



# The Messenger

## A Message from Pastor Lars

One of the neat things about being an established congregation with a long history is having resources to work with. We have a really dedicated community here, one that still impresses me. For example, the Advent soup dinners and services were so well-attended. I'll admit I'm not used to that. We have a lot of dedicated people, and a big facility on an even bigger lot. I can't imagine how many millions it would be to try to buy this new today.

Along with that comes both a danger and an opportunity. The danger is in getting comfortable and coasting while the demographics of the community change. We know most of Walla Walla is no longer German farmers who regularly attend church. In fact, most don't go to any religious body at all. But the opportunity comes through the gifts we have, that can be leveraged to reach new generations and peoples for Christ.

To get a start on addressing our future, the council met on January 10<sup>th</sup> to talk about where our church is, what our core values are, and start thinking of ways to position ourselves for growth. We looked at what we most cherish, what we're open to changing, and a few ideas of things we might try. Little was finalized, because this is a process.

There was a strong feeling, generally, that we are a liturgical church, that we love the worship structure and the stained glass windows. We value community and fellowship functions, and have a strong heart for outreach projects. We also felt our growth edges were in areas of youth, single adults, and diversity. I plan to meet with the council again this year to review our initial thoughts, and start looking at some bigger goals.

In the meantime, a few new things will be happening. First, Anne Swant, property chair, and I are convening a team to review the facility for upkeep and mission. This diverse group includes people with knowledge of the building, safety and health, as well as having been at other churches – getting ideas of how things are done in other places. We're looking at not just our current needs, but the needs of our future. Going over the whole property, we'll look at

- 1) structural and mechanical repairs
- 2) welcoming visitors

3) worship space.

4) Rebuilding/repurposing. What do we need space for in the future? What kind of groups in the church and out? We'll look at current and potential future needs, and how to use our space inside and out.

The process is comprehensive, to come up with a strategic plan for our property. Too often churches make small changes here or there and end up getting into fights about carpet color or furniture location. Sometimes (often) it becomes personal. "This is what Pastor wanted", or "the committee liked this color". That happens when you haven't spent the time on the goals: what impression do we want visitors to our church to get? What will help our worship be alive and grow? What configuration of rooms will be most useful for outreach and mission? The form must follow the mission.

The Design Team will come up with some plans and go to the council, who will review them and then come to the congregation. There will be plenty of revisions. The process needs to start small to avoid having 170 different opinions on every part. I've seen churches do projects with a "please everyone as much as you can" strategy, and they end up with something nobody really wants, and isn't useful for the future. This will be several months; keep your eyes open for updates.

The new Care Team is starting this month. Headed by Peg Haug and Melanie Hein, we want to expand our care for our members, especially those who are older and have health conditions. It's not to take away from the pastor's role, but to expand into areas I'm not as good at (medical and social work) and empower our members who have time and ability to do this. Let us know if you feel called to this.

Our music ministry is also going to get a new start. Our organist, Eleanor Elkins, will be resigning, after graciously serving our church the past several years. James French will play in the interim, while we look for a new musician.

If you have good ideas for Christian education, let me know. Nothing is scheduled at this time, but the sky's the limit. It could be Sunday mornings, or at an evening time. How about off-site? Wine and Chat? Let me know.

And, of course, we move forward now with our new welcome statement approved last month. This opens new opportunities for outreach. I thank everyone personally for being so respectful and supportive of the church in this process.

Whew!!! For only being here six months, it's a lot going on. But I wouldn't have it any other way. So many gifts we have, and so much need out there. 2026 is going to be a fun year. Here's looking forward.

Pastor Lars

On January 11, Christ Lutheran Church affirmed becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. To learn more about what this means, check out the Reconciling Works website: <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/>.

Below is our Statement of Welcome, as posted on the CLC [website](#):



Welcome to Christ Lutheran! We welcome and invite all as Jesus Christ welcomes and includes ALL races, ethnicities, ages, abilities, citizenship, sexual orientations, gender, identities, or expressions. You are invited to worship with us to receive God's gift of grace and to participate fully in our community's life. We commit ourselves to embracing the work of racial equity and social and economic justice. We believe our unity is in the love of God made known in Jesus Christ.

### CHOIR FOR PALM SUNDAY

How would you like to have a choir for Palm Sunday?

Clarice Swanson has offered to lead a choir. She thought those who are interested could practice a couple times after the Wednesday night lenten services or Sunday morning after worship. There will be a sign-up notice on the bulletin board across from the library.

Please indicate your name, your practice time preference, and your phone number or contact info.



**Did you know that on the third Friday night of every month Christ Lutheran Church prepares and serves a meal for the residence of the Christian aid center?** Kurt Hoffman has been shepherding this mission of love for well over 20 years. When he is out of town, He asks for another member of CLC to lead the serving of a meal. On January 16, Peg Haug prepared a meatloaf with the able assistance of Mara Palumbo, and Anneliese Haug. We were joined by several others pictured in this photo who helped us serve. That night we served 83 people, including folks in the community who are unhoused but welcomed in for that meal.





### Save the Date:

This year's WW Sweets  
Baseball Game will be on  
Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>

This year the price per person will be \$26  
This includes gate entry as well as "Sweet  
Spot" entry and all you can eat ballpark  
food and non-alcoholic beverages; alcoholic  
beverages are available for purchase.

More details to come!

If you have any questions feel free to ask

Janet Mobley

509 200-1363

## February Birthdays!

Cassie Spangrude	2/2
Preston Stedmen	2/4
Tobias Hammar	2/6
Max Lohrmann	2/7
Elsa Gomsrud	2/8
JoEllen Riley	2/17
Mikela Stemp	2/18
Erik Krebs	2/24
Kady Barnett	2/28
Troy Hein	2/29



### Save the Date!

February 15th after church meet in the  
Godly Play room.

All who are interested in Volunteering  
or helping with VBS are welcome to  
join.

We will be planning and setting up a  
volunteer sign up.

VBS Will Be June 15-19



### Attendance Report

*Average Sunday Worship Attendance*

**December 2025 - 126**

**December 2024 - 111**

### **CLC'S FINANCES**

**December 2025**

Total Income: \$54,915

Total Expenses: - 26,489

Net Gain \$28,425

**Year To Date (approximate):**

100% of projected revenue through  
December has been spent







**Bill & Kaye Miller celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary with a wonderful reception after service on Sunday December 28th. They had help from Bill & Jill Roznowski and it really was a very nice selection of foods & desserts. Congratulations Bill & Kaye on reaching such a wonderful milestone!**

**Dear Pastor, Council, and Members of Christ Lutheran Church:**

It has been my privilege to serve your congregation over the past 3 years. We have weathered some interesting times together and I remain amazed at the resilience and dedication of this congregation. It is a gift to have a strong leader in place again.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to continue on this journey with you. I have sustained a broken hip and it's highly unlikely that I can even try playing organ until we are almost to Easter. That simply won't do. How ironic it would be for me to leave you in the exact same fix as I found you!

I am regretfully submitting my resignation and wish you all the best as you go forward. I am eternally grateful to James French for being willing to step in for as long as it takes. At some point in the future I hope to play again and will be happy to substitute when possible.

In the meantime, my best wishes to all of you as you journey forward. I will sorely miss your heartfelt singing on Sunday mornings.

With love in Christ,

Eleanor Elkins



**Please Join Us for a Celebration of Life**

**Honoring : Avis Joanne Marie Hutson**

**Avis was a warm and giving person who found joy working at her cabin and tending the fire. She will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered.**

**Date: February 22 Time: 1:00 PM**

**Here at the Church**

**In the Sanctuary.**

**A reception will be held following the ceremony.**

**Your presence means more than words can express. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital,**

**Avis's favorite charity.**

**The Family**

**Christ Lutheran Church  
Church Council Meeting Minutes  
January 13, 2026**

Council President Kay Shelton called the meeting to order at 5:34pm. Those attending were Pastor Lars Hammar, Greg Romaniuk, Lori Peterson, Janet Mobley, Melanie Hein, Jim Peterson, Anne Swant, Peggy Haug, Kirsten Brannon, Linda Lohrmann, Julie Michener and Mara Palumbo.

**Devotions** – Kay Shelton

**December Minutes**- approved by email affirmation December 15, 2025

**Financial Reports** –

The December 2025 financial report will be sent by Gordon Heimbigner as soon as it is completed.

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

**Committee Reports:**

**Finance & Budget:** Jim Peterson shared preliminary year end results show the operating budget finished at a loss of approximately \$10,000. The savings account balance at the end of the year is a little over \$154,000. We also have about \$133,000 in invested reserves. The checking account balance as of Jan 15th is approximately \$54,500. December and last Sunday's offering were good. Both appear to contain annual end of the year gifts. Budgeted expenditures for 2026 are higher than 2025 because of inflation, insurance costs and needed building improvements. We will be sending over \$1,080 to ELCA from our Christmas Good Gift donations.

**Worship:** Peggy Haug shared that in the month of January, our Organist, Eleanor, took a break. James French replaced her during her absence. While out, Eleanor was injured and resigned from her position as organist. James has agreed to fill the position until it can be permanently filled.

**Evangelism:** Linda Lohrmann met with former Evangelism Chairperson Karleen Heintzberger and received information concerning past activities.

**Fellowship:** Janet Mobley - The December Soup Suppers were well received and thank you to all who participated. Thanks to Leslie & Nick for setting up and the council for all your help. Thanks to Kari Issacson for putting together a wonderful night of Christmas Caroling to Wheatland Village as well as a few private homes. Thanks also to Kari & Jim for inviting the carolers to their house for holiday treats and fellowship.

**Outreach:** Melanie Hein -Thank you to all who gave to Good Gifts. Quilting and meals continue. SJAG will resume meeting in February. New ways are being explored on how to reach out and help with the needs of our congregation and community in this new year.

**Youth Education:** No report

**Youth & Family:** No report

**Adult Education:** No report

**Stewardship:** No report

**Continuing Business:**

A. RIC Vote – Pastor Lars – On January 11, 2026, at 10:41am, Council President Kay Shelton opened the Congregation Meeting to vote on Christ Lutheran becoming an RIC church. She read the ballot information, ballots were passed to voting members, motion made by Anne Swant for Christ Lutheran Church to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation, seconded by Peggy Haug. The ballots were collected and counted by Julie Swenson, Kay Shelton and Julie Michener. 76% of members casting ballots approved. The motion passed. The meeting was closed at 11:14 am.

B. Requests for membership approved by the 2025 Council after the last Church Council meeting:

1. Karleen Heintzberger made a motion to approve Scott and Kim Morasch as members at Christ Lutheran Church. Jim Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed by Council email vote on December 18, 2025.

2. Karleen Heintzberger made a motion to accept Mark Stone, Nathan Williams, and Theresa Long as members of Christ Lutheran Church. Julie Swenson seconded the motion. The motion passed by Council email vote on December 30, 2025.

C. Jim Peterson made a motion to appoint Greg Romaniuk as Treasurer and Carmen Funderburk as Financial Secretary. Peg Haug seconded the motion. The motion passed by Council on January 10, 2026

### **New Business**

#### **A. New Year Business: Kay**

Appointed Mission Endowment Committee members Lori Peterson and JoAnne Savage for 3-year terms;

Appointed Audit Committee member Julie Swenson for 3-year term. Motion made by Jim Peterson, seconded by Melanie Hein, passed by council.

Melanie Hein Vice President elected from Board of Deacons, motion by Anne Swant seconded by Peg Haug, passed by council.

Nominated Treasurer Greg Romaniuk. Kay Shelton and Jim Peterson as financial signers at Banner Bank, Mission Investment Fund, ELCA Foundation accounts, and Blue Mountain Community Foundation and remove Gordon Heimbigner and Julie Swenson as financial signers on all accounts. Motion made by Linda Lohrmann, seconded by Melanie Haug, passed by council. Jim moved to apply for a credit card at Banner Bank w/ a \$3,000 limit and Pastor Lars as the card owner, seconded by Anne Swant, passed by council.

Reviewed 2026 Fundraisers: Quilt Sunday in the fall, 40 Days of Giving (Lent), Good Gifts (Advent), 3 fundraisers for Youth Program, including Cookie Tin Sale in December. Motion to approve fundraisers by Peggy Haug, seconded by Janet Mobley, approved by council.

Vacation Bible School Dates selected - June 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>

Council Directory, Church Council Calendar and Guidelines will be sent by Kay through email

Council liaisons for Adult Ed and Youth Ed groups- there is currently no chairperson for either group. It was suggested that an announcement be made asking if someone or a team would like to coordinate Adult or Youth Education. Kirsten will be the Council liaison for Youth Education.

B. Counting dates were given to council members by Jim Peterson to be returned by January 25<sup>th</sup>

C. Synod Assembly delegates- Anne Swant will talk to the congregation on Sunday for nominations.

D. Designated/Restricted Fund Procedures: Youth Fund Policy- Jim will research our current policy and will coordinate updating it.

E. The church has an MIF CD maturing 25K + interest in January. Jim made a motion to reinvest the CD for another year and have the interest paid out quarterly into the church Banner Bank account, seconded by Anne Swant, approved by council.

F. Motion to allocate up to \$1,000 in funds from the Restricted Youth Fund to send three adults and 5 children to Lutherhaven Winter Camp in February was made by Melanie Hein and seconded by Lori Peterson. Motion passed.

### **Future Dates:**

January 25, 2026 – Annual Congregation Meeting (notice in bulletin Jan. 11 and 18)

February 18 – Ash Wednesday

April 5 – Easter

April 24-26 – Synod Assembly in Kennewick

June 27 – Sweets Game, 6pm in the Sweet Spot

### **Adjournment at 7 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer**

Respectfully submitted, *Julie Michener*, Council Secretary



December 31, 2025

Christ Lutheran Church of Walla Walla  
1420 S 2nd Ave  
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous support of nonprofits through the Valley Giving Guide! We are grateful for your commitment to our community. This letter serves as your receipt.

Your donation will be distributed to the organizations you selected, as detailed below. If you did not request anonymity, your gift details and contact information were shared with each nonprofit you supported.

Nonprofit	Amount
Akin - Walla Walla <i>for the Cookie Tin Fundraiser</i>	\$744.00
Blue Mountain Action Council <i>for the Food Bank</i>	\$1,049.00

Thank you for investing powerfully in our community!

Sincerely,

Sara Archer  
Director of Development & Philanthropic Services  
Blue Mountain Community Foundation

### THE CARE TEAM - or CCC!!

Christ Lutheran Church would like to offer the services of a CARE TEAM. A few weeks ago Melanie Hein and Peg Haug met with Pastor Lars to sketch out ideas on what this team would offer to our congregation.

We listed ideas, such as monthly blood pressure checks, classes on health and end of life issues, making "wellness visits" to check on members needs. We envision a team who could offer occasional respite care, or perhaps lawn or yard assistance, when someone is recovering from surgery or illness. We have a member who would love to offer haircuts to people who find it difficult to leave their home.

How do we get started? We need to know if you are willing to serve on this team, and then we can plan a meeting to talk about this more.

You will hear more about this care team - should we call ourselves simply the CARE TEAM, or the Congregational Care Committee or CCC? Perhaps you have an idea for a name for the group... But more



**LUTHERHAVEN**

On February 6-8, Christ Lutheran is sending 4 youth (Lily, James, Robin, and Rowan) and 3 adults (Pastor Lars, Kirsten, and Sara) to Camp Lutherhaven for "Back to Camp!" Please keep them in your prayers for safe travels and a wonderful time on this winter retreat.



# February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Worship Service 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Godly Play	2	3 9am Mission Group 10am Men's Group 6:30 <sub>pm</sub> Mission Group	4 3pm Confirmation Class	5 1pm Bible study	6	7
8 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Worship Service 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Godly Play	9	10 9 <sub>am</sub> Mission Group 5:30 <sub>pm</sub> Council Meeting	11 3pm Confirmation Class	12 10 <sub>am</sub> SJAG 1 <sub>pm</sub> Bible Study	13	14
15 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Worship Service 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Godly Play VBS Volunteer meeting after service	16	17 9 <sub>am</sub> Mission Group 10am Men's Group 6:30 <sub>pm</sub> Mission group	18 3pm Confirmation Class <b>Ash Wednesday</b> 6pm Soup Supper 7 <sub>pm</sub> Service	19 1 <sub>pm</sub> Bible Study	20	21
22 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Worship Service 9:30 <sub>am</sub> Godly Play	23 Newsletter Deadline	24 9 <sub>am</sub> Mission Group	25 3pm Confirmation Class <b>Lent</b> 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Service	26 1 <sub>pm</sub> Bible Study	27	28



Christ Lutheran Church

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

Return Service Requested

We're on the Web!

[www.christwallawalla.org](http://www.christwallawalla.org)

## February 2026 Newsletter

### CHURCH COUNCIL AND STAFF

·President· Kay Shelton	<b>Pastor</b> <b>Lars Hammar</b>	Finance/ Budget· Jim Peterson
·Secretary· Julie Michener	·Office Manager· Dee Kasten	·Worship· Peg Haug
·Treasurer· Greg Romaniuk	Sexton· Jeff Wagner	·Youth Education· Vacant
·Stewardship· Lori Peterson	·Organist· James French	·Youth & Family· Kirsten Brannon
·Fellowship· Janet Mobley	·Personnel· Mara Palumbo	·Adult Ed/ Library· Vacant
·Outreach· Melanie Hein	·Property Management· Anne Swant	·Evangelism· Linda Lohrmann

### 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.