



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

The Rev. Allison Bengfort
Bridge Pastor

Dr. Denise Reed
Worship Musician

Frank Kenny
Administrative Assistant

Sandy Young
Administrative Assistant

Phone:
503-397-0090

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1stlutheransh@comcast.net

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Call Committee is happy to present their recommended candidate for Pastor of First Lutheran Church: The Rev. Robert Neubert. Check out his self-written bio below!

On Saturday, January 6, Pastor Neubert had a meet-and-greet with members of the congregation in the Fellowship Hall. There was a Question and Answer session, followed by visiting with Pastor Robert and his family. Now, there is only one more step remaining in the process to call a new pastor: the congregational vote to extend an official letter of call.

You are invited to join us on **Sunday, January 21**, immediately following worship, for a brief Congregational Meeting where we will vote on calling Pastor Robert Neubert as the next pastor of First Lutheran. We will vote on his official letter of call, which includes his compensation package. Please join us on this exciting day!

PASTOR ROBERT NEUBERT'S BIO

My life experience prior to and during seminary has given me unique perspective regarding ministry. Before seminary I worked as a bartender for eight years while attending an urban Lutheran church in downtown Portland. During my years behind the bar I met and talked with people from all walks of life. I spent many hours with individuals whose lives were spiraling downward and, during this time many regular customers, colleagues and friends passed away or suffered deep grievous losses forcing me to take on the role of counselor and sounding board. I also found myself helping people through relationship difficulties and various other transition periods in their lives. These experiences taught me a lot about the various difficulties that people go through during their life and the different ways people learn to cope with those problems. It also taught me about the effects and dangers associated with drug and alcohol addiction and how these addictions effect the way people perceive the world.

The first Summer after starting seminary I did my CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at York Hospital in York, Pennsylvania. This was the trauma center for most of central Pennsylvania and as a result we had an extremely busy trauma bay. Every Chaplain (including the students) was required to pull an all-nighter at the hospital every ten days. It was during these shifts that we all received crash courses in how to council people during emergencies, and due to the volume of people that came through the trauma bay we were given ample opportunities to learn.

Continued on page 2...

PASTOR ROBERT NEUBERT'S BIO, Continued

Continued from page 1...

This experience proved invaluable a few years later while serving in my first pastoral call in Sharon, WI as I had to counsel family members, firefighters and students following the suicide of a fourteen year old boy, as well as five other suicides that the community endured during my first two years of Parish ministry. Before completing seminary my family moved to Salt Lake City while there I began working at a group home for autistic boys. The home housed three boys all needing one on one care and each experiencing different levels of autism. While teaching me the challenges that families and individuals face in regards to autism this experience also taught me a lot about patience. Even though I only worked there for eight months I was quickly promoted to assistant manager of the group home and participated in program development for each of the boys, devised nutritional programs, and helped train others in how to provide care. My experience with these young men taught me a lot about patience and the different ways people think and process information.

Following my work at the group home I did my internship at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Roy, UT where I was blessed with a very active and supportive congregation. I learned what it was like to do Lutheran ministry in a culture that is dominated by the LDS church. The overwhelming presence of the LDS church in Utah provides a unique experience for anyone attempting to do ministry in this area. As a result people have a genuine thirst for knowledge regarding the faith so that they can understand what separates them from the dominant culture. Unfortunately all the positive energy I experienced at Our Savior's turned very negative when half of the congregation rejected the 2009 Churchwide decision to allow for the ordination of LGBTQIA+ people currently in same sex partnerships. This happened just as I was finishing with my internship and had recently agreed to stay on as a Youth Director. The current pastor at the time wanted to lead the congregation out of the ELCA while another faction in the congregation wanted to stay. This initiated a desire for those wishing to stay in the ELCA to try and call me as their pastor, though I declined. All of this would provide me with valuable experiences in dealing with congregational conflicts helping to better prepare me for the challenges of being a pastor that have helped immensely over the years.

My first call was in Sharon, WI and I quickly learned about the joys and challenges of being a "pastor of the community". Being the only full-time Pastor in the town of Sharon I was everyone's pastor, whether or not they came to church. This taught me the power of community and the connections we share with those beyond our walls. Because I was the only full-time pastor in Sharon I often found myself working with the local Police department and Fire Department, especially in the wake of local tragedies. This inspired me to become a volunteer chaplain with Sun Prairie police, fire and ems in my next call where I worked with seven other chaplains from several different denominations to serve our local community.

When I first started at Burke, seven years ago, the congregation was in a lot of pain. A pastor had recently been fired from their position after only serving 18 months (this had also happened at my previous call in Sharon), they had to fire their youth director due to a lack of funds and it had recently been discovered that the cause for their lack of funding was that the secretary had embezzled over forty thousand dollars (not including the loose cash that had also gone missing from the offering). All of these things resulted in the community losing many of its members, particularly most of their young families, thus causing a huge dip in their available resources and finances. Consequently, the first few years of my time spent at Burke

PASTOR ROBERT NEUBERT'S BIO, Continued

was centered around healing and the conflict that erupted followed the events listed above. There was a lot of anger in the congregation and unfortunately there were several people who were feeding that anger and making things even worse. After several sit-down sessions with various members and helping people recognize their joint love for this congregation we were able to move forward and begin to grow in faith and love as a community.

Once we were able to move forward and begin healing, work began on a massive building project starting in the summer of 2019. It began with the construction of a new office wing and fellowship hall in the field northwest of the current building. In March of 2020 the new wing was completed and we moved into it while work began demolishing the old addition that included an office wing and fellowship hall. Then the Pandemic hit and everything went online and construction continued. Once the old addition had been torn down work began preparing the 1899 sanctuary to move and attach it to the new wing. Over the summer of 2020 the Sanctuary was moved approximately 200 yards over the top of our cemetery in order to connect it to our new addition. In April 2021 construction was finally complete and we were once again able to use our sanctuary (in a limited capacity due to the ongoing pandemic). Due to the construction project, and the last year and a half of living under the shadow of the Pandemic, ministry was very unique at Burke since for most of that time we didn't have a building to return to. I left Burke at the end of December of 2021 and while we still had many restrictions in place in accordance to local guidelines based upon CDC restrictions ministry was going very well and there was a deeply hopeful spirit at work within the community as it was entering into this new period in the life of this small congregation.

During the month of January 2022 my family and I moved to Hillsboro, OR where we are currently renting a home. On February 1st my wife started a new position running the Oregon State Newborn Screening Laboratory. On March 1st I began my ministry at Gethsemene Lutheran church where I helped them complete their interim process after the previous interim left due to conflict with some of the members. Part of this process included the congregation also hiring a consultant who I worked alongside to help the congregation better handle some of the conflicts that they had ignored and allowed to fester over several years. We did this through congregational meetings, meeting with members one on one and most importantly helping the leaders understand their roles and how to be strong and effective leaders in their community. It is my belief that over the seven months that I served Gethsemene they did a lot of soul searching as a community putting them in a much better place to support and love their next called pastor.

In October of 2022 I began my interim position with Prince of Life Lutheran Church in Oregon City. Thankfully this has been a rather smooth ride. My family and I were welcomed by the congregation and we used these past sixteen months to discern who they are now that they lost their beloved pastor of over twenty two years, and who they wish to be moving forward. Similar to 1st Lutheran we spent the past 16 months meeting in small and large groups discerning where the energy was with the congregation and figuring out what our priorities were moving forward. I will deeply miss the people of Prince of Life but I am very excited to begin a new chapter serving the people of First Lutheran.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Robert Neubert

SERVING IN JANUARY

January 7

Assisting Minister: Katie Garman
 Greeters: TBD
 Ushers: Norris & Sharyn Sundeen
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Kate Freitag
 Lay Reader: Kitty Heide
 Communion Server: Caroline DuBois
 Comm Prep. Caroline DuBois
 Comm. Clean-up: Geri Logan
 Tech: Kitty Heide
 Altar Flowers:
 Coffee Fellowship: Chuck Garman

January 14

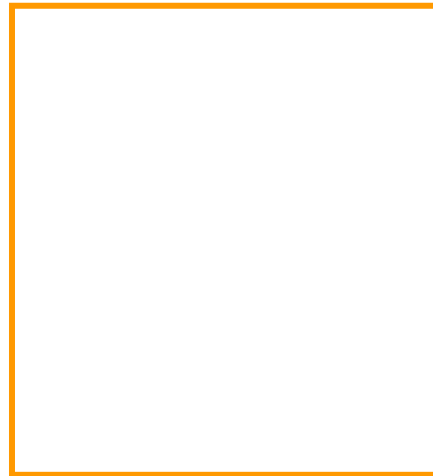
Greeters: Donna Meyers
 Ushers: Tim Meyers & Kathy Bauska
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Frank Kenny
 Lay Reader: Beth Hunnicutt
 Communion Server: Linda McCoy
 Comm Prep. Kathy Bauska
 Comm. Clean-up: Donna Meyers
 Tech: Kitty Heide
 Altar Flowers: The Burdetts
 Coffee Fellowship: Linda McCoy

January 21

Greeters: TBD
 Ushers: Terry & Wendy Rude
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Kate Freitag
 Lay Reader: Linda McCoy
 Communion Server: TBD
 Comm Prep. Candice Becker
 Comm. Clean-up: Geri Logan
 Tech: Kitty Heide
 Altar Flowers: The Beckers
 Coffee Fellowship: K & J Anderson

January 28

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

***LAY HELPERS NEEDED***

As you can see, there are many volunteer spots that need to be filled. Please take a look at the dates, see where you might be able to serve and sign up on the sheets in the Parish Hall.



CELEBRATING



6 *Caroline Niemi*
 7 *Doug Christophersen*
 21 *Frank Kenny, Christina Vingerud*
 26 *Harold Gullickson*



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

FROM PASTOR ALLISON'S DESK

Happy New Year, people of First Lutheran! It has been so wonderful to celebrate this special Christmas season with you.

If you have been in worship during the seasons of Advent and Christmas, you may have noticed that we have a new lay leadership role during the service: the role of **Assisting Minister**. This role is common across Lutheran churches as well as many other denominations, and it is an opportunity to more fully embody our belief in the priesthood of all believers.

A bit of history for you, from *Serving the Assembly's Worship: A Handbook for Assisting Ministers*:

In the early church, the primary minister or priest was the assembly of believers...Through baptism and the power of the Spirit, disciples become Christ's body in the world, sharing his mission and ministry as "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). Where the ancient priesthood offered literal sacrifices to God, this **priesthood of all believers** offers its sacrifice of praise to God in worship and its sacrifice of service in mission to the neighbor in need.

The unfortunate effect of centuries of atrophy – both of the active role of the priesthood of believers and of the proper lay-led roles assisting in worship – is that in many congregations worship leadership is thought to be "the pastor's job." Not so! A good presiding minister is host at a party where there are many roles.

During the coming weeks, I would like to invite all of you to consider the possibility of serving in worship as Assisting Minister. The role primarily involves leading prayer throughout the service, including the Prayer of the Day, the Prayers of the People, the Offering Prayer, and the Prayer after Communion. If you have any questions about the role, I am happy to talk with you. Sign ups for all worship leadership roles can be found on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you, and may the peace of Christ be with you in 2024!



ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 4, after Worship

This year's Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held after worship on Sunday, February 4. We will vote on the 2024 budget, elect new Council members, as well as other important business. Please plan to attend!

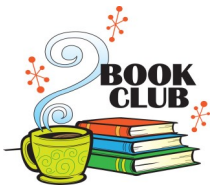
BUNCO BUNCH



formation.

Bunco Bunch gathers on Friday, January 19, at 6:30 in the fellowship hall. If you are a regular player and cannot attend, please contact one of the alternates to play. See a recent email for the list of alternates and contact in-

BOOK CLUB



let Candice or Audrey know so your email can be added to the list. Note: Looking ahead, February's book is *Beauty in Breaking*.

Book club meets via Zoom on Monday, January 29, at 11 a.m. This month, they will discuss *Lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake* by Anna Quindlen and *Moloka'i*. If you would like to join the group, please

PHOTOGRAPHER NEEDED... The 100th anniversary committee is seeking someone to help take pictures at the anniversary celebration. If you are interested, please contact Jean LeMont.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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

DEVOTIONALS



ble in both regular and large-print versions.

The "Christ in Our Home" publication for January through March is now 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 OUR PRAYERS

- Our congregation
- Our Call Committee and the process of finding a new pastor.
- Our Congregation Council.
- 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.
- Those affected by unemployment, lack of housing and hunger.
- Those in recovery.



For healing: Sandy Young, Ashleigh Dahlgren, Carlene Clore, Michelle Zimmer, Mike Corn, Patty Huhn, Scott Bauska, Wynn Reader and all with COVID.

For ongoing support: Clara Jensen, Doreen Gordon, Fred & Sandy Hora, Harold Gullickson, Kim Mathisen, Marilyn Hensley, Wilda Eberly.

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

WELCA NEWS

December

THANKS - to ALL that supported the various parts of the 2023 Harvest Bazaar effort including the MINI-BAZAAR, SOUP & DESSERT LUNCHEON, QUILT DRAWING, SILENT AUCTION, and BAKE SALE. A giant thanks to all that baked, created, purchased items or enjoyed the fellowship (and yummy food) at the free-will donation luncheon. Caroline—thank you so much for hosting the WELCA Christmas Party. All that attended had a fun and joyful time at your home that was so beautifully decorated.

We chose to donate the funds to 11 agencies that help locally. They include Amani Center, CASA, CAT, Community Meals, Columbia Pacific Food Bank, Columbia Co. Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Community Services NW, SAFE Shelter, Senior Meals, School Backpack Program. These totalled \$4,000.

Plus we gave \$1,550 to global Lutheran agencies.

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH - CornerStone group home received 25 beautiful quilts. The quilts were donated by PEACE BY PIECE. The group of talented and caring women from many churches in our area meets once a month in our Fellowship Hall.

We were also able to donate many personal care items from our collection closet.

JANUARY

PLANNING FOR 2024

New & Old ideas will be considered for the upcoming year. Join us and help to decide what mission projects and activities will be chosen for us to focus our efforts on for 2024.

Mtg on Saturday 1/13 @ 10am....includes a potluck salad luncheon.

CATHOLIC-LUTHERAN WORKING GROUP

Joint Service of Music & Prayer Luncheon to Follow

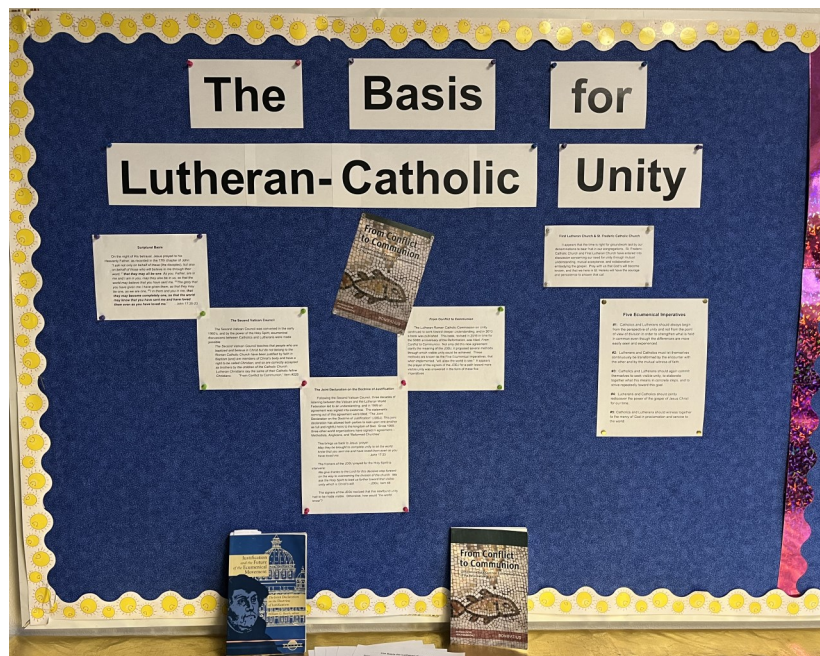
Saturday, Jan. 20, 11 am, First Lutheran

All are invited to participate in this collaboration between First Lutheran Church and St. Frederic Catholic Church. The service will be on Saturday, January 20, at 11 am at First Lutheran. Choirs from both churches will sing, and there will be congregational singing, scripture, and prayers. Following the brief service, you will be invited to the Fellowship Hall for a luncheon where members of both congregations can get to know each other. Please support our Catholic-Lutheran working group and take advantage of this opportunity to encounter our Catholic neighbors through music, prayer, and conversation!

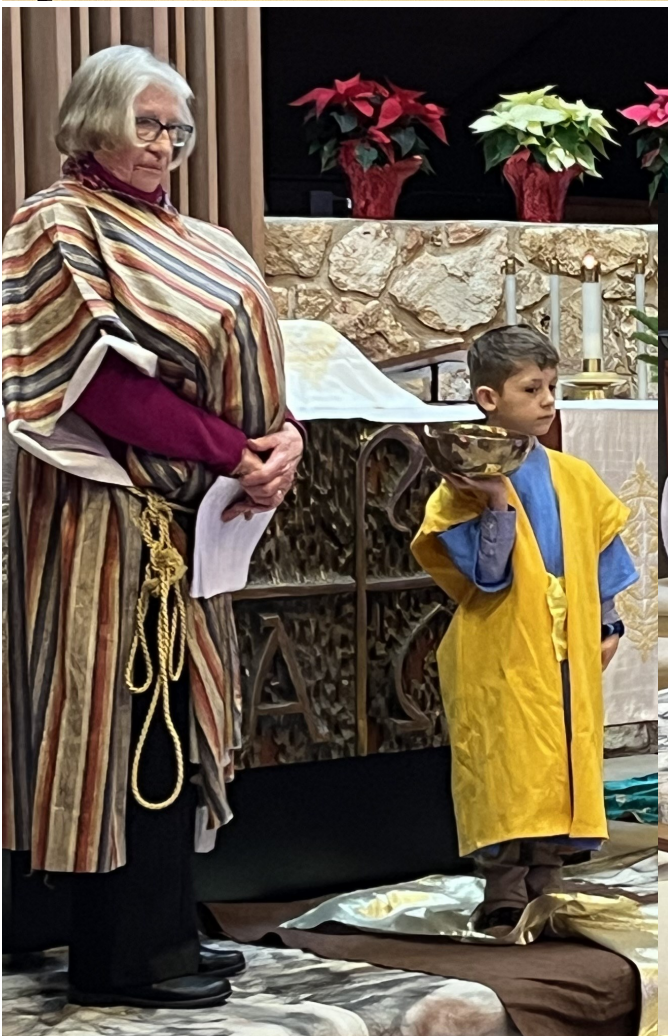
Adult Forum Report

After church on Sunday, January 7, congregation members gathered for an Adult Forum about the work of the Catholic-Lutheran Working Group. This working group is made up of leaders from First Lutheran and leaders from St. Frederic Catholic Church who hope to develop a relationship across our two denominations and collaborate on living out the gospel together. At the Adult Forum, we discussed how this project got started, its historical and theological foundation, why it matters, and where we hope to go from here. If you would like more information or are interested in supporting this effort in any way, please contact Tim Meyers.

For resources, check out the bulletin board display in the Fellowship Hall!



Christmas Pageant



CHURCH COUNCIL

Kate Freitag, Congregational Secretary (2026)

503-704-5624

kate_freitag@hotmail.com**Mark Hagelberg, Vice President (2024)**

214-662-4498

hagelb@swbell.net**Geri Logan (2024)**

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gerilogan2@gmail.com**Tim Meyers (2025)**

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mejdontim@yahoo.com**Brian Morse (2026)**

503-397-4463

rrmanon30@gmail.com**Wendy Rude (2025)**

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wendyter3@msn.com**Rodney Sherpe (2025)**

503-543-2251

stjohnsladyhawks@yahoo.com**Audrey Webster, President (2025)**

503-397-5866

abw1@comcast.netAppointed, non-voting:**Jon Vingerud, Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary**

503-397-1838 (H) 503-703-7465 (C)

jonvingerud@comcast.net**Cathy Bowcock, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary****Barbara Gordon, Financial Secretary**

503-407-9044 (C)

bdbg@comcast.net**Sandy Young, Recording Secretary**


503-396-0147 (C)

sweetsandy00@comcast.net

First Lutheran
Church
St. Helens, OR



2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p>1 New Years 7:00 pm Alanon</p> 	<p>2 No Community Meals 7:00 pm. Properties Meeting</p>	<p>3 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>	<p>4 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>5 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous <i>Reports due for Annual meeting</i></p>	<p>6 1:00 pm <i>Meet & Greet with Robert Neubert</i></p>
<p>7 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship</p>	<p>8 11:00 am. Zoom Guild 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>9 5:30 pm. Community Meals</p>	<p>10 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:45 P.m. Bell Choir 6:00 pm. Executive Comm. 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>	<p>11 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>12 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous</p>	<p>13 10:00 am Welca meeting and potluck</p>
<p>14 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship 11:30 am. Council Meeting</p>	<p>15 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>16 10:00 am. Sarah Guild 5:30 pm. Community Meals</p>	<p>17 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 3:00 pm. Worship & Music 6:00 P.m. Choir 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>	<p>18 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>19 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous</p>	<p>20 11:00 am Joint Service and Potluck- with St.Federic</p>
<p>21 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship 11:30 am Church meeting and vote to approve pastoral candidate</p>	<p>22 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>23 5:30 pm. Community Meals</p>	<p>24 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>	<p>25 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>26 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Fellowship</p>	<p>29 7:00 pm. Alanon</p>	<p>30 5:30 pm. Community Meals</p>	<p>31 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 pm. AA Meditation</p>			

First Lutheran Church
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The Skylight

January 2024

First Lutheran Church

The Skylight
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