



January 2026  
Newsletter

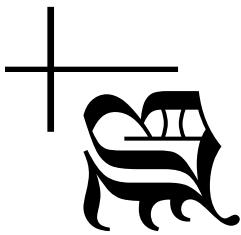
# Bethany Lutheran Church



Bethany Lutheran Church  
2900 Parkview Drive  
Longview, WA 98632

January 2026

*God's Blessings to ...*



## Bethany Lutheran Church

Church: 360-577-8240  
2900 Parkview Dr. Longview, WA 98632  
Pastor Susan Dollinger  
Church Musician: Dorothy McMillan  
Admin. Asst: Ginger Garner

Bethany website: [www.bethanylongview.org](http://www.bethanylongview.org)

Office Hours: Tuesday -Thursday 9:30am - 3pm

Office email: [secretary@bethanylongview.org](mailto:secretary@bethanylongview.org)

Pastor email: [pastor@bethanylongview.org](mailto:pastor@bethanylongview.org)

Sunday Morning Worship Time

9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour



*“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:36-39).*

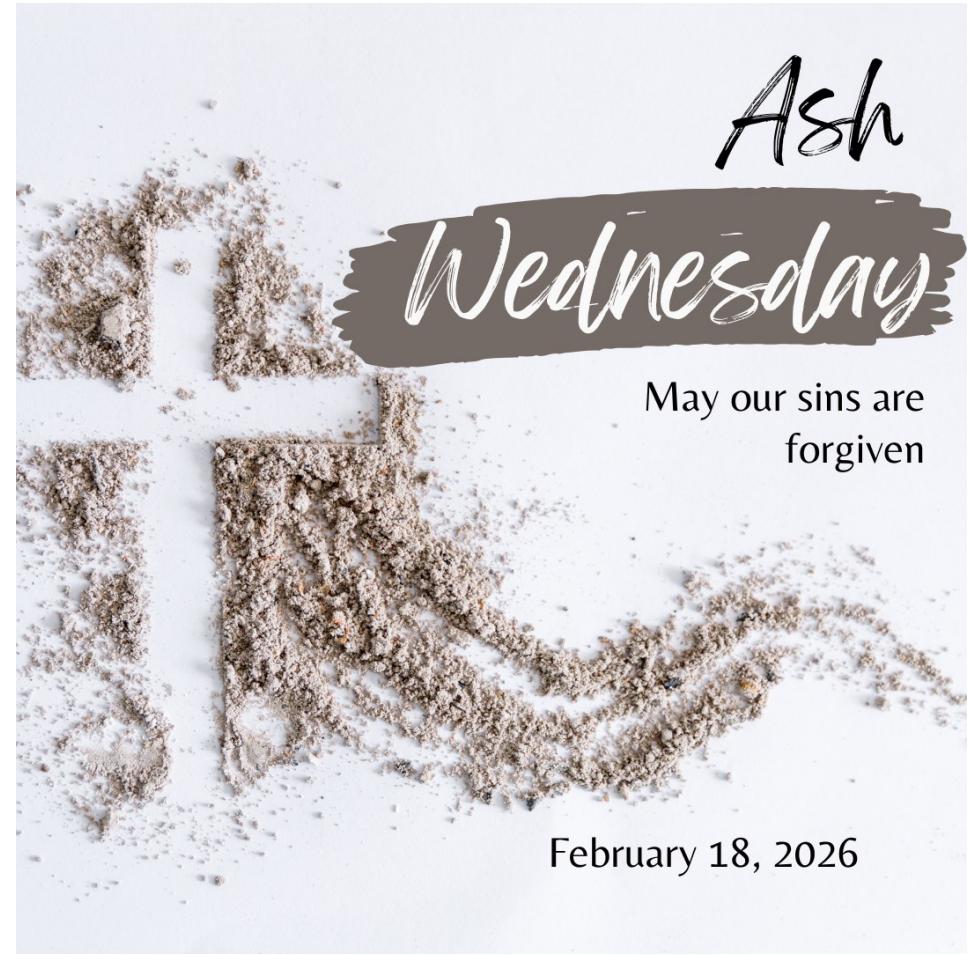
In life there are a lot of distractions and opportunities that keep us from following either of these commandments. From sports to shopping to social media and every app on our phones, we are distracted and move quickly, barely pausing to look up from our phones or TV. As we turn the page of the calendar to a new year, perhaps there might be a way to add more of God into our lives. Can this be the year to join a church, or go more often if you are already a part of one? Or start reading the Bible, or read it every day? What about adding in daily prayer or a bible study?

When it comes to our neighbors, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have our groups of friends, coworkers, and family, but we may not even know the neighbor who lives next door to us. We have found a way to be so isolated and absorbed in our own activities. In addition, we are adding big divisions such as religion and politics. We even allow many small things to divide us, like the sports teams we watch, whether we eat meat or are vegan, etc. Where we are called by Jesus to love each other, we find it easier to hate. Where we are called to forgiveness and repentance (which can be the hardest thing to ever do), we hesitate, and yet don't even try to move forward.

Growing close to God is an act of love. Creating new habits as we move into a new year and creating new commitments can make a difference. We all have the same opportunity every day to choose activities that honor the Lord and to remove any that have become an obstacle. The new year is a perfect time to reorder our lives for God and for our neighbors everywhere.

May you have a blessed New Year filled with the love and grace of Christ.

In Peace, *Pastor Susan*



May our sins are  
forgiven

Please have newsletter articles submitted before  
**January 20**

*While all efforts are made to keep original submissions, article submissions are subject to editing for accuracy, spelling, grammar and formatted to fit in the space allowed.*

**Staff Report –**

- **Facility Use Approval-** Reminder Girl Scouts cannot use the FH on Fri. Jan. 23-4 for Sew Fun Days Quilting.
- **Vacation Request-** Continuing Education Byberg Conf. Jan.27-8 for Pastor. **Moved, seconded, & passed to approve.**
- **Scheduled Budget Meeting-** Ginger, Pastor, Susan, & Barb met on Dec. 31

**Adjournment-**Barb Clausen adjourned the meeting adjourned at 4:42pm;

**Next Scheduled Meetings:** Executive Com. Wed., Jan.6 1:15pm; Council –Jan. 6 2:00-5:30pm-please bring a snack & beverage;

<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	
<b>December</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
7	47
14	63
21	55
28	40
Avg	51

<b>Offering to date December</b>	
<b>2024</b>	<b>2024</b>
\$130,717	\$168,351
<b>Expenses to date December</b>	
<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
\$138,728	\$168,155

<b>Name/Position/Term</b>
1. Russ Gilchrist (2027) 1st Term
2. Barbara Clausen President (2027) 2nd Term
4. Phyllis Cavens (2025)
5. George Obermeyer (2026)
6. Beth Grambo Secretary (2027) 2nd Term
7. Don Wallin (2027)
8. P. Susan Dollinger (Pastor)
Susan Shui (Treasurer)



## **Bethany's Corner**

Shelly Limpach is our prayer chain contact. You may contact her with your prayer concerns through email at [BethanyPrayer247@gmail.com](mailto:BethanyPrayer247@gmail.com). If you have an urgent prayer request, please call the church office.

### **Continued Prayers & Healing**

June White	Barbara Bley	Barb Clausen
Audrey Schauer	Judy Bailey	John Mullaney
Kim Isakson	Barbara Price	Gail Obermeyer
Jennifer Nance	Takko family	Custer family
Gilchrist family	Bob Baldwin	Krista & John Croy
Thibodeau family	The Milhisers	David & Dana Hughes
	The Newtons	

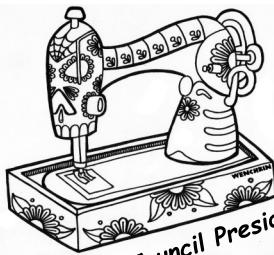


### **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

07 Marilyn Isakson	17 Barbara Clausen
08 John Pelster	22 Carol Thompson
12 Judy Bailey	Carol Lane
16 Shaylin Murphy	24 Jeff Storm
	26 Gail Obermeyer

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

29 Rick & Robin Siragusa



From the Council President

## Emergency Fund for January

“For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in.” Matthew 25:35

The council voted to start the year with the local Cold Weather Shelter as the emergency fund donation of the month. The winter nights have been very cold, and we have experienced a deluge of rain and wind—killing one local homeless person. The local Cold Weather Shelter has already been open for two nights with temperatures at or below freezing. They served 62 meals and 31 overnight guests at the McClelland Arts Center location. This is only the start of the winter; we will need to help the over 350 homeless adults—many local people who have lost their jobs due to health, drugs, or mental illness. Please put your donation in the Emergency Fund plate at the entrance to the sanctuary or mail your check marked “ER” in the memo. May God help us to be a blessing to those in need.

## 2026 Annual Meeting and Potluck

On Sunday, January 25th we will gather after the service for a breakfast potluck and our annual meeting. Please bring any brunch dish you would like to share and plan to join us. The potluck will start right after the service with the meeting to follow at about 10:50. A quorum of voting members present is required for our short meeting so we can pass the budget and elect council, nominations, financial review, and endowment members. ALL are welcome to join the fellowship and keep informed about all the news at Bethany! Please mark your calendar and make a special effort to join us!

## Nominations

The committee of Pat Reistroffer, John Pelster, Carol Lane, George Obermeyer, and Barb Clausen are praying and meeting to consider the nominations. We have one open council position, three for financial review and nominations, and one open for the endowment committee. If God is calling you to serve, please let Barb Clausen know as soon as possible.

## Council Meeting Minutes Continued

- ◊ Donations for Thanksgiving family food boxes to Col Hts and Lexington. Christmas Lexington \$698.57 and Col Hts \$149.28; Thank you, Bethany!
- **Duct Tape Crew:** Pastor Susan Dollinger, George Obermeyer;
- ◊ Retaining wall – Pleased with the results. So far we have received \$3,3446 and paid \$5570 from capital improvements and Thrivent \$448.12;
- ◊ Tree Removal-They will see about cutting down the dead cedar tree so it does not fall on the wall;
- ◊ Decorating-Thank you to the team for hauling out the many boxes, setting up the tree, etc. You are appreciated so much!
- **Stewardship:** Thank you to those who turned in a pledge. Although the campaign to help us figure our budget is over, any additional pledges are welcome. Just mark the envelop “Pledge” and turn in for the Financial Secretary.
- **Mutual Ministry:** Meet on Feb. 4
- **Women’s Bible Study**-Meeting Tuesday, 10:30 studying *Taste and See: Discovering God Among Butchers, Bakers, & Fresh Food Makers* by Margaret Feinberg. Join us!
- **Education-**
  - ◊ Bible study on Romans continuing Friday zoom and Sunday after church.
- **Minister’s Report:** Pastor Susan
- ◊ **Manage Time/Tasks**-(project prep/personal time)-Need to set a time to plan the rest of the year;
- ◊ **Strengthen spiritual growth (members/outreach)**- Will advertise Comfort & Hope and Christmas Eve;
- Goal/Action Plan Progress Report:** 2025-2026: To strengthen our spiritual growth so that God’s promises come alive & Christ’s love is shared with others. Hoping to schedule Telling Your Legacy in January. Invite your friends to join us!
- Unfinished Business:**
  - **Sound System Report**-Scheduled time to “tweak” the system with the company February—Pastor will schedule with John, etc.;
  - **Clipboard Volunteer Sign Ups**-completed until March;
- New Business:**
  - Number of family units \_\_\_\_\_ and number of pledges received to date 39
  - **Nominations Committee**-Council appointed George Obermeyer and Barb Clausen to be the council representatives who will join the three elected members Pat Reistroffer, Carol Lane, & John Pelster; Meeting on January 4<sup>th</sup>;

# December Council Minutes

## **Bethany Lutheran Church**

**Council Meeting Minutes**— Thursday, December 11 at 4:00 Pm  
Beth Grambo's at 3234 Allen Street, Kelso

**Attendance** -Present-Beth Grambo, Susan Shiu, Phyllis Cavens, George Obermeyer, Pr. Susan Dollinger, Barb Clausen; Absent-Tori Gosch;

**Devotions and Prayer** – Susan Shui

**Call to Order and President's Report** – Barb Clausen called the meeting to order at 4:19pm

- **Decisions made between council meetings:** none
- **Agenda Changes:** none
- Devotions for January 6 2:00-5:30pm (Budget & Meeting)-Beth Grambo

**Secretary's Report** – Beth Grambo

- Council Minutes November 13<sup>th</sup> Filed as printed.

**Treasurer's Report** – Susan Shui

November		2025 YTD		November 2024		2024 YTD	
Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expenses	Income	Expenses
\$23,557	\$12,270	\$143,422	\$141,343	\$ 10,125	\$11,702	\$183,300	\$133,933
Exceeded by \$11,287		Exceeded by \$2,079		Fell Short by \$ 1,577		Exceeded by \$ 49,367	

- **Synod Remittance-\$824.50**
- **Emergency Fund Report- \$559.81** (Pr Discretionary \$111.96—rest under Youth/Service))
- **Attendance for Averages: 48**
- **Financial Review Reports for November**-Completed 12/4-no concerns;

**It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the Treasurer's Report & November audit as printed.**

**Ministry Reports –**

- **Hospitality:** Joyce Croy planned and did a wonderful job with the annual Smorgasbord that celebrates the December, 1962 start of Bethany. 58 attended to hear the Castle Rock Men's Choir and enjoyed friends and family in a lovely potluck dinner.
- **Memorial:** Joyce Croy No report
- **Worship/Music:** Need to schedule regular meetings;
- **Youth/Service:**
  - ◊ **Grant money:** Paid The Refuge the \$1,000 for fresh foods or the Go Bags from Peace Health grant.
  - ◊ **FISH-** Served: 104 last time, but face two times on Dec.26 (Set up Dec. 24) and Jan.2 (Set up Jan 1);
  - ◊ **Small Seeds/Sprouts** -Jan.11; Wild West Christmas rehearsals were on the 6 & 13<sup>th</sup> with the play on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> service;

## **Ministry of the Month: The Financial Team**

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the father through him.” Colossians 3:17

As the old year ends and the new year begins—our first task is to set the church budget for the entire year. That means we must estimate our income and set a budget plan for the congregation to consider—this is done with much prayer and planning. It is also a time when we must get the statements out to everyone for their taxes! A special thank you to everyone involved in the finances:

Financial Secretaries-Pam van den Driessche, Mary Storm, & Barb Wilson;

Treasurer-Susan Shui;

Bookkeeper/Administrative Asst.-Ginger Garner;

Financial Review-Bob Baldwin, Debra Takko, & Bob Reistroffer;

Your hard work and careful planning have made our financial year feasible! Thank you for being good communicators and careful documenters with willing hearts to give so many hours to the task! You are appreciated! We give thanks for each of you!

## **Who Can Vote at Our Annual Meeting?**

Bethany Lutheran Church is a non-profit organization and thus we need to follow certain guidelines at formal meetings such as the Annual Congregation Meeting. The ELCA has specific rules along with Roberts Rules of Order 12th Edition that are used for these guidelines. Only those with membership status are allowed to vote at the congregational meeting. We recount our active members right before the meeting and we must have a quorum to pass the budget or do any other business on January 25, 2026. You must be in person to vote.

However, we hope that everyone will join us at the meeting. It is a great time for a full fellowship potluck brunch and to reflect on last year and move forward into a new year of ministry.

All are welcome at the meeting (and don't forget a potluck for the brunch.) Blessings on 2026.

# Upcoming Events

## New Years Day

Office Closed

## FISH Distribution

January 2 at 8:30

## Nomination Committee

January 4 at 10:45

## Council Meeting/ Budget Meeting

January 6

Exec @1:00

Budget @2:00

Council @ 3:00

## Small Seeds and Sprouts

January 10 @ 12:30

## Music and Worship Meeting

January 11 @ 11:15

## Lower Columbia Lutherans

January 14 @ 11:00

Stella Chapel

## Annual Reports Distribution

January 18

## Annual Meeting

January 25

Following service we will have our annual potluck then congregational meeting. Please plan to attend.

## Quarterly Meeting

February 12 @ 4:30

### LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER:

I THANK YOU, MY HEAVENLY FATHER, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, YOUR DEAR SON, THAT YOU HAVE KEPT ME THIS NIGHT FROM ALL HARM AND DANGER; AND I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD KEEP ME THIS DAY ALSO FROM SIN AND EVERY EVIL, THAT ALL MY DOINGS AND LIFE MAY PLEASE YOU. FOR INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMEND MYSELF, MY BODY AND SOUL, AND ALL THINGS. LET YOUR HOLY ANGEL BE WITH ME, THAT THE EVIL FOE MAY HAVE NO POWER OVER ME. AMEN.

### Luther's Evening Prayer:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things.

# Volunteers keep our church running

## Volunteer Coordinator Needed!

**Are you able to make a few phone calls from the comfort of your home and fill in the clipboard blanks each month? (You can write them in and the office will type it up and send it out.) Please let Ginger or Barb know if you would consider doing this important work.**



## **Ministry Volunteers Sunday, January 4 Communion**

Greeter	Barb Bley
Ushers	Carol Thompson
Reader	
Communion Setup	
Communion Assist	
Powerpoint	
Live Service	
Financial Secretary	
Coffee hour	Carol Thompson / Barb Utto

## **Sunday, January 11 Small Seeds Sunday/ Communion**

Greeter	Small Seeds
Usher	
Reader	Small Seeds
Communion Setup	Reistroffers
Communion Assist	Reistroffers
Powerpoint	Carol Thompson
Live Service	
Financial Secretary	
Coffee hour	Barb Wilson/ Hospitality

## **Sunday, January 18 Communion**

Greeter	
Usher	
Reader	
Communion Setup	
Communion Assist	
Powerpoint	
Live Service	
Financial Secretary	
Coffee hour	Beth Grambo

## **Sunday, January 25 - Communion**

Greeter	
Ushers	
Reader	Beth Grambo
Communion Setup	
Communion Assist	
Powerpoint	
Live Service	
Financial Secretary	
Coffee hour	Annual Potluck

## Opportunities to Gather and Learn



### Breakfast Group

Tuesday mornings at 8:00 am.

#### Corner Cafe

796 Commerce Ave. Suite 103 in Longview

What a great opportunity to enjoy good food and fellowship!



### Women's Bible Study

We gather for prayers, cares, concerns, challenges, and celebration in the Faith room & on Zoom



**January 6, 13, 20, 27 at 10:30 am**

Women's Bible Study is based through Gather Magazine, Gather Magazine is \$9.95 for new subscribers.

### Moments at the Lake Bethany

Wednesdays @1:30

This is a wonderful opportunity for people to sit in the Word and have holy conversation while we discuss the scriptures for the following Sunday.

During the colder months and inclement weather, we meet in the faith room at Bethany



### Thank You

Thank you to the FISH team

What an amazing season of ministry. We know that each FISH takes a lot of effort, energy, and also many prayers and blessings. Thank you for all that you do.. Two back-to-back FISH sessions was challenging, and amazing. Thank you for all the service and energy put forth. You are appreciated.

Thank you Hospitality,

Thank you for the amazing Smorgasbord at the beginning of December and also the Friendship Force dinner. Thank you for the care, planning, energy and late nights that you gave for these special events. You are appreciated.

Thank you Music Team, Financial Team, Council and Duck Tape, & Staff, Christmas time leans heavily on all of you as you wrap up the year, add in more music, set up Christmas displays. It is all a lot of hard work and stress added into a very busy season. You are all so appreciated. Thank you for all you do.

Dear Bethany,

Thank you so much for the generous and kind Christmas gifts. Your thoughtfulness and care are deeply appreciated. I am truly blessed and grateful for all of you.

I pray that you all have had a good Christmas season and that your New Year is filled with blessings. Thank you for the amazing ministry in this last year. It all takes a village.

Let us praise the Lord together.

Thank you again.

Love, Pastor Susan

# SMALL SEEDS and Sprouts

January 10 12:30-2:00



## Helpful definitions of Church Giving Terms



### Endowment

An endowment is a financial gift or fund that is set aside permanently, often invested so that the church can use the earnings (interest or growth) to support its mission, programs, or future needs. The principal gift usually remains untouched, making it a lasting source of support.

### Stewardship

Stewardship is the practice of faithfully managing all the gifts God has given—time, talents, resources, and finances—for His purposes. In a church context, it means recognizing that everything belongs to God, and we are caretakers responsible for using it wisely and generously to serve Him and others.

### Tithe

A tithe is the biblical principle of giving the first 10% of one's income back to God, typically through the church. It is an act of worship, obedience, and trust, symbolizing gratitude and reliance on God as the provider of all things.

Dear Bethany Family:

Thank you so much for all of the greeting cards, gift cards, sweet treats, cash, prayers, well wishes over this Christmas season! I was blessed by it all. I am thankful for you. I still have the cards, I ate the sweet treats, and the cash will be used to help with an unexpected home fix repair....I was wondering how I was going to navigate this unexpected expense...and now I can get the repair done because of your generosity.

I hope each day is filled with music in your heart and home. Keep singing, for the Lord is good!

I am honored to serve as the musical director at Bethany Lutheran. You are such an amazing group of believers that gather together each week. Thank you.

Dorothy



# Bethany Lutheran Church

# JANUARY 2026