



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

Dear Siblings in Christ,

The Christmas season is upon us again! Beginning in mid-October just as the zombies and vampires were just getting comfortable on the store shelves in between the large bags of candy corn and decorative skeletons; brightly colored trees, strangely decorated wreaths of red and green, strange bearded white men dressed in red, little elvish creatures, and an endless assortment of small decorative balls invaded the shelves. These strange and joyous decorations slowly pushed these dark and creepy symbols of Halloween and the beginning of fall out of the way, as the dark looming of presence of Mariah Carey and the other representatives of the looming Christmas season prepared to take over. Now that Advent is upon us I am finally willing to embrace these strange joyous decorations that have been invading our store shelves for months. For over a century now Christmas has been slowly taking over the fall holiday season pushing Halloween and Thanksgiving out of the way as stores compete as to who can get their Christmas decorations out first, yet things were not always this way...

In the early days of American history Christmas was a relatively minor holiday only celebrated by the most devout Christian families and did not include many of the traditions or decorations that we now associate with Christmas. That began to change during the latter half of the 19th century when Christmas was deemed a federal holiday in 1870. Initially this did not go as many had hoped. Workers, mainly men, now often enjoyed either their workplace closing or operating under limited hours between December 25th through January 1st and that meant that a lot of these men were spending a lot more time in the bars and brothels that dotted the big cities. Women's aid groups in New York soon became fed up with the amount of drinking and assorted debauchery that plagued the city around the end of the year and they pledged to embark on a media campaign to change attitudes around the holiday. Their goal was to transform the Christmas holiday into a more family-oriented holiday like Thanksgiving rather than just being a religious holiday. Thus, the image of Christmas was transformed with the help of imagery from popular literature of the time such as "Twas the Night Before Christmas" and thus the modern images of Santa Claus and Children gathered around a Christmas tree (a decoration brought here from German immigrants) lined with presents were spread far and wide. Retail Stores jumped on board with this campaign almost immediately since it greatly boosted the "holiday shopping season" and helped curb the excessive drunkenness that was causing disturbances in and around their businesses.

Christmas was now mainstream, and today people who no longer celebrate the birth of Jesus, or never did, gather with family and friends to share a meal and exchange gifts with each other. While I do take joy in the idea of people from all walks of life and from all over the world coming together to share a meal and exchange gifts I often worry that we sometimes lose sight of the purpose of this celebration.

Continued on Page 5

OUR CHURCH COUNCIL

Cathy Bowcock (2027)

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Kate Freitag, Secretary (2026)

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Geri Logan (2025)

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Mike McCoy (2027)

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Tim Meyers (2025)

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Ben Ruff (2026)

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Rodney Sherpe, President (2025)

503-543-2251
stjohnsladyhawks@yahoo.com

Audrey Webster, Vice President (2025)

503-397-5866
abw1@comcast.net

Appointed, non-voting:

Jon Vingerud, Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary

503-397-1838 (H) 503-703-7465 (C)
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Cathy Bowcock, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary
Barbara Gordon, Financial Secretary

503-407-9044 (C)
bdbg@comcast.net

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



The First Lutheran Church Council met on November 10, 2024. The meeting was called to order by President Rodney Sherpe. Devotions by Geri Logan. Audrey Webster will do devotions in December.

- ◆ **October Minutes:** The council reviewed the minutes from the October 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.
 - ◆ **Pastors' Report:** Pastor Robert shared that Wendy Rude had requested to resign her position on the church council. He stated that he has been making visitations and that he would be out of the office November 17-19.
 - ◆ **President's Report:** Rodney Sherpe also reported that he had received a letter of resignation from Wendy Rude.
- Committee Reports:**
- ◆ **Endowment:** Audrey Webster and Mike McCoy discussed potential for redistributing funds to take advantage of better interest rates.
 - ◆ **Finance & Stewardship:** Pastor Robert requested that someone take the 3rd and final Temple Talk position at the Nov. 17 service. Kate Freitag volunteered either her or Matt.
 - ◆ **Properties:** Mark talked to the contractor who had done the previous modifications in the kitchen and they are willing to do additional work.

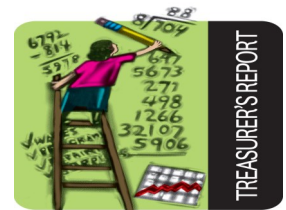
TREASURER'S UPDATE

Information as of November 30, 2024

	Nov 30 <u>Actuals</u>	Nov 30 <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>	
General Fund (GF) Income	\$ 174,885	\$ 199,298	\$ 24,413	behind budget
General Fund (GF) Expenses	\$ 182,276	\$ 202,125	\$ 19,849	under budget
Borrowed from GF Reserves	\$ 10,730			
Checking Acct Balance	\$ 4,328			

We need your help in December. Expenses have exceeded Income. Our goal for year end is to have all expenses paid with our offerings from this year. We have been able to attain this goal for several years. Your prayerful consideration and assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you as always for all you do and contribute to our Church.

Jon...



CHURCH COUNCIL Cont.

- ◆ **Social Ministries:** Mike McCoy reported that he has been discussing ideas for membership growth with another church member.
- ◆ **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.
- ◆ **Worship & Music:** Geri Logan submitted a written report where she updated dates for the an ecumenical Thanksgiving service at Plymouth Presbyterian Church on November 24. Also there will be Temple Talks on November 3rd, 10th and 17th.
- ◆ **Fellowship:** Tim just started a conversation with Tom Previs from St. Frederic Catholic Church. He has talked to Denise and she is willing to provide the music for the service again.
- ◆ Mike McCoy updated the council on proposed telephone upgrades After much discussion, a motion was made and seconded to go with the option of buying phones from a retail store. The motion passed unanimously.
- ◆ Update on permanent nametags. Sandy made some sample nametags for the council to wear and the feedback was positive. Pastor will tell Sandy to go ahead with the nametags.

New Business:

- ◆ Update on 2025 Budget Committee: The committee will be meeting in November to discuss the upcoming budget.

Good of the Order/Announcements:

- ◆ Geri shared that the piano in the Fellowship Hall has been removed.
- ◆ Several prayer requests were shared.

Old Business:

- ◆ Update regarding stair railings to altar. Tim stated that the contractor is about 10 weeks out from being able to do the work.



SERVING IN DECEMBER

December 1

Ushers: The Sundeen's
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Frank Kenny
 Lay Reader: Vincent Yellot
 Communion Server: Katie Garman
 Comm Prep. Caroline DuBois
 Comm. Clean-up: Cathy Bowcock
 Tech: Mike McCoy
 Altar Flowers: Margaret Booth
 Coffee Fellowship: Ken & Jennifer
 Anderson

December 8

Ushers: Tim Meyers & Kathy Bauska
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Kate Freitag
 Lay Reader: Sandy Young
 Communion Server: Linda McCoy
 Comm Prep. Katie Garman
 Comm. Clean-up: Donna Meyers
 Tech: Kitty Heide
 Altar Flowers: The Becker's
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD

December 15

Ushers: Terry Rude & Ben Ruff
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Frank Kenny
 Lay Reader: Katie Garman
 Communion Server: Caroline DuBois
 Comm Prep. Katie Garman
 Comm. Clean-up: Cathy Bowcock
 Tech: TBD
 Altar Flowers: TBD
 Coffee Fellowship: The Neubert Family
 Frank Kenny & Sandy Young

December 22

Ushers: Mike & Linda McCoy
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Kate Freitag
 Lay Reader: Linda McCoy
 Communion Server: TBD
 Comm Prep. Candice & Peach Becker
 Comm. Clean-up: TBD
 Tech: Mike McCoy
 Altar Flowers: Tom & Christina Vingerud
 Coffee Fellowship: The DuBois

Christmas Eve Service

Ushers:
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor
 Lay Reader:
 Communion Server:
 Comm Prep.
 Comm. Clean-up:
 Tech: Kitty Heide
 Altar Flowers: Poinsettias

December 29

Ushers: Matt & Kate Freitag
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: TBD
 Lay Reader:
 Communion Server:
 Comm Prep.
 Comm. Clean-up: Geri Logan
 Tech: TBD
 Altar Flowers: Poinsettias
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD

CELEBRATING



- 2 Miles Reardon
- 5 Lydia Reardon
- 11 Peach Becker, Carlene Clore
- 14 Aaron Williams
- 16 Rebecca Freitag
- 20 Wes Naish
- 31 Christopher Cory



- 6 Ben & Kristol Cohn
- 18 Tim & Donna Meyers
- 28 Bob & Carlene Clore



CONTEMPLATIVE GROUP

The Women's Contemplative Group will be meeting on December 12, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome! Contact Mariel McMullen 503-396-1646 or mariel.mcmullen@live.com

FROM PASTOR ROBERT—CONTINUED

During the season of Advent we light a candle each week as prepare for the coming of Jesus, and each candle symbolizes what the birth of Jesus means to not only Christians but all of God's Children. The first candle symbolizes Hope; hope for a world centered around God and the world God created. The Second candle symbolizes Love; a love for creation and a love for all the many blessings God has given us. The third candle symbolizes Joy; the joy that comes with new life and a new beginning. And the fourth candle symbolizes Peace; the peace that we all have received through our faith and the peace that God wishes that we can some day achieve when we learn to accept and celebrate our differences as children of God. These words are not just symbols but are what God wants for each and every one of us, and that is why God sent Jesus into this world.

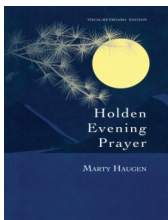
May the hope of a new day where all will learn to love one another fill you with a joy that surpasses all other pleasures that this life can offer, and may that hope, love, and joy bring you peace as we await the birth of our savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Peace,
Pastor Robert

from the
PASTOR



ADVENT SERVICES



We will be having Tuesday night Advent services beginning on December 3rd and continuing on December 10th and 17th. We will worship with the *Holden Evening Prayer* beginning at 6:30 p.m.

followed by bible study on the book of Ruth at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to join in both the service and the bible study as we prepare to welcome Jesus.

FOOD BANK

With the holidays fast approaching, let's not forget those who are less fortunate and may be experiencing hunger or are unable to provide a holiday meal for their family. If you would like to help the food bank provide food for these people, please place the items in the barrel by the church office. And remember, canned or dry foods no more than a year past the expiration date.



"FLYING HOME"

The drawing for this beautiful quilt will be on December 8 following the worship service and during coffee/fellowship time.

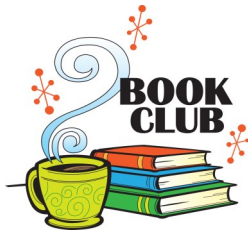
Tickets are only \$1 each or \$5 for six tickets.

Tickets can be purchased up to December 8th when we will have the drawing. Also, there will be two other quilts that will be drawn for.

So, run, don't walk, to get your tickerts now!!



FLC BOOK CLUB



In December, the FLC Book Club will be discussing *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope* by Anne Lamott. They meet via Zoom on Monday, December 30, 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. If you want to read ahead for January, that book is *Winter Garden* by Kristin Hannah.

SUNSHINE PLATES



Cookie Plates

WELCA's annual Sunshine cookie plates will be assembled Sunday, December 15 right after coffee hour. Patrice Neubert and Judy Ann Johnson are heading up the project this year. We especially need bakers and deliverers to help. Please have all goodies at the church by that morning. While we don't need a lot of help assembling and wrapping the plates, we do need drivers to deliver them so please volunteer for this if you can. Recipients like a visit as well as the goodies, which means a little extra time but is so appreciated.

A complete list of recipients has not yet been determined. Any suggestions, contact Judy Ann by text to 503-987-2463. We appreciate all the help making this project a success over the years. Thank you in advance for helping.

DEVOTIONALS

Daily
DEVOTIONALS
Available

The "Christ in Our Home" publication for December is still available. The devotionals for January - March are also 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 Wendy Rude, Jayne Schilling, Charlie Boelk, 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

POINSETTIAS



We are now accepting donations to help purchase poinsettias to decorate the Sanctuary. Donations may be placed in the offering plate or left in the church office. Please note "poinsettias" on your contribution and make checks payable to WELCA and note if the flowers are in memory of anyone. Thank you.

The busy holiday season is nearly upon us. During this time God, help me focus on your goodness, peace and love, the heart of all the upcoming celebration.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

REMINDER!! Confirmation classes have started. 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

HELP US CHOOSE

On Wednesday, December 11, at 11:00 a.m., we will be prayerfully deciding on how to dispense the proceeds from the Harvest Bazaar and other income that we have received throughout the year. This will be shared with agencies within our community and global missions, also. Bring your ideas! Bring a sack lunch like the quilters do every week and join them for lunch. And thank you to the quilters for sharing their time slot with us.

WELCA CHRISTMAS PARTY — SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH.



BLUE CHRISTMAS

Feeling blue this Christmas?
YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

On December 22nd at 4pm we will be holding a Blue Christmas service here at First Lutheran. Blue Christmas services during the holiday season (typically held on the longest night of the year) are held in recognition of those who might not be feeling the joy of Christmas that others are feeling. This service recognizes that the holiday season is not a time of joy for all people but instead can be a time of deep pain for many reasons. The Blue Christmas service reminds us that we are not alone, that God is with us even if our pain makes it difficult for us to celebrate the birth of Christ.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY UPDATE



Before renovation

We've had TWO graduates this past month from our IDA matched savings program! One is a house-bound disabled senior who began in April of 2022. She has been saving diligently since that time and used her funding for a new roof, siding, exterior painting as well as new gutters. What a difference this makes for this home, the second oldest standing home in Columbia City! These projects were in cooperation with help from Community Action Team, J&K Roofing and Owens-

Corning. Susan is so relieved now that her house is no longer leaking water through the walls! She commented, "This program is one of the only ones that is all about helping people, and then you are taught or reminded that you can save. With that, you can do what you want to do. And, for that, I am grateful."



After renovation

Our other IDA graduate we met at the Senior Fair in September. Although Audrey reported many repair issues needed for her Scappoose home, it turns out she and her husband also been without heat in their home for at least two years now! We got special permission from Neighborhood Partnerships to access her funding without the minimum 3-month waiting period. Randy Lucas from NP told her, "I think this is a perfect example of the flexibility of this program." Audrey finished her education requirements in October then scheduled with Columbia NW Heating and called us practically dancing the first week in November to say how excited she was to have heat in every room in her house at long last! She is so grateful for the experience with the Oregon IDA!

If you know of anyone saving for a home purchase or working to save money for a home repair, please let us know if this program could make a difference for them too!



CHRISTMAS MEAL

Community Meals will be serving a traditional Christmas dinner on Tuesday, December 17th, with ham, potatoes, etc.. You are invited to join them for this celebration.



Community Meal

God is with us in our longing to bring healing to the earth,
while we watch with joy and wonder
for the promised Savior's birth.

-- Jeannette M. Lindholm in ELW 258:3

MARY & SARAH GUILD

Mary Guild will be meeting at Avamere Monday, December 16th, at 10:30 a.m. with lunch and visiting  LADIES GUILD 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, December 17th, at 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome.

PEOPLE PICS!!



Ally Vingerud reading the scriptures. Good job, Ally!!



Thank you to our wonderful Worship & Music Committee for helping to make our services so beautiful and meaningful.



Pastor Linda back in the pulpit assisting Pastor Rob with worship on November 24.



To the left is our choir making a joyful noise on Reformation Sunday. We are so blessed to have them share their beautiful voices with us.

ZOOM GUILD



Online Bible Study

Zoom Guild meets on Monday, December 9, at 11 a.m. on Zoom. They will be going through Session 11 of *Twelve More Women of the Bible*. This session is titled, *Elizabeth-How*

to Win the Waiting Game. At this meeting the group will also begin reviewing other potential studies for the future, as there is only one remaining session after November. If you are interested in joining for the next study, let a member know. Zoom Guild is made up of Candice Becker, Beth Hunnicutt, Judy Ann Johnson, Geri Logan, and Audrey Webster.

BUNCO

Bunco Bunch is taking December off. With winter months being so dark and dreary at night, they decided to try a daytime get together 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



NEWSLETTER DATE

Please have any submissions for the January newsletter into the office by Wednesday, **December 18th.**

Thank you!

Newsletter **DEADLINE**

"Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man. Why wait for a call when you have a command?"
—Robert Hughes

ADVENT COLLECTION

Beginning the first Sunday in Advent, December 1st, we will be collecting toiletries throughout the Advent Season. Please bring the items to worship service each Sunday where we will be placing them on the altar. Let's see how crowded we can make the altar for Pastor Robert by December 22. Following that, the items will be packed up and distributed to those in need.

Suggested items include:

Women's personal hygiene products such as Tampons
 Toothbrushes and toothpaste, dental floss
 Bar soap and shower soap
 Shampoo
 Combs and brushes
 Towels
 Kleenex
 Lip Balm
 Deodorant
 Body lotion
 Razors and shaving cream
 Toenail clippers
 Hand wipes
 Baby Wipes
 Diapers
 Ziploc Bags
 Also, we will collect socks, stocking hats and gloves



Personal Products Collection

WELCA CHRISTMAS PARTY



"Tis the Season" for celebrating!









The WELCA Christmas white elephant gift exchange is back —with a few changes. The goal is to have **Fun and Fellowship!** All women of the congregation are invited, whether or not you attend WELCA events. Pastor Rob is the only male member of WELCA. The party is **Saturday, December 14**, from **1:30—4:00** at Beth Hunnicutt's home, 665 H Street, Columbia City. Bring a finger food if you want to, but don't worry if you don't. Beth will provide beverages.

This will be a TRUE white elephant exchange. Do NOT go out and buy something new. Look and see what you have lying around. This year we are vying for a "best" or "most" title. Look for the **shiniest, oldest, ugliest, coolest, dumbest, sweetest, etc, or most colorful, most useful, most unused, most annoying, etc.** Please feel free to come up with any other "ests" or "mosts". Wrap your gift with a note telling what category it fits into inside the wrapping, We'll use dice to exchange the gifts so that you don't have to steal any of the "treasures". Questions—contact Beth or Sandy.

First Lutheran Church St. Helens, OR



2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship</p> 	<p>2 7:00 p.m. Alanon</p>	<p>3 10:00 am. Bible Study 5:00 pm. Executive Comm. 5:30 pm. Community Meals 6:30 pm. Advent Service 7:00 pm. Bible Study 7:00 pm. Properties Meeting</p>	<p>4 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship 11:30 am. Church Council</p> 	<p>9 11:00 am. Zoom Guild 7:00 p.m. Alanon</p>	<p>10 10:00 am. Bible Study 5:30 pm. Community Meals 6:30 pm. Advent Service 7:00 pm. Bible Study</p>	<p>11 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 11:00 am. WELCA Meeting 4:30 pm. Budget Meeting 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>	<p>12 10:00 am Contemplative Group 1:00 pm. Peace by Peace</p>	<p>13 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous</p>	<p>14 1:30 pm. WELCA Christmas Party</p>
<p>15 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship</p> 	<p>16 10:30 am. Mary/Guild at Avamere 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>17 10:00 am. Bible Study 1:00 pm. Sarah Guild 5:30 pm. Community Meals 6:30 pm. Advent Service 7:00 pm. Bible Study</p>	<p>18 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 1:00 pm. Worship & Music 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous NO BUNCO</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship 4:00 pm. Blue Christmas</p> 	<p>23 7:00 p.m. Alanon</p>	<p>24 4:00 pm. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</p> 	<p>Have a Blessed Christmas</p> 	<p>26</p>	<p>27 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship</p> 	<p>30 7:00 p.m. Alanon</p>	<p>31 New Year's Eve</p> 				

First Lutheran Church
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St. Helens, OR 97051

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The Skylight

December 2024

First Lutheran Church

The Skylight
is the monthly newsletter of
First Lutheran Church

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