Christ Lutheran Church Walla Walla



THE MESSENGER
VOLUME 66 #12

Pastor's Column December 2026

Advent is here, those four weeks before Christmas when the church is telling us to reflect more deeply on our spiritual lives, while the boss is telling us to get all the year-end reports done, and the school wants all their forms in. It's become, in our culture, one of the least calm, reflective times. Throw in shopping, and it's become the season of "Hurry and finish up your projects while shopping a lot and make it magical somewhere in-between". So what to do in the church?

Well, I am one of those stubborn old coots who refuses to make Advent into pre-Christmas. Let Hallmark do that, where we can indulge the fantasy of having endless time to plan community bake-offs and sweater competitions. Instead, Advent should be its own time, where it speaks its own truths.

The texts in the lectionary don't make it easy. First you get Jesus warning about the end of the world, then two weeks of "Is John the Baptist really the Messiah". And then, finally, one about Mary. So, is it Apocalypse Season? Who is John the Baptist Time? Or is it about Christmas Is Coming? Like a lot in the church year, Advent was not designed for one purpose, but evolved from a combination of different ideas over the years. What we have is a mash-up. All this has led me to work on themes for the season, rather than try to make the end of the world "relevant".

We met as a worship committee and decided to highlight the themes that have historically been attached to each Sunday: hope, peace, joy, love. Each week I'll focus on one in the sermons. In addition, we have a special liturgical arts project for the congregation, making a banner with the themes for each week. Our fourth Sunday in Advent, December 20th, will be our youth Christmas program. To fill out our season there's the All-Family Advent Event on December 6th (see the article from Kristie), and caroling for shut-ins on December 13th.

Christmas Eve services will be the same times as last year, at 4pm and 6pm. While I heard many stories of fond memories of the second service being late, there was little interest in actually attending one now. Then the Sunday after Christmas will be a lessons and carols service, where the first half will be readings of the Christmas story interspersed with Christmas hymns. This will give us a time to sing away while getting more of the readings than we can do just on Christmas Eve.

And, how could I forget the annual plug for the Advent mid-week services. As before, soup dinner will be at 6pm and Holden Evening Prayer will be at 7pm. There's only three (Dec. 2, 9, 16) because the fourth one would have been the day before Christmas Eve. So here's to a great Advent of preparation for Jesus' arrival in our hearts, in our worlds, in our families.

Peace,

Pastor Lars

UPCOMING EVENTS AT CHRIST LUTHERAN

Advent services & Soup Suppers 12/2, 12/9 & 12/16

Congregational meeting December 6, 2026, after worship



12/6 Family Advent Night 3:00pm

12/13 Christmas Caroling 3:00 to 6:00pm

12/20 Nativity Program & Cookie Tin Sales

12/24 Christmas Eve Service 4:00pm & 6:00pm

Adult Education: Lutheran Spirituality

December 13, January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

What does it mean to be "spiritual" in the Lutheran sense? Contrary to some misconceptions, Martin Luther valued the life of personal prayer and personal connection with God. Spirituality is something Lutherans practice, and rooted in Luther's own writings. This series of forums will look at Luther's views on spirituality, as well as other spiritual practices in Christianity and how we can discover connection to the Holy Spirit in our lives. Led by Pastor Lars.

Our readings will come from the book *Luther's Spirituality*, edited by Timothy Wengert

Confirmation Class Schedule 2026-2027

Dec 13- Go Caroling
Jan 10
Jan 24
Feb 21



Mar 7
Mar 21
Apr 4
Apr 18



ADVENT HAPPENINGS at Christ Lutheran

If you have attended Advent services at Christ Lutheran in the past, you probably remember the wreath of four candles, plus a center Christ candle. But did you know that each candle stands for a word? The first Sunday's candle stands for HOPE, the second Sunday is PEACE, the third is JOY and the fourth is LOVE. For Advent 2026, we have an intergenerational activity that we think everyone will enjoy. Let's start with the first word, HOPE. When you come to church on Sunday, November 29, both before the service and afterwards in the fellowship hall, the letters for that word will be available for each of us to write a few words or a sentence about what HOPE means to us. We will have some assistants with us who will act as scribes so even the young children can participate. When we come together for Wednesday night soup supper before the Advent service on December 2, there will be another opportunity for those who haven't yet participated to write what the word means to them. . On Sunday, December 6, the word will be PEACE. The same routine will follow for the other Sundays and Wednesdays. The next word is JOY and the last one is LOVE. We hope you will join us both on Sunday and on Wednesday evenings as we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

Advent soup suppers are a cherished tradition, bringing community members together during the festive season to share warmth and fellowship. This year, the suppers will be held on December 2nd, 9th, and 16th. Sign-up sheets for those who wish to contribute by bringing a soup are available in the narthex of the church. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to come together, enjoy delicious homemade soups, and engage in meaningful conversations as we prepare for the holidays. Whether you're bringing a dish or simply attending, all are welcome to join in this heartwarming celebration.

Attendance
October 2025 - 108
October2026 - 95

CLC'S FINANCES
October 2026
Total Income: $16,910
Total Expenses: - $25,612
Net Loss: $-8,711



Save the Date

Anne & Peter Swant would like to invite people to their home for an Ornament Exchange and Dinner Party!
***Please let Anne know if this is something you would like to attend.**
Planned for: Saturday, December 19th 5:30 PM
Pot-Luck Style Dinner

More Details to Come
Transportation available

December Birthdays

John Hoffman	11/1
Linda Mobley	11/7
Traci Krebs	11/8
Kirsten Brannon	11/10
Samuel Holce	11/19
Dan Grinstead	11/19
Kyle Rutledge	11/20
Thelma Sanks	11/20
Anne Swant	11/23
Sara Pinkerton	11/27
Jessica Norby	11/29

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AGENDA
December 6, 2026, 10:30 a.m.

1. Call to order and establish a quorum

2. Approve Minutes of Congregational Meetings held January 11, 2026 and January 25, 2026

3. Elect slate of officers and congregation council members for 2027, as presented by the Nominating Committee:

President – John Lohrmann (first one-year term)
Secretary – Julie Michener (second one-year term)
Adult Education – Cheryl French (first two-year term)
Fellowship - Janet Mobley (first year, second term)
Youth Program- Kirsten Brannon (first year, second term)
Property - Anne Swant (first year, second term)
Youth Education – open
Evangelism – Linda Lohrmann (continuing first term)
Worship – Peggy Haug (continuing first term)
Stewardship – Lori Peterson (continuing first term)
Personnel – Mara Palumbo (continuing first term)
Finance Budget – Jim Peterson (continuing second term)
Outreach – Melanie Hein (continuing second term)

Treasurer – Greg Romaniuk (to be appointed by Council in January for second one-year term)
Financial Secretary – Carmen Funderburk (to be appointed by Council in January with no term limits)

4. Inform congregation of Committee Openings, to be appointed by Council in January:
Mission Endowment Committee (two openings, three-year term)
Audit Committee (one opening, three-year term)

5. Adjournment

Meet our new Youth Coordinator

Hello!

As the new youth coordinator, I would like to introduce myself. As you know, I have come to Christ Lutheran as a pastor's wife and mother to five incredible children. What you may not know is that I enjoy working with children and have done so nearly my whole life. This feels like the perfect opportunity to merge this gift with belief in the beauty of this welcoming congregation. The goal of this position is two-fold: 1) We want to solidify the church and the community. 2) We want to help to create something exciting that outside people are drawn to and want to make Christ Lutheran their church home. As the coordinator, I am going to need help from all of you. What does this mean exactly? I understand that not everyone wants to teach a VBS class or Sunday School, but could you donate a supply for one of our activities or perhaps a meal or snack for these activities? Or maybe you do enjoy working with our youth and want to be more hands-on. I know I can find a place for you to help. The point is that as the Christ Lutheran Church family, we all can have a place in helping to make the youth of our church feel like this is their home too. I am hoping to reach out the members of this church after the new year to the members of this church and talk to each of you about helping us out to make this dream of what or church could be a reality.

I am going to hit the ground running with some events in the Advent season. On December 6, we will be having an Advent Family event. We will be making some Jesse trees and baking cookies for the annual Cookie Tin fundraiser. That fundraiser is set for December 20. This fundraiser is used to help fund some of our youth activities throughout the year. Can't make the Advent Family event, but still want to help make cookies? We would love for you to bring your cookies in on the 20th. Our Christmas program will also be on December 20th, so be sure not to miss our youth telling the Christmas story in a new way.

It is a lot in a month's time, but I am excited to be in this new role. I am also excited to see what God has in mind for our church as we grow our youth and family ministry.
Blessings,

Kristie Hammar



Sunday, December 13th Caroling

Join us for an afternoon of festive cheer as we gather in the rear church parking lot at 3 PM for a heartwarming caroling journey. You'll receive a list of people and addresses in the order we'll visit, along with copies of familiar carols to share. Feel free to car pool or follow in a caravan. If you know someone who would appreciate a visit, especially those who are shut in or in nursing homes, please let Kari know via email or text. Our usual stops include Mirney Wagner's, the Fryhlings, Wheatland, and Brookdale, culminating with a 5 PM performance at the State Veterans' Home on the VA campus. Musicians are encouraged to bring their instruments to enhance the experience. Dress warmly and, after caroling, join us at Kari & Jim's home for refreshments—children are welcome!

Christ Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday November 10, 2026

Council President Kay Shelton called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. Those attending were Melanie Hein, Lori Peterson, Pastor Lars Hammar, Jim Peterson, Peggy Haug, Mara Palumbo, Anne Swant, Linda Lohrmann, Greg Romaniuk and Julie Michener

Devotions – Devotions by Mara Palumbo, Prayer by Kay Shelton

Minutes - Minutes of the October 20, 2026 meeting were approved by email affirmation October 30, 2026.

Financial Report - Greg Romaniuk –
In the October 2026 Financial Report, you will note that our monthly revenue was $17,492 and that is $8,025 less than we budgeted for. Our yearly income (giving + interest income) is at 93% of our target. There is some good news in that we are spending less than our budget but we were still $8660 in the red for the month. In other words, we spent $8660 more than we brought in during October 2026. The church has a healthy amount of cash in our checking/savings accounts at $192,962. Our restricted funds total $306,069 at the end of October 2026.

Pastor's Report – Pastor Lars Hammar emailed his current report to the Council.
Committee Reports

Finance & Budget: Jim Peterson
The $25,000 term investment at Mission Investments Fund of ELCA (MIF) with $287.60 of interest was closed at the end of October. The $25,000 has been reinvested at Live Oak Online Bank for 9 months at 4.40% The remainder of $287.60 is treated as interest income in our general fund. Greg's Treasurer's report sums up our current financial situation. October was not a good month for offering. I have watched the first two Sunday offerings in November. Because of what appears to be a couple of one-time gifts, November is looking better than October. Remember to come to our November meeting tomorrow with budget requests, support for our current level budget (if you advocate for current level), and ideas about what our 2027 revenue estimate should be.

Worship: Peggy Haug
As we are about to enter the season of advent and Christmas. I have planned for a meeting of the worship committee. I would like to extend the invitation to anyone who has an interest in the worship experience to attend the meeting. Pastor Lars and I have been able to book our musicians for the various worship services during the absence of our Organist. November 20 is the date for another offering of Prayer Around the Cross. Please consider attending.

Evangelism: Linda Lohrmann
New Member Orientation for anyone seeking membership at Christ Lutheran Church and for those who joined this congregation after December 2024 will take place from 2:00 to 6:00 on Sunday, November 15. Pastor will lead the informative event. Council members are encouraged to join the group at 5:00 for dinner and to have a chance to meet new members and let them know how they can become involved in the life and mission of Christ Lutheran Church.

Outreach: Melanie Hein
Melanie shared her new email address.

Property: Anne Swant
Property has focused on yard clean up and maintenance. We met on Saturday Nov. 7 and had about 15 volunteers including myself. A special thank you to Dan & Amelia Grinsted, Dick Hanson, Pastor Lars & Tobias, John Funderburk, Paul & Samuel Holce, Jim Peterson, Larry Johnson, John & Linda Lohrmann, John Remington & Karleen Heintzberger. You were amazing and are greatly appreciated! John Funderburk & Bert have done some light ballast and bulb switch out - thanks to them. I have scheduled window cleaning prior to Lenten services. I did not move the chairs from the back entrance to the church. We have a temporary fix in mind. More later. The Art Committee has done a beautiful change out of the art. Please make sure to stop and view and read about the artists. Clarice Swanson is also a contributing artist, as a new addition to our list. We are so blessed by their ministry of their God given gifts. Please thank each of them when you have a chance. Finally, the Design Team will meet next week. With the lukewarm reception from what we presented to the council, and because the budget is being planned for 2027, and because we will be having a much larger discussion in our council retreat in the early part of 2027, the Design Team will keep our thoughts and ideas together and put any further efforts on pause after our November meeting. We will simply debrief about the council meeting and hear what the Design Team's thoughts are from there. Unless the council supports what we are thinking about and considering, I really don't want to spend any further time and energy until there is more of a church wide concern. I want to request funds for furnishings for the narthex and the back entrance. I will also be discussing ways to decrease our facility costs. There are many ideas being brought up. More later on that.

Fellowship: Janet Mobley
On Sunday, November 22nd during coffee hour we will help Thelma Sanks celebrate her 97th Birthday. Please join us to celebrate Thelma. Advent Soup Suppers are December 2nd, 9th and 16th. A signup sheet will be posted soon. Kari Isaacson has once again planned a Christmas Caroling event. It is scheduled for Sunday, December 13th from 3:00 - 6:00pm. More details to come but please save the date and plan on attending. If you are interested in hosting a coffee hour and need help, let me know. I am more than happy to lend a hand!

Stewardship: Lori Peterson
October found the Stewardship Committee getting ready for Commitment Sunday. We placed 2 E-Blast articles on October 2nd and October 16th. We had 2 Temple Talks in October, by Cheryl French and Scott Morasch that focused on the 4 Ts and how they use the 4 Ts to promote and help the church, the community and the world to know God's love, grace and peace that he gives to all. We also had an article in the October Newsletter. The cover letter and Pledge Card were mailed out on Friday, October 30th. Commitment Sunday was on November 8th, and we received 15 pledge cards on Sunday and 2 were received at the church office. A reminder to bring Pledge Cards will be in the E-Blast on Friday, November 13th. We will also be sending a thank you letter to all members who participated in Commitment Sunday by bringing a pledge card to church or by mailing it or dropping it off at the office. The letters will be sent in November, (when we feel we have received most of the pledge cards). The Stewardship Committee will be meeting one more time this year. The date has not been set at this time.

Personnel report: Mara Palumbo
Kristie Hammar accepted the Youth Coordinator position and will meet with President Kay Shelton on Wednesday November 11 for onboarding.

Adult Education: Cheryl French
Adult Education classes are going very well. Pastor Paul Anderson has begun his class on Galatians.
Participation has been good. The class will continue through November. Pastor Lars will be starting his series, Luther and spirituality, on December 6th. There will be no class on December 13th, 20th and 27th in celebration of Jesus's birth. Pastor Lars will continue his class though the month of January. A committee meeting is set for December 20th to plan the rest of the year. All are welcome.

Youth & Family: Kirsten Brannon
Allison Tabacco-Hines accepted the nomination for Youth Education.

Continuing Business:
A. Design Committee – Anne reported that the Design Committee will meet again next Monday. They will review what they have done this year and table implementing any ideas until next year.
B. Nominating Committee Update – Linda and Kirstie met with the Nominating Committee members, Carmen Funderburk, Joyce Anderson, and JoAnne Savage. John Lohrmann nominated as President and
Allison Tabacco-Hines nominated as Youth Education. (Due to a work conflict and after additional discernment, Allison subsequently withdrew her nomination.) Several Council members will return for second terms.
C. Child and Youth Policy – Tabled until Cheryl and Pastor Lars can meet again to complete it.

New Business:
A. Employee Compensation –The Council discussed cost-of-living increases and will continue this discussion at the next Council meeting when the budget is finalized.
B. 2027 Proposed Budget – Jim provided a handout with a proposed 2027 CLC Budget. It compared the current plan to the proposed changes for next year.
C. Designate Advent Mid-week service offerings – Kay opened discussion for suggestions on where the offerings should be donated. Pastor Lars suggested the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless and made a motion to donate to them. Jim Peterson seconded the motion. Passed by unanimous Council vote. It will start November 29th.
D. Soup Suppers – Janet shared that there will be a sign-up list to donate soup and help with the soup suppers as hosts. She encouraged all Council members to participate.

Future Dates:
November 29 – First Sunday in Advent
December 6 – Congregational Meeting to elect new officers (notice in the bulletin Nov 22 & 29)
December 13, 3-6 p.m. – Christmas Caroling
December 20 – Children's Christmas Program and Cookie Tin Fundraiser
Adjournment – The meeting concluded with the Lord's Prayer
Respectfully submitted, Julie Michener, Council Secretary

December 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Mission Quilting 9:00am	2 Soup Supper 6:00pm Worship 7:00pm	3 SJAG 10:00am Bible Study 1:00pm	4	5 Weavers 1:00 –4:00pm
6 Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play Congregational Meeting 10:30am Family Advent Night 3:00pm	7	8 Mission Quilting 9:00am Men's Group 10:00am Council Meeting 5:30pm	9 Soup Supper 6:00pm Worship 7:00pm D&D 7:00pm	10 Bible Study 1:00pm	11	12
13 Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play Adult Education 10:40am Caroling 3:00-6:00pm	14 Design Team 6:30pm	15 Mission Quilting 9:00am	16 Soup Supper 6:00pm Worship 7:00pm	17 Bible Study 1:00pm	18	19 Party @ Swants 5:30pm
20 Nativity Program 9:30am Cookie Tin Fundraiser 10:30am	21	22 Mission Quilting 9:00am Men's Group 10:00am	23 D&D 7:00pm	24 Christmas Eve Services 4:00pm & 6:00pm	25 Merry Christmas	26
27 Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play	28	29 Mission Quilting 9:00am	30	31		

Christ Lutheran Church
1420 South 2nd Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-4502

Return Service Requested

Church Website come see what's new!
www.christwallawalla.org

December 2026

Church Staff

Pastor Lars Hammar	President Kay Shelton
Office Manager Dee Kasten	Secretary Julie Michener
Sexton Bert Rodriguez	Treasurer Greg Romaniuk
Organist Dr. Feng Kang	Stewardship Lori Peterson
Youth Coordinator Kristie Hammar	Fellowship Janet Mobley

Church Council

Property Management Anne Swant	Outreach Melanie Hein
Finance/ Budget Jim Peterson	Adult Ed./Library Cheryl French
Worship Peg Haug	Personnel Mara Palumbo
Evangelism Linda Lohrmann	Youth Education Vacant
Youth & Family Kirsten Brannon	

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.