FLC Book Club will be discussing *Winter Garden* by Kristin Hannah. They meet via Zoom on Monday, January 27, at 11 a.m. If you would like to join, but don't want

to mess with Zoom, you are welcome to come to Candice Becker's house to participate on her computer with her. The Book Club welcomes people who want to just read the book on a particular month; there is not a 12-month commitment or anything formal like that. Just let Candice know so she can add you to the email list. There is a list of chosen monthly books, including descriptions, in the church office.

## NEW YEAR'S BLESSING

The eighth day of Christmas,  
the eighth day of Creation,  
the Next New Day,  
New Year's Day.

May every day be a new year's day for you:  
a chance to forgive and be forgiven,  
to start again.  
May you take courage to begin anew. ...

As you let go of the year past,  
may you in your free fall find yourself held  
by an eternal love that has come ages to  
be with you,  
and will carry you all the way to the end. ...

Every day may you trust your belovedness,  
your freedom from having to prove  
yourself,  
and receive the grace that is given to you.

May this year be a year of grace and hope.

## DEVOTIONALS

Daily  
DEVOTIONALS  
Available

The "Christ in Our Home" publication for January - March is available. It is important we find some quiet time to spend with our Lord. "Christ in Our Home" is a useful tool for that contemplation. These devotionals are located at both main entrances and are available in both regular and large-print versions.



## IN OUR PRAYERS

- Our congregation.
- Our nation.
- Peace in our world.
- Refugees and Victims of terrorism and war.
- Those serving in our Armed Forces.
- Police and other first responders.
- Victims of Covid-19 and health care providers.
- Those affected by natural disasters and weather.
- Those in need of healing for body, mind, or soul including:
- Those affected by unemployment, lack of housing and hunger.
- Those in recovery.
- For healing and support for Jayne Schilling, Clara Jensen, Carlene Clore, Kim Mathisen, Doreen Gordon, Marilyn Hensley, Harold Gullickson, Ashleigh Dahlgren, Cheryl Perkins, and all others in need of prayers.



If you would like something specific published in the "In Our Prayers" column, please contact the office. 503-397-0090

## WELCA CHRISTMAS PARTY

*Thank you to Beth Hunnicutt for hosting the WELCA Christmas party. A good time was had by all. We especially enjoyed the new version of "White Elephant Exchange" that Beth had for us to play. There were lots of exchanges and laughter and, of course, goodies to share.*



## CONFIRMATION CLASS

**REMINDER!!** Confirmation classes begin again on January 5th. They are at 11:30 a.m., on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Children between the ages of 10-14 are welcome to join us as we explore what it means to be part of the church. For more information, contact Pastor Robert.



## WELCA NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

MANY THANKS for the  
MANY PEOPLE that make  
MANY SPECIAL ACTIVITIES POSSIBLE !!

- \* THANK OFFERING — we were able to send over \$700 to support the National WELCA.
- \* FOSTER KIDS — 21 kid size quilts and over 30 hats were delivered to DHS in mid December.
- \* HARVEST BAZAAR FUNDS — WELCA decided to donate \$7,100. The following local agencies received various dollar amounts totaling \$5,850. Amani Center, CASA, CAT, Columbia County Food Bank, Col. Co Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Community Services NW, Safe Shelter, SHSC-senior meals, SHSD-backpack program, and the local St Vincent DePaul. Global support of \$1,250 went to Lutheran Disaster Relief and Lutheran World Relief. Throughout last year we were privileged to hear speakers from several of these organizations. The work they do for people in our community is amazing.

THANKS TO BETH for hosting our annual Christmas Party. A fun afternoon for all that were able to attend.

WHAT SHALL WE DO IN 2025??

Join us on Tuesday January 7th @ 11am to help us decide. Bring ideas for activities, speakers, hands-on-projects or just your thoughts. We will consider new or well worn ideas. Soup will be provided for lunch



# ADVENT DONATIONS TO SAFE



The donations that we collected throughout Advent were dropped off at SAFE, a non profit organization here in Columbia County dedicated to helping people fleeing domestic violence. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

If you would like to learn more about this organization please follow this link:  
<https://www.safeofcolumbiacounty.org>



Picture above shows donations at the SAFE office. They were so appreciative of everything!



## COMMUNITY MEALS

Community Meals is back after a much needed break over Christmas and New Years. Tuesday, January 7th, will be the first Tuesday back serving. They are still looking for more volunteers to help. If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer for this amazing Outreach, please contact

Kathy Bauska or  
 Kathy Bowcock.



Community Meal

## MARY & SARAH GUILD

Mary Guild will be meeting at Avamere Monday, January 20th, at 10:30 a.m. with lunch and visiting at 11:00 a.m. in the dining room. Lunch tickets for non-residents are \$5.00 Please join them for this time of reflection and fellowship.



Sarah Guild will meet on Tuesday, January 21st, at 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome.



## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL GATHERING



It's nearing the time again to come together for our official Annual Meeting of the Congregation. Please mark your calendars for Sunday, February 2, following our worship service. At this meeting we will be reviewing and approving the budget, voting on new council members, and choosing our representatives to attend the Oregon Synod Conference.

**Please note: Committee Reports are due to the office no later than WEDNESDAY January 15, to be included in the annual report. This will enable the office staff to have the report done the Sunday prior to the meeting so people can read through it before the meeting. Thank you!**

## CHURCH DIRECTORY



### Church Photo Directory

Beginning in February, we will start developing a NEW directory for the church. The directory will

include all information that you and your family wish to share. Photos will be taken here at church following services on February 2, 9, 16 and 23. Forms for updating your information will be available soon. Please bring them with you when you have your picture taken. If you have a family picture of your own that you would like to use, please bring that to the church with your information form. Please be aware that this directory will be seen by people other than just members. Also, February 2 is the Annual Meeting day, so time for photo will be limited. You don't have to sign up for a particular time slot, but look for a sign-up sheet with the photo dates listed and add your family's name under the date you would like to have your picture taken.

If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Young at 503-396-0147 or the church office.

## BUNCO

Bunco Bunch took the month of December off and will now get together to play in January: Sunday, January 12, at 2:30 p.m. The game is



played in the Fellowship Hall. Sandy Young is bringing treats. If you have been wanting to try Bunco but not wanting to go out at night, this is a great opportunity. Come check it out and meet the wonderful ladies in the group.

## NEWSLETTER DATE

Please have any submissions for the February newsletter into the office by Wednesday, **January 22nd**. Thank you!

Newsletter  
**DEADLINE**

# IN APPRECIATION



Blessings and thank you to Steve DuBois and Norris Sundeen for providing the Christmas tree this year for the sanctuary. It was beautiful and fun to watch as it evolved each week with adding the lights and then the ornaments.. Also, thank you to everyone else who helped set it up and decorate it and to those who brought their special ornaments to hang on the tree.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you for the plate of Christmas cookies that were delivered to Mike. He doesn't understand where they came from, but they brought him pleasure as the caregivers rationed the sweet treats throughout the week. I am truly grateful that he was remembered in this special way.

*Linda Easterling*



Special thank you to everyone for the Christmas gifts. I appreciate them so much and am so grateful to be a part of this wonderful church family. Your love and caring this past year will be with me always and I will never be able to thank you enough



*Blessings, Sandy*

\*\*\*\*\*

A big thank you to all the "worker bees" who helped in so many ways to make this Christmas season memorable and beautiful for our congregation and visitors. And, thank you to Pastor Robert for introducing us to some new traditions that we hope to implement for many years to come.



# THANK YOU FROM THE NEUBERT'S

THANK YOU!

Patrice, Clara, Ellory and myself would like to thank all of you for welcoming us into your church family. You have all been a blessing to us, and we can't wait to see what amazing things we will be able to do together in the years to come! Your gift to my family and I was incredibly generous and we are eternally thankful!

Peace and Blessings,  
*Pastor Robert, Patrice, Clara and Ellory*



First Lutheran  
Church  
St. Helens, OR



2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Happy New Year!	2	3 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	4
5 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship 11:30 am. Confirmation	6 7:00 pm. A/Anon	7 10:00 am. Bible Study 11:00 am. WE/CA 5:00 pm. Executive Comm. 5:30 pm. Community Meals 6:30 pm. Bible Study 7:00 pm. Properties Meeting	8 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 pm. AA Meditation	9 10:00 am Contemplative Group 1:00 pm. Piece by Peace	10 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	11
12 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship 11:30 am. Church Council 2:30 pm. BUNCO	13 11:00 am. Zoom Guild 7:00 pm. A/Anon	14 10:00 am. Bible Study 5:30 pm. Community Meals 6:30 pm. Bible Study	15 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 1:00 pm. Worship & Music 6:30 pm. AA Meditation Annual Meeting Reports Due	16	17 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	18
19 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship 11:30 am. Confirmation	20 10:30 am. Mary/Guild at Avamere 7:00 pm. A/Anon	21 10:00 am. Bible Study 1:00 pm. Sarah Guild 5:30 pm. Community Meals 6:30 pm. Bible Study	22 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 pm. AA Meditation	23	24 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	25
26 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship	27 7:00 pm. A/Anon	28 5:30 pm. Community Meals	29 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 pm. AA Meditation	30	31 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 2
<div style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">                 Pastor Rob out of office at Byberg Preaching Workshop             </div>						

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# The Skylight

January 2025

First Lutheran Church

**The Skylight**  
is the monthly newsletter of  
**First Lutheran Church**

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