



The Messenger

A Message from Pastor Lars

Churches are unique entities today. They're one of the few places left where people of different political persuasions exist in the same community. Yes, we work with all sorts of people, but jobs are not communities in the same way, as much as that new hip consultant who was hired to do the team bonding retreat tells you. At a place like Christ Lutheran, we worship and sing together. We pray together for each other, sometimes laying on hands or hearing each other one-on-one.

What makes us as ELCA Lutherans (and, mainline churches generally) so different is that we predate the self-sorting and silo-ing that's taken hold of our culture. Originally our connections were ethnic (the first members were mostly German), then theological, but not political. Maybe that's because our society was generally more socially conservative, regardless of opinions on economic policy. But also because we didn't think of our politics as identities. Now, we don't say, "I vote democrat" or "I vote republican". It's "I am a democrat/republican or conservative/liberal". What we believe has become who we are.

And so, when we come to looking for churches, we generally pick ones that align with our politics first, and sort between them. Those outside our politics, we don't even consider. And with 50 churches in Walla Walla, one has a lot of choices. Statistics show that this trend continues year after year, with churches becoming more politically homogeneous, and ones that are more mixed politics are shrinking. We people like to hear our views mirrored back, and seek places that align with our values.

That said, I would totally do that myself, if I were "Lars the insurance agent" instead of "Lars the pastor", and I were moving to town with my kids. I would cross off places that taught the earth was 6,000 years old, or had lots of hellfire, or lots of that "submission and obedience" language. I would search for a place that I felt was more open-minded, more critical thinking, less harsh, more accepting – more like the ELCA, in other words. And it's not because I need to only be around people like me, but there are things I just don't want to be a part of – such as fundamentalism or legalism.

On December 7 we have a vote on becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. I encourage you to come, to be a part of the process of discernment. In many ways, I wish we didn't have votes, but could make decisions by consensus, so we don't move forward until we have everyone on board. Logistically, that's very difficult in large groups, and constitutionally we're not set up for that. So a decision has to be made one way or the other, ballots must be cast. It's how we do it that will make all the difference. Will we approach it as a community, in love and respect, honoring each other, however we vote? Will we give the best possible spin on our neighbor's position, and not assume bad faith or devious intent? And how will we react? Will we maintain that? I hope so.

Too many big votes turn ugly in the aftermath. It's why I struggle with them. You end up with "winners" and "losers". Some feel like they got what they wanted, while others feel defeated. Then you have those who gloat and dance, making the minority feel unwelcome. I've seen it too many times, the sore "winner".

I don't see this as something with winners or losers, but as a decision to change or not. It's part of the process of being in community. We know we can't keep everything the same forever. We know that new visions and new stances, new understandings and new directions are necessary to grow and not be stagnant. Which ones: that's what we have to figure out. And we try to do that together, with respect.

It's worth noting: the official ELCA statement on sexuality outlines 4 positions that are all considered valid. However the vote goes, you are still an ELCA member in good standing. You are still a part of our church. So I guess this is a plea for good process, for love and respect and support of one another in a big choice. I hope to still see everyone around after for Advent and Christmas.

God Bless,

Pastor Lars



Brews & Brats 2025

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Jayla & Maxwell's Confirmation October 26, 2025



Jayla Ortiz, Pastor Lars Hammar & Maxwell Lohrmann

December Birthdays!

CLC'S FINANCES

October 2025:

Total Income: \$17,020

Total Expenses: - 29,541

Net Loss: (\$12,521)

Year To Date (approximate):

81% of projected revenue through October

85% of budget spent through October



Lily Stone 12/8
 Paul Anderson 12/9
 Allison Tabacco-Hines 12/9
 Helen Hill 12/12
 Kate Keyes 12/12
 Ophelia Pederson 12/13
 Noah Hein 12/14
 Jessica Austin 12/15
 Mackenzie Austin 12/20
 Sadie Austin 12/20
 Darlene Babcock 12/20
 Calder Schmidt 12/23
 Astrid Bailey 12/23
 Byran Harvey 12/25
 John Lohrmann 12/30
 Robert Tabacco 12/30

Thank You Notes from the Church Council

The Nominating Committee has worked diligently for several months to fill open Church Council positions. Please join us in thanking Barbara Hoffman, Anne Swant, Kaye Miller, Carmen Funderburk, and Larry Johnson for finding some wonderful nominees. If you are a candidate, thank you in advance for your willingness to lead! Church Council members and officers will be elected at the Congregational Meeting held immediately after church on Sunday, December 7 and installed on January 4, 2026.

So Long, Farewell: We also appreciate our dedicated Church Council members and appointed committee members and officers who are finishing their terms: Julie Swenson, Gordon Heimbigner, Barbara Hoffman, Karleen Heintzberger, Emily Stone, and Peter Swant. Gene Spangrude will step down as Financial Secretary after over 30 years of service; please give Gene a huge thank you for his service when you see him next. Kari Isaacson rotates off the Audit Committee; Alicia Lohmann, Dan Grinstead, and Gordon Heimbigner rotate off the Mission Endowment Fund Committee. Please talk to Kay if you are interested in an appointment to either the Audit or Mission Endowment Fund Committees.

Welcome Dee Kasten: Thank you to Pastor Lars, Kay Shelton, Julie Swenson, Barbara Hoffman, and Marit Rasmussen for serving on the Hiring Committee for the new office manager/bookkeeper. We are thrilled that Dee Kasten filled this position and started work on November 17. Dee has her hands full to learn a new position at this busy time of year, and we are grateful to her for her good work so far. Thank you, Leslie Anderson, for providing Dee's orientation and training. Thanks again to Leslie Anderson, Jim Peterson, Anne Swant, and Kay Shelton for staffing the office part-time after Erin's last day.

Advent Activities: Advent begins November 30, with three mid-week soup suppers and services on Wednesdays beginning December 3: soup supper at 6:00 p.m., followed by the advent service at 7:00 p.m. Thank you to Nick and Leslie Anderson for setting up the fellowship hall for the soup suppers each week. Church Council members will host the soup suppers; sign-up sheets to bring soup are in the Narthex. This year the Church Council voted to donate the offerings from the mid-week advent services to the Blue Mountain Action Council for use in their food bank.

As you can see, there are many ways that Christ Lutheran Church members and friends have devoted their time and talents to our congregation. Fulfilling our church's mission would not be possible without their contributions. Thank you ALL for your support of our congregation.

Kay Shelton
Council President

Attendance Report

Average Sunday Worship Attendance

October 2024 113

October 2025 111

Advent

The word 'advent' means coming or arrival. It is a season of preparation that looks both to Bethlehem and the final coming of Jesus Christ at the end of time. The traditional (now) color of Advent is blue, symbolizing hope. The color purple was used previously, the royal color of the coming king. The color purple also linked Advent with Lent as a penitential time in the church year.

In a beloved tradition, we will gather on Wednesday evenings (December 3, 10, and 17) for the fellowship of a soup supper at 6 p.m. and Holden Evening Prayer at 7 p.m. This midweek gathering offers an opportunity to pause in this busy season.

Upcoming Events in December

December 3: Soup Supper 6pm. Advent Service 7pm

December 7: Care Kits

CLC will be providing care kits to members of the community. The kits will include a variety of items such as food, toiletries, and clothing. If you are a member of CLC to participate. If you have questions, please contact Laura Berry.

December 7: Family Advent Night

CLC will be hosting a family advent night. The night will include a variety of activities such as singing, crafts, and a meal. If you are a member of CLC to participate. If you have questions, please contact Laura Berry.

December 10: Soup Supper 6 pm. Advent Service 7pm

December 13: Christmas Caroling to homes, Wheatland Village & the Va for starters.

Approximately 3:00pm to 5:00pm. we can meet at CLC and then caravan. Afterwards everyone is invited to Jim and Kari's for hot chocolate and treats. For further information talk to Kari Isaacson.

December 14: CLC at Tri-Cities Americans Hockey Game

CLC will be attending the Tri-Cities Americans Hockey Game. The game will be held at the Tri-Cities Civic Center. If you are a member of CLC to participate. If you have questions, please contact Laura Berry.

December 17: Soup Supper 6pm. Advent service 7pm

December 21: Nativity Story

CLC will be hosting a nativity story. The story will be read and acted out. If you are a member of CLC to participate. If you have questions, please contact Laura Berry.

December 21: Cookie Tin Sale

CLC will be hosting a cookie tin sale. The sale will include a variety of cookies and tins. If you are a member of CLC to participate. If you have questions, please contact Laura Berry.

December 24: Christmas Eve Services 4pm and 6pm

Come meet the new Office Manager

Hi everybody,

I look forward to meeting all of you! My name is Dee Kasten and I live in Weston, Oregon. I have a wonderful Husband Dave and 2 grown children Patrick my son and Morgan my Daughter. We share our home with 3 cats Lily, Macy & Karl as well as our Lab/Border Collie mix Daryl. I love to read watch movies and spend time with my friends. My favorite hobby is Drag Racing at the Walla Walla Drag strip! I have over 25 years of office experience and look forward to using it here. I want to say a big thank you to everyone involved in my hiring for giving me this wonderful opportunity. THANKS!

**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
November 11, 2025**

Council president Kay Shelton called the meeting to order at 5:32pm. Those attending were Pastor Lars Hammar, Gordon Heimbigner, Anne Swant, Jim Peterson, Barbara Hoffman, Karleen Heintzberger, Janet Mobley, Melanie Hein, Kirsten Brannon, Peggy Haug and Peter Swant.

Pastor Lars opened the meeting with prayer.

The October minutes were approved by email affirmation on October 23, 2025.

Financial Report: Monthly report: Christ Lutheran's operational income came in \$8,608 less than budget for October.

Operational expenses were \$2,738 more than budget for October. Operational funds combined for a net outflow of \$12,521 for October. Designated/restricted activity resulted in a net outflow of \$1,496 for October.

Year To-Date: We have collected approximately 81.80% of the revenue through October. We have spent approximately 84.90% of the budget through October.

Balance Sheet Items: CLC's checking and saving account ended October with a \$171,966 balance.

Restricted/endowments fund totaled \$290,840 as of 10/31/2025. CLC had \$1,803,215 in positive equity on 10/31/2025.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Lars Hammar provided a written report to Council.

Committee Reports:

Property: Fall clean up day was a success with 19 volunteers (saints) showing up to help with the clean up. There will be additional work that needs to be done with leaves as the fall progresses.

JC Landscaping is ready to help with snow removal this winter and has been given instructions to plow out the lot when appropriate. They are blowing out the sprinkler system this week.

Pastor Lars & his son Leif have a plan for getting our streaming speed higher for better resolution of our services online. This will be completed asap.

WW Electric has been busy getting the church ready for the solar panel install.

The HVAC system is scheduled for fall cleaning/servicing.

Finance & Budget: Our current financial situation is pretty completely described in Gordon's

Treasurer Report. I received budget requests from two council members. So, I guess two budget groups will get to split all the money. I do have a preliminary and incomplete draft of a 2026 budget for our review tonight.

Worship: Nothing new to report for Worship.

Evangelism: Maxwell Lohrmann and Jayla Ortiz were confirmed on October 26, 2025 with a reception following.

Name tag Sunday was held on Oct. 5.

Fellowship: Brats & Brews was a huge success with approximately 75-80 people attending. Many thanks to all who helped and participated. It was great to see friends & family join us as well. We had a small reception for Erin on her last day. It was very nice with a few treats, some Gluten Free, and beverages. Thank you to all who came and helped out as well. We wish her the best. We have our Advent Soup Suppers coming up as well as a wonderful night being planned for Christmas Caroling. 'Tis the Season!

Outreach: Continuing as reported last month.

Youth Education: No report.

Youth and Family: Kirsten is gathering with a group this next week to plan Advent and the Christmas program.

Adult Education: For the month of November, we are continuing the educational series in conjunction with SJAG in preparation for the vote of our church on whether to become an RIC congregation. There has been a good response so far and I expect even more people will attend with Pastor Lars leading the last two sessions. For December and Advent, since our church has events scheduled immediately after worship on the second and third Sundays in advent, December 7 and 14th, I have decided not to do any other adult education in December.

Stewardship: Pledge cards have been tallied. 31 cards have been received for a total of \$132,134 pledged. Looking forward to further information.

Continuing Business:

On October 29, 2025, Peggy Haug made a motion by email to hire Deanne Kasten as church secretary/administrative assistant at the pay rate, hours and benefits outlined in Kay's email. Emily Stone seconded the motion. A vote was taken by email reply. The motion carried. Deanne (Dee) Kasten accepted the position and begins on November 17, 2025; hours 8 am – 2:30 pm, M-F.

The Nominating Committee is comprised of Anne Swant, Barbara Hoffman, Kaye Miller, Carmen Funderburk, and Larry Johnson. The committee has worked hard to fill the open positions and a preliminary overview of people willing to serve was presented.

New Business:

Karleene Heintzberger made a motion to approve Sandra Heilman and Cheryl French as voting members of Christ Lutheran by Affirmation of Baptism. Kirsten Brannon seconded. Motion passed.

The updated Office Manager/Bookkeeper job description was shared. Barbara Hoffman made a motion to accept the updated Officer Manager/Bookkeeper job description. Peggy Haug seconded. Motion passed.

Anne Swant made a motion that mid-week Advent offerings be sent to BMAC with designation for the Food Bank. Jim Peterson seconded. Motion passed.

Jeff Wagner has given six months' notice of his resignation as Sexton, effective April 30, 2026. Council members are encouraged to sign up to help at Soup Suppers during Advent.

The first draft budget for 2026 was reviewed line-by-line in comparison to the updated budget from June 2025. Anne Swant presented a "Christ Lutheran Property Mgt Budget Proposal" with a detailed description of her requests. At their December meeting, council will vote on the final budget to recommend to the congregation at the January annual congregational meeting.

A capital campaign for roof replacement in the next 3 to 5 years was discussed.

Future dates: Financials on Dec. 3, 17, 31 (reimbursement or credit card requests due before church, on prior Sunday)

November 15 – Julie Drischell funeral 10:30 a.m. with reception following

November 30 – Advent begins; Wednesday Advent services Dec. 3, 10, and 17

December 7 – Congregational Meeting

December 14 – Tri-City Americans Hockey Game

December 24 – Church services at 4 pm and 6 pm (Pastor Lars's recommendation)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Julie Swenson, Council Secretary and Anne Swant

DECEMBER 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9am Mission Group 10am Men's Group 6:30pm Mission Group	3 Financials	4 10 _{am} SJAG Meeting 1 _{pm} Bible Study	5	6 Weavers 1pm to 3pm
7 9:30 _{am} Worship Service 9:30 _{am} Godly Play 10:30 Congregational Mtg 2 _{pm} Care kit project	8	9	10	11 1 _{pm} Bible Study	12	13 Christmas Caroling 3pm to 5pm or 6pm
14 - Hockey Game 9:30 _{am} Worship Service 9:30 _{am} Godly Play 11:00am Forum : RIC)	15	16	17	18 1 _{pm} Bible Study Newsletter Deadline	19	20
21 9:30 _{am} Nativity Story Worship Service 10:30am Cookie Tin Sale	22	23 9 _{am} Mission Group 6:30pm Mission Group	24	25 - Christmas Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27
28 9:30 _{am} Worship Service 9:30 _{am} Godly Play		9am Mission Group 6:30pm Mission Group				



Christ Lutheran Church

**1420 South 2nd Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-4502**

Return Service Requested

We're on the Web!

www.christwallawalla.org

CHURCH COUNCIL AND STAFF

·President·

Kay Shelton

Pastor

Lars Hammar

·Finance/ Budget·

Jim Peterson

·Secretary·

Julie Swenson

·Office Manager·

Dee Kasten

·Worship·

Barbara Hoffman

·Treasurer·

Gordon Heimbigner

·Sexton·

Jeff Wagner

·Youth Education·

Emily Stone

·Stewardship·

Peter Swant

·Organist·

Eleanor Elkins

·Youth & Family·

Kirsten Brannon

·Fellowship·

Janet Mobley

·Personnel·

vacant

·Adult Ed/ Library·

Peggy Haug

·Outreach·

Melanie Hein

·Property Management·

Anne Swant

·Evangelism·

Karleen Heintzberger

Mission

We are God's people, united by faith in Jesus Christ, forgiven, chosen, and called by him through the Word and Sacraments to make disciples, and to serve in the world God loves.