

CROSSBEAMS

Lutheran Church of the Cross



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Beloved of God,

Grace and peace to you for this month of December. I know December is a busy month and that it can be a hard month. It can be hard for many reasons: it's the last month of the year and you may be asking yourself, where did the time go? Holidays can be stressful, lonely, or involve a lot of traveling. It is dark, cold, and the weather is ever changing... Usually not for the better.

And yet, there are many beautiful blessings that December brings. For outdoor enthusiasts (with enough snow) one can go snowshoeing, skiing, sledding, and snowmobiling. There are holiday movies, family traditions, Christmas songs, and decorative lights on display.

And St. John has some beautiful traditions carried on by all of you. Every Sunday, until Christmas Eve, we will light our Advent wreath. A wreath with evergreen boughs, to represent everlasting life in Christ. Advent is a time to wait with purpose. Waiting for Christ to be born and for Christ to come again, while knowing Christ is with us still.

Which reminds me of Psalm 139 *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."*

God is with you in all things, even as we wait for Christ to be born. God is with you when your December days are bright and merry. God is with you when your December days are dark and dreary. God is with you when you have that cup of cocoa, snuggle up on the couch, and watch a Christmas movie (even if it is about Santa). God is with you in all things.

Pastor Lindsey

I love the Winter Solstice. I like the darkness and the short days, and the fact that a fresh year is coming. It's a bit surprising to me that, by Christmas, the darkest part of the year is over, the days have already started getting longer, and even though the full blast of Winter is yet to come, the Sun has already begun its journey south. Spring is on its way, and with it, a time of change and renewal.

Change certainly. By now everyone knows that we need to replace some of our rental income, and the Administration Committee will be starting to work on that, and address our annual deficit. Many thanks to Pastor Lindsey, Paddy Colfer, and the team that ran the Stewardship Service on November 23rd - it was a ringing success. It's a hopeful sign that the Congregation has already started to respond, and membership has been showing some growth.

It's also a hopeful sign that the Furnace Fund seems to have taken on a life of its own, and is growing steadily. Many thanks to all the members of the congregation for your generosity.

A number of you have noted that the Powerpoint laptop in the Sanctuary has become a little slow, and really needs an upgrade. Again thanks are due: in this case to Helmut and the Men's Breakfast Group, who volunteered some funds to make that happen. We'll try to get that in place as soon as possible.

And speaking of funds and deficits, it's time one again to prepare the Budget for the AGM. We'll be working on that through December and January, trying to get a grip on the cash flows for the coming year. As always, your input is welcome.

Finally, Christmas is coming, and I'd like to finish on a less materialistic note. Every year brings some loss, and 2025 has been no exception. We are missing some of the most valued members of our Faith family, and we mourn their loss. But we take comfort in the hopes and promises of a better life to come, for them and for all of us. And this helps us look forward to the new year with joy - tempered, perhaps by the inevitable sorrows of the human condition - but joy nonetheless.

And may each new dawn lift up our hearts, brighten our spirits, and bring us the peace and serenity of the Christmas season.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New year to all!

Council Co-Chairs
Bill O. & Paddy C.



FINANCIAL UPDATE:

Church of the Cross Financials through October 31, 2025				
	2025 Budget	Budget YTD	Actual YTD	October
Income	\$299,700.00	\$249,750.00	\$235,030.19	\$18,901.70
Expenses	\$331,036.00	\$275,863.33	\$289,293.07	\$25,469.28
Balance	(\$31,336.00)	(\$26,113.33)	(\$54,262.88)	(\$6,567.58)
General Fund Balance			(\$4,047.49)	
Furnace Fund			\$46,594.00	
Building Maintenance Fund			\$46,613.33	
Other Designated/Passthrough Funds			\$44,303.54	

Income represents general (budgeted) income. Maintenance Fund Transfer represents transfers from the General Fund (01) to the Designated Fund (02). Expenses represents general (budgeted) expenses. The numbers do not include any income to or expenses from designated funds.



Your abundant and generous giving has made our ministry and mission possible this year - thank you! Now is the time to consider a special designated gift to the general fund to help us end the year in a more positive financial position. All donations received before Sunday December 28th will be eligible to receive a tax receipt for 2025. Financial gifts by cheque, cash, e-transfer, or from investments are always welcome. We give thanks for the shared life and ministry of this family of faith!

There are many ways to give your offering at Lutheran Church of the Cross:

- Safely donate online with your credit card using our church website: www.churchofthecross.ca
- You can e-transfer through your online banking to churchofthecross@shaw.ca at any time.
- Set up monthly recurring donations with a cheque or bank account through Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR).
- Give by offering envelopes in service, mailing in cheques, or by dropping your offering off in person:
Monday - Thursday 9am-1pm
- If you are in need of offering envelopes reach out to the office - we would be glad to order you some.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS:

December 24th: office open 10am-noon

December 25- 27: office closed

December 28: office open 10:00am-noon

December 29 - January 1: office closed

January 2, 2025: regular office hours resume 9:00am-3:00pm



REMEMBERING GOD'S BELOVED



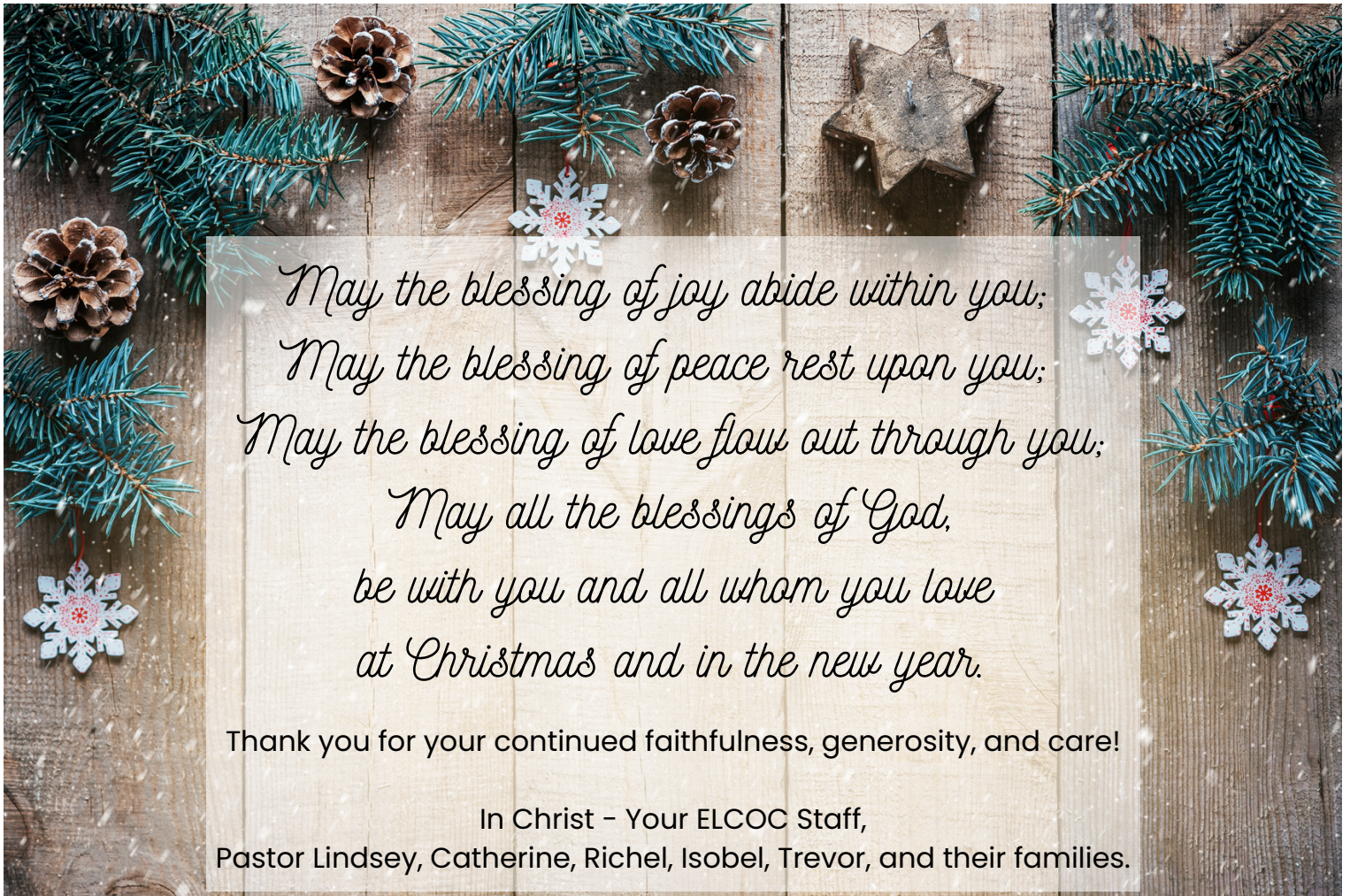
*"Lord, now let your
servant go in peace
for my eyes have
seen your salvation."
Luke 2:29*

In loving memory of
**GLORIA
WELLS**

Funeral Service
November 28 at 10:00AM
Church of the Cross



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



*May the blessing of joy abide within you;
May the blessing of peace rest upon you;
May the blessing of love flow out through you;
May all the blessings of God,
be with you and all whom you love
at Christmas and in the new year.*

Thank you for your continued faithfulness, generosity, and care!

In Christ – Your ELCOC Staff,
Pastor Lindsey, Catherine, Richel, Isobel, Trevor, and their families.

ADVENT WORSHIP 2025

Advent 1: Sunday November 28th, 2025

10:00am - Worship Service of the Word
with Seminarian Mike Plested

Advent 2: Sunday December 7th, 2025

10:00am - Worship with Holy Communion
& Blessing of the Quilts

Advent 3: Sunday December 14th 2025

10:00am - Worship with the Baptisms of Elliott and Wren,
& New Member Welcome.

Advent 4: Sunday January 21th 2026

10:00am - Worship with Holy Communion
with Nativity Scene / Creche sharing following worship

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS 2025

Christmas Eve: Tuesday December 24th, 2025

4:00pm - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Christmas Day: Wednesday December 25th, 2025

Emmanuel Christ is with us!

Christmas blessings to you and all whom you love
as you celebrate at home or away visiting family!

Christmas 1: Sunday December 28th 2025

10:00am - Christmas service of lessons and carols.

Christmas 2: Sunday January 4th 2026

10:00am - Christmas service of word and sacrament with
Communion.

Looking Ahead

Quilt blessing



On December 7th we will be blessed to send out warm, comforting quilts to members in our community in greatest need. A heartfelt thank-you to our Quilting Group here at Lutheran Church of the Cross and for everyone who has donated materials to make this ministry possible! 27 full size quilts, 3 baby quilts, 55 scarves (made by Phyllis B.) will be shared with *SWARM, Berkana House, Hull House, Women's Shelter, and the Mustard Seed*. In this Advent season—when we wait in hope for the Light of Christ—may these quilts bring warmth, dignity, and love to our neighbors as winter settles in.

Baptism & New Member Sunday



On December 14th we look forward to welcoming several new members to our community of faith! Three through transfers and two through Holy Baptism. Plan to join us for a wonderful service of celebration and stay following worship for cake and fellowship. We look forward to welcoming: Valorie, Michelle, Linda, Wren and Elliott to our family of faith!

Nativity Sunday

We invite you to bring a nativity or creche with you to worship December 21 2025 to share in the end of our Advent celebrations. We will display all the sets during coffee hour for the congregation to enjoy. Please ensure you set is clearly labeled and if there is a story associated with it we would love for you to share it in written form. We ask that you take your nativity scenes or creches home with you following coffee.



Janzen Family Nativity - Jesus, Mary, Josephine and the three wise women!

Coffee Set up & Clean Up



Fellowship is such an important part of our life as a community of faith - and having beverages and snacks following worship sure helps us welcome one another! Thanks to several of our long term members we have not had to worry about coffee set up for many years! Well done good and faithful servants! With their stepping back we are looking for some help to share the ministry of coffee set-up and clean-up at Church of the Cross. If you would like to learn more about this role and what is needed we would love to train you! Contact us in the office or sign up to share coffee & snacks via the sheet by the mailboxes.

Ministry Opportunities:

Join the Stewardship Committee



In 2026 the Stewardship committee will begin their work with organizing a pledge drive to focus our giving to meet the needs of our congregational budget. The committee will also assist the treasurer and financial secretary with quarterly mail-outs to all who give financial gifts to the congregation, as well as planning stewardship Sundays, and congregational learning opportunities. Speak with Pastor Lindsey to join this important work.

Join the Administration Committee



This committee will start by focusing their efforts on our congregations rental renewal, assessing our fair market value, and about ability to meet financial needs through hosting various performing arts groups. This committee will also look after general congregational contracts, building maintenance needs, and planning for larger scale projects. If this is an area of passion for you or you have a keen eye for our congregations administration needs contact the office or Bill O. for more information.

December Kids Saturday Bible Camp



Once a month we will gather our young people from 2pm-4pm for a time of singing, learning, games, snacks, and crafts on a central bible story. Our program starts Saturday December 20, 2025 from 2pm-4pm with sharing the story of Christ's birth!

We look forward to welcoming kids from our congregation, neighborhood, and other church communities who wish to learn and grow with God in an inclusive, affirming, and encouraging environment.

We look forward to welcoming kids in grade 1-6, and ages 5 and under with adult supervision.

Thanks to the generous support of the ELCOC endowment committee there is no cost associated with this program but registration will be required to attend. To register contact our office at: churchofthecross@shaw.ca

While the kids are at play there will be a parent support group with coffee and snacks to share!

We are looking for volunteers to help with snacks, crafts, games, and story time. reach out to Pastor Lindsey if you would like to share your gifts with our young people.

JOIN A SMALL GROUP



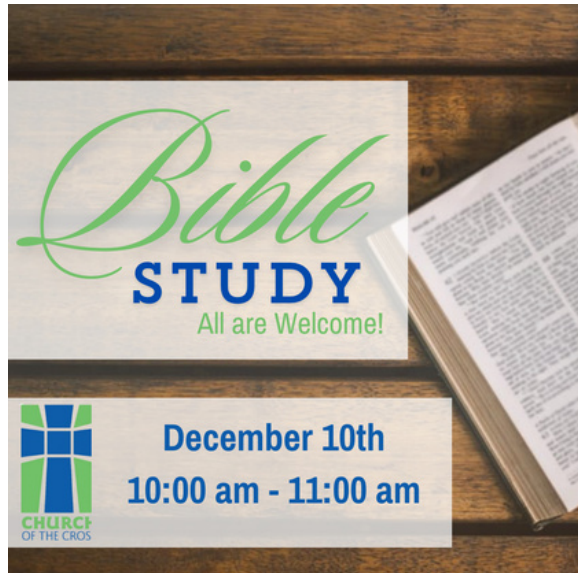
UKULELE GROUP




Wednesdays from 11:30am-1pm
All skill levels are welcome to join us!

If you need further details, please contact
Jean at jeandacko7@gmail.com



Bible
STUDY
All are Welcome!

 **December 10th**
10:00 am - 11:00 am



 **CHURCH OF THE CROSS**

PETROF
ELQC
Choir

THURSDAYS 6PM - 7:15 PM.

ALL ARE WELCOME AND
ENCOURAGED TO COME AND
SING.

CONTACT CATHERINE FOR
MORE INFORMATION.



Caring Connections

 **CHURCH OF THE CROSS**

CAREGIVER PEER SUPPORT GROUP
Third Tuesday of the Month
Church of the Cross at 1pm
Connect with Pastor Lindsey to RSVP

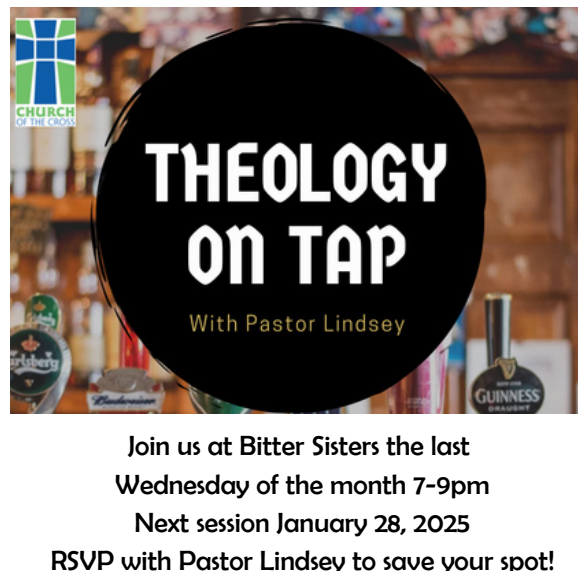



Mens Breakfast
ALL ARE WELCOME

December 13
LCOC - North Meeting Room



 **CONNECTION
COMMUNITY
& BIBLE STUDY** **8:00AM - 10:00AM**



 **CHURCH OF THE CROSS**

**THEOLOGY
ON TAP**
With Pastor Lindsey

Join us at Bitter Sisters the last
Wednesday of the month 7-9pm
Next session January 28, 2025
RSVP with Pastor Lindsey to save your spot!

UPCOMING EVENTS



SENIORS LUNCH

Quiche salad and entertainment!!

**DECEMBER 9
@ 11:30 AM**


Join us for Seniors Lunch this December!

Pastor Lindsey and Catherine will be present to share in a hymn sing and communion following lunch.

All are welcome to attend!

Night at the Movies

Wake Up Dead Man




When a young priest is sent to assist charismatic firebrand Monsignor it's clear that all is not well in the pews. After a sudden and seemingly impossible murder rocks the town, the lack of an obvious suspect prompts local police chief to join forces with renowned detective Benoit Blanc to unravel a mystery that defies all logic.

Mystery - 1Hr 44min PG

Landmark Cinemas Shawnessy
December 8 at 6:40PM

Post movie discussion with Pastor Lindsey at
Hudson's Pub - 16061 Macleod Trail SE



December 12, 2025 - 7pm

Arthur Christmas

Lutheran Church of the Cross
Fellowship Hall
10620 Elbow Drive SW

Community
MOVIE NIGHT

All are welcome
Those under 13 must be accompanied by an adult
Popcorn and refreshments will be provided
This is a free community event

FREE

Family Friendly Film






Lets decorate!

Join us following worship
Sunday December 14th
to decorate our
Christmas trees!

All ages and abilities
are welcome!

Warm beverages &
snacks provides




NATIVITY SUNDAY

Advent 4
December 21, 2025
10:00 AM

We invite you to bring a nativity scene or crèche with you to worship to share with the congregation. We will have tables out to share these beloved scenes with the congregation at coffee time. Please ensure your nativity is well labeled.



DECEMBER 19 @ 6PM

SongFest

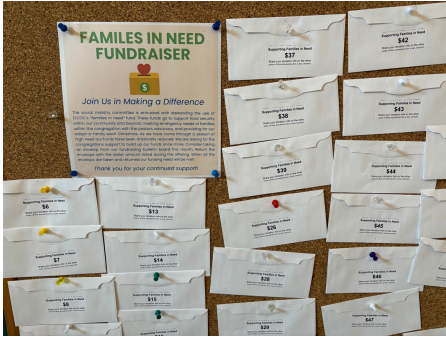
Join us for a fun night of Christmas songs, stories, and performances

All are welcome- warm drinks & snacks provided




**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF THE CROSS**

SOCIAL COMMITTEE UPDATES:



The social ministry committee is entrusted with stewarding the use of ELCOC's "families in need" fund. These funds go to support food security within our community and beyond, meeting emergency needs of families within the congregation with the pastors advocacy, and providing for our adopt-a-family each Christmas. As we have come through a season of high need our funds have been drastically reduced. We are asking for the congregations support to build up our funds once more. Consider taking an envelop from our fundraising bulletin board this month. Return the envelope with the dollar amount listed during the offering. When all the envelops are taken and returned our funding need will be met!

DREAM CENTRE REVERSE OFFERING



Thank you to all who donated items for the Dream Centers Christmas Stocking drive! We packed a smart car full of donations that will bring so much hope and cheer. We are so glad to support the work of the Dream Centre and all whom they come alongside this season. The Calgary Dream Centre offers our clients an opportunity to reimagine a transformed future through wrap around support from housing, clothing, training, and community care.

WINTER COAT DRIVE



We were able to donate a wonderful haul of winter wear, coats, and boots to the mustard seed just as temperatures began to drop. Thanks to everyone who shared to help us donated the gift of warmth!

ADOPT-A-FAMILY



Church of the Cross is blessed to be able to adopt a family this year. With the help of the congregation and the Social Ministry committee the family of six will receive a food hamper, Christmas sweatshirts, and toys for the young kids. A sign up sheet will be passed throughout the congregation for those who wish to sign up to aid in this gift. If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to Pastor Lindsey or a member of the social ministry committee.

SMALL CHRISTMAS HAMPERS



We are blessed to have a number of small Christmas hampers to give out this year. If you, your family, or someone you know is in need of a little extra help this year reach out to pastor Lindsey to reserve a small hamper. Each hamper includes a festive meal with snacks to share. Thanks to "Tree of Life" for their assembly and donations of these hampers

SOUTHWOOD COMMUNITY

Southwood Community
Calgary's Cooking
Cooking Group

Planning Meeting
First Thursday of the Month, 10 AM -1 PM

Cook
Second Thursday of the Month, 10 AM-3 PM

Lutheran Church of the Cross
10620 Elbow Dr. SW Calgary



For more information and to register contact Teresa:
info@southwoodcc.ca or apply at
www.ckpcalgary.ca/calgarys-cooking



Southwood's Calgary's Cooking group is looking for a few more participants. The group meets together twice a month to plan and cook healthy, nutritious and budget-friendly meals. We have been preparing about three recipes to take home with a cost between \$3-8/ portion. Plan: First Thursday of the month, 10-1 PM then Cook: Second Thursday of the Month, 10-3 PM - at Lutheran Church of the Cross 10620 Elbow Dr. SW Calgary

To register please contact Teresa at info@southwoodcc.ca For more information on the cooking group: <https://www.ckpcalgary.ca/calgarys-cooking>

COMMUNITY PHOTO VOICE PROJECT

This project invites you to share your stories, memories, and experiences of Southwood through photos and words. Participants take photos in response to guiding questions, then write or share short reflections about what the photos mean to them. We will be collecting photos and reflections until December 15, 2025, so there is lots of time to take part.

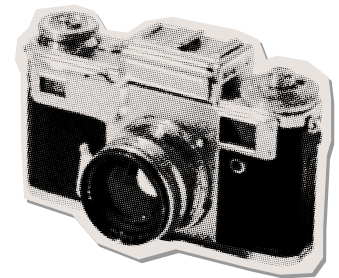
Guiding Questions:

- 1) What has shaped you, in small or big ways, in your neighbourhood?
- 2) What do you love about our neighbourhood?
- 3) What do you want to care for or change in Southwood?

How to take part: Take 1-2 photos for each of the above guiding questions.

Write a short reflection for each photos.

Send your photos + reflections to sarah.thomas@calgary.ca



MAY THIS CHURCH BE LIKE A TREE

Workshop by Katja Brittain - October 25, 2025 - Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd - Red Deer

First things first, what a wonderful time we had together, driving to Red Deer and back! Thank you to ELCOC and especially a member of the congregation for sponsoring our participation in this event. It was a full day, listening to Katja and conversing with other ELCIC churches from Okotoks to Edmonton area. We are not alone in our struggles; some have sold, some are thinking of selling and some are revitalizing. Many churches had stories of dwindling attendance, in some cases down to only a dozen or so per Sunday. We are blessed to have the attendance and the space that we do and are blessed to currently be hosting new families and visitors to our space. We also need to keep in mind our weekly activities and the visitors that they bring in - volunteers, choir members and families and should be thinking about how we are welcoming them and also encouraging them to contribute to our space. Here are some of the take aways we heard:

Hybrid Worship - Sasha

LCOC seems to be one of the congregations that uses of livestreaming and YouTube channel in an advanced way: Multiple cameras/angles, intentional interaction with those online in the service (sharing of the peace and communion). Our positive outlook with use of online worship of being a safe place to all to check us out and using this option for home-bound people. Other's perception is for online to translate into people coming in-person. The concern of most is the "disconnect" between those who worship online vs in person. How do we bridge that, if possible? Planned Zoom connect sessions would help to fill this gap

Amalgamating / Changing Space - Kathy

We were given a list of activities that churches undertake when they need or want/need to make changes in their buildings. These activities were interesting to help communities figure out the value that members place on different parts of the church. It seems that doing these activities intentionally would help honour the past experiences of members while moving forward. Conversation in this group was guided by the activities but one of the most interesting ideas was - what kind of church would we build if we had to start over today.

Building partnerships for rentals - Hanna

Church buildings are both gifts and responsibilities and ultimately belong to God. They can strengthen mission, drain energy, or open doors to new community impact. We should view them as partners for new ministry. Rentals should align with your church's mission and values and be purposeful. It is ok to decline rentals that are not aligned in order to open doors to other missions. Renters should pay for the space they use at competitive rates. Regular meetings with tenants and perhaps even multi-tenant meetings are important. Day to day rentals within policy can be handled by office but larger partnerships should be handled through property committee with recommendation to council. We received multiple handouts and a toolkit for assisting congregations to make decisions in this space, starting with a space usage analysis.

In Christ, Kathy B., Hanna J., and Sasha C.

ABT SYNOD UPDATES



December 2025

Dear siblings in Christ,

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

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

Here in our Synod, we know something about the challenges of waiting through the long nights of cold winter. Right here in our Synod many congregations are anxiously waiting for a minister! We also know the deep warmth that comes when people care for one another — when neighbours share, when communities open their doors, when churches reach out in support and the walls that divide us crumble. This is Advent hope in action.

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

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

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

With Advent hope and peace,

Bishop Trish

Bishop Trish Schmermund
Synod of Alberta and the Territories, ELCIC

CLWR UPDATE

Your gifts have the power to change lives this Christmas! Share God's love with the world and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others with Gifts from the Heart!



Here's how it works:

- You choose just the right gift for that person on your list, like a pair of goats or a flock of chickens!
- We'll send you a beautiful card you can share with your loved one to tell them about the special gift made in their honour.
- Your gift changes lives — thank you!

Here are a few of the many gifts you can choose from this year:

- **Duckling (Tiny Hearts)** - Choose this gift for the Tiny Hearts in your life, and you'll help give a family a duckling so they can grow their own food and income. Suggested donation: \$8
- **Fishing kit** - We're working with local fish nurseries to ensure healthy stocks of fish in the Lake Chad region. As families adapt to a changing ecosystem, give someone the tools to earn an income and a source of food for their family! Your gift will be matched! Kit for one family: \$10
- **Flock of Chickens** - Help a family add chickens to their farm, which will give them eggs, meat and a new way to earn income. Your gift will be matched! Chickens for one family: \$45
- **Assistive devices** - Life in a temporary settlement is especially hard for people with disabilities. By giving a mobility aid to a disabled person, you share improved quality of life and help restore dignity. Mobility aid for one person with a disability: \$50
- **Mobile clinics** - As families in the West Bank face increased violence, your gift will help our partners at Augusta Victoria Hospital bring vital health care to people in need through their mobile mammography and diabetes clinics. Mobile care for one person: \$75
- **Women in Business** - Many displaced people are single mothers who don't have a stable source of income. Your investment in an aspiring entrepreneur will equip her with what she needs to start a business. Suggested donation: \$100
- **Connect the camp** - We're connecting a refugee camp in Somalia to clean water, with a new pipe that will carry enough water for 15,000 people. Your gift adds 10m to the pipe! 200 gifts needed! Suggested donation: \$150

To see gifts available this year take home a *Gifts from the Heart* catalog from church or access it online at: <https://donate.clwr.org>

Please note: If you're planning to make a gift in someone's honour and would like us to mail you the card please get your order in by December 17, or you can print a card at home by either requesting an email with the cards you need. For donations made after December 20, we will not be able to mail or email cards before Christmas, so please plan to print them off yourself at home.

Lutheran Orthodox Commission members meet at Strasbourg's Institute for Ecumenical Research

Members of the International Lutheran Orthodox Commission on Theological Dialogue met at the Strasbourg Institute for Ecumenical Research last week to continue their reflections on the topics of 'Synodality and Primacy', examining the way that authority and decision making has been exercised in the church over the centuries. The second preparatory meeting of the 19th Session of the Commission took place from 16 to 18 November, chaired by Bishop Johann Schneider of the Evangelical Church in Central Germany and by Metropolitan Kyrillos of Krini from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It follows on from a plenary meeting hosted by the Orthodox Church in Cyprus in May this year.

The Commission members heard presentations on the sacramental foundation of synodality and primacy. The Orthodox presented perspectives on Baptism and Synodality and the Lutherans on Eucharist and Synodality. Other presentations explored questions of decision-making and methods of decision-taking in their churches at local, regional, and universal levels, as well as the necessary relationship between synodality and primacy.

We challenged each other to explore the theological foundations of [our] beliefs through the lens of [our] dialogue partner LWF's Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, ELCIC Member, and Prof. Dr Dirk Lange noted how both sides "challenged each other to explore the theological foundations of their beliefs through the lens of their dialogue partner, for the Orthodox through Baptism and for the Lutherans through the Eucharist." He said: "The papers were insightful and thought-provoking, and the ensuing discussion was exciting, outlining topics for further exploration. "Shared prayer was another important dimension of the meeting, as participants began each day with common prayer. They also enjoyed a visit to St Thomas' Church in Strasbourg, known as the "Protestant Cathedral", where the Reformer Martin Bucer served as pastor and later the theologian, medical doctor and organist Albert Schweitzer worked.

At the conclusion of their meeting, Commission members established the agenda for the next plenary gathering to be held from 10 to 16 May next year in Sète, in south-eastern France. That session will continue focusing on the main topics of the 19th Session, 'Synodality and Primacy', with specific attention to the history and reception of the church's Ecumenical Councils, dimensions of ecclesial communion, and other ecclesial decisions, both past and present, as well as the important role of the Holy Spirit in all questions of synodality and primacy.



Brazil: a passion for protecting the rights of people and the planet

A medical student and an active member of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), Jorge Fernando Cunha was part of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) delegation to the UN climate conference, COP30, that took place in Belém, Brazil, earlier this month. It was a groundbreaking experience for the 25-year-old, who also participated in an LWF Peace Messengers training held in Guatemala in May this year. His experience at COP marked a high point for him, the culmination of a journey which began way back in primary school, where he and some school friends embarked on an environmental awareness campaign to “teach” adults about the damage being done to planet Earth.

Tell us a bit about yourself and where you come from? Yes, I’m a fourth-year medical student and I live in São Luís, the capital of the state of Maranhão in north-eastern Brazil. I was born and grew up here, but my grandparents on both sides came from rural areas and worked in the fishing industry. We don’t live in the very poorest part of town, but it’s not the wealthy side of the city either. I do research into the health and education of children and teenagers, and I am a part of the International Federation of Medical Students Associations.

You didn’t grow up in the church, did you? No, my family was Catholic and then later, we moved to a Pentecostal church but that didn’t speak to me on a theological level. During the pandemic, I joined an online session of the Lutheran church and realized that this was the place where I could live out my faith. I usually say that I was a Lutheran all my life, but I just didn’t discover the church until then. The church is actually in my neighborhood, but our community is only 20 years old, so we don’t have many people who have grown up with the church. It is a small community with less than 50 registered members, but we have visitors and other people who come to worship with us every Sunday.

Where does your passion for climate justice come from? When I was only about seven or eight years old, my mother gave me one of those school notebooks that had information written on the sides of the pages about garbage disposal, water pollution, or climate change. As a child, I thought that obviously, other people don’t know about this, because if they did, they would have done something to stop it by now. With my friends, I started a neighborhood group of children who met in my home and shared some snacks while we discussed how we could let other people know what was happening to our planet. We got some folders with the information that we wrote out by hand and put them into the mailboxes of our neighbors’ houses. That’s how it started for me, but later at our state school my professors were concerned about attacks that were happening against indigenous people. We had discussions about land rights and about the importance of preserving indigenous culture to help preserve the planet. Before studying medicine, I also went to law school for four years where I learned about environmental law. Here in Latin America, nature is increasingly seen as a subject of rights and that was life-changing for me as I started to see things in a different way.

You talk about hope, but many people at COP were disappointed with the outcomes?

Yes, I was also disappointed to see how some people try to go back on decisions or proposals made a few years ago. But at the same time, for me it was a place of hope because I could see how many people there are working for change, taking the ideas of climate justice forward. So even now that COP30 has ended, I can still feel the strength of those people who continue to work for these ideals.

What are the next steps that you'll be taking to continue this work?

As part of our church's youth program here in Brazil, we coordinated a project called 'COP of the Evangelical Youth' supporting the presence of 14 young people at the conference in Belém. We organized devotional and spirituality sessions, as well as workshops to prepare them to go back to their communities, their churches, and ensure that climate justice is integrated into all our lives and beliefs as Christians. We discussed ways of supporting them to create their own projects to have an environmental impact, how to transform their ideas into actions, how to find funding and so on. Some of them want to work on solar panels, or collect rainwater for use in church, or design community gardens. Others plan to talk to local companies about how to protect the planet while saving money at the same time. I'm hoping to support some of them with the next steps for these different projects. At the same time, I realize how people don't always understand how environmental justice relates to their personal, their family or their community life. So now I am planning to do some informative posts on our Instagram to show how climate justice relates to every single area of life.

Beyond politics and economics, how do you think that voices of faith can make a difference in this work for environmental justice?

In the COP negotiations themselves, it's hard to see the faith groups being represented, and I'm not sure if that is the right place for them to be. But I think that spirituality affects all aspects of our lives, whether people believe in God or not. Spirituality is something that we all bring with us and it gives us strength to keep fighting and working for what is right. As Christians, I believe we should be the ones who keep on hoping, who don't give up. We might be tired, we might need to rest a bit, but we don't give up. As people of faith, we must look into the souls of all those who are struggling and tell them that we are here for you. We will help you to continue this journey for more justice in the world.

What is the most important lesson that you are taking away from these experiences as part of the LWF family?

The heartwarming lesson that I learned from both experiences is that I am not alone. For our generation, we are always surrounded by information and ideas, but I think we feel increasingly isolated and alone. So, this was the most powerful lesson for me to know that I am not alone, but that I am part of this beautiful communion of people of faith.





DECEMBER 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Social Ministry 10:30 AM Ukulele Group 11:30AM-1PM RTS Meeting 11:30 AM	4 Quilting Group 9:30 AM Choir 6:00 PM	5	6
7 Advent 2 & Quilt Blessing Worship with Communion 10 AM Confirmation @ Cross	8 Staff Meeting 10:30 AM - 12PM Night at the Movies 6:40 PM Landmark Shawnessy	9 Seniors Lunch 11:30AM	10 Bible Study 10 AM Ukulele Group 11:30AM-1PM Council Meeting 7-9PM	11 Choir 6:00 PM	12 Community Movie Night 6pm	13 Men's Breakfast 8 AM - 10 AM
14 Advent 3 New Member Sunday Worship with Baptisms 10 AM Confirmation @ Hope	15 Staff Meeting 10:30 AM - 12PM	16 Caring Connections 1 PM - 2PM	17 Ukulele Group 11:30AM-1PM	18 Choir 6:00 PM	19 Song Fest 6pm	20 Kids Bible Camp 2PM - 4PM
21 Advent 4 & Nativity Sharing Worship with Communion 10 AM No Confirmation	22 Staff Meeting 10:30 AM - 12PM	23	24 Christmas Eve Worship 4PM	25 Christmas Day Blessings as you greet the Christ Child in your lives and homes. Next worship Dec 28	26 Church Office Closed	27
28 Christmas 1 Worship with lessons and Carols 10 AM No Confirmation	29 Church Office Closed	30 Church Office Closed	31 Church Office Closed			



"Christmas in Bethlehem. The ancient dream: a cold, clear night made brilliant by a glorious star, the smell of incense, shepherds and wise men falling to their knees in adoration of the sweet baby, the incarnation of perfect love."

—Lucinda Franks



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