



Winter Messenger

PASTOR'S CORNER

Pointing to God

We live in seasons of great change: political forces causing upheaval in our communities, climate change, and AI. In the cycle of the church year, this three-month newsletter spans four seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and the beginning of Lent – each with different themes and foci.

Throughout the tumult and changes for Israel and the early church, our readings do one thing: they point to the God who loves us and who justifies our existence, the God who dignifies all of life, the God who comes to journey with us, and the God of justice, who brings hope and restoration out of the broken and dead places. We see John the Baptist in seasons of certainty and doubt pointing to the Messiah; we see prophets portending redemption; we see the Christ in a refugee baby, and outsiders bearing witness to a God beyond human boundaries.

As we prepare for the intensities of the holidays and the New Year – with the uncertainties, the need, and the anxieties surrounding us – may we come together as community to be grounded in faith through these stories. Then, through our shared life, may we together point to God, for our own faiths' sakes and for the good of our neighbors.

Blessings,
Pr. Beth

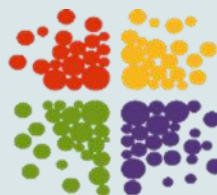
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St. Luke
LUTHERAN CHURCH

SPECIAL SUNDAYS

November 30

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 10 & 17

Holden Evening Prayer at **6:30 pm**

December 6

Advent Festival, **2:00—3:30 p.m.**

December 7

Second Sunday of Advent

Youth-Led Sunday

Nativity Story **ONLY at 10:30 a.m.**

December 14

Third Sunday of Advent

December 21

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24 — Christmas Eve

3:00 p.m. Family

5:00 p.m. Modern

10:00 p.m. Traditional

Jan 4 — Epiphany Sunday

Jan 11 — Baptism of Our Lord

Jan 25 — Annual Meeting

One Service **ONLY at 9:15 a.m.**

All-Congregation Meeting at **10:15**

Feb 15—Transfiguration Sunday

Feb 18 — Ash Wednesday

12:00 p.m. Worship

6:30 p.m. Worship

Feb 22 — First Sunday of Lent

SAVE THE DATE

Mar 1 — Second Sunday of Lent

Mar 8 — Third Sunday of Lent

Mar 15 — Fourth Sunday of Lent

Mar 22 — Fifth Sunday of Lent

Mar 29 — Palm Sunday

Apr 2 — Maundy Thursday

Apr 3 — Good Friday

Apr 5 — Easter Sunday

WORSHIP

Join us for worship as together we explore the work of God's restoring, healing power!

Modern Worship: Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

Traditional Worship: Sunday at 10:30am



WORSHIP AT ST. LUKE

Sunday Morning Education Ministries

Children's Ministry: Meet in Fellowship Hall, classes held in Room 109

Middle School Ministries: Lower Shalom

St. Luke Youth: Vermont House

Parent Group: Upper Shalom

Children's Church held during the **9:15 a.m.** service.

Nursery care for children birth to five years will continue at both services.

Serve in Worship!

Share Your Faith as a Reader or Prayer Leader

Readers and prayer leaders are a vital part of our worship at St. Luke, both on Sunday mornings and at special services throughout the year.

Reading the scriptures aloud and leading the Prayers of the People bless both the reader and the congregation. It's an active way to share our faith and declare our trust in God's care for us.

Readers and prayer leaders, it's time to sign up for slots during Advent and Christmas! [Here's the sign-up link.](#)

Have you always wanted to share your spiritual gifts during worship as a reader or prayer leader? Contact the church office for more information.

Virtual Worship

Not able to join us in person? Worship with us online!

Our **9:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services** are livestreamed on Facebook and saved on YouTube and Facebook.

Access recordings on [St. Luke's Facebook page](#) or our website: stlukechurch.com.

You'll want your bulletin to participate online!

Download your Worship Bulletins at stlukechurch.com.

Join Us for a St Luke Community

Advent Festival

Let's All Celebrate the Season Together!



Hot
Cocoa
Bar
Provided

Bring
Cookies
to
Share

Intergenerational Offerings

Enjoy crafts & cookie decorating

Sat, Dec 6th, 2-3:30pm, Fellowship Hall

Post-Festival outing with Pastor Beth, caroling, cookies, and cheer to our
home-bound members

MUSIC MINISTRY

WINTER MUSIC HIGHLIGHTS AT ST. LUKE

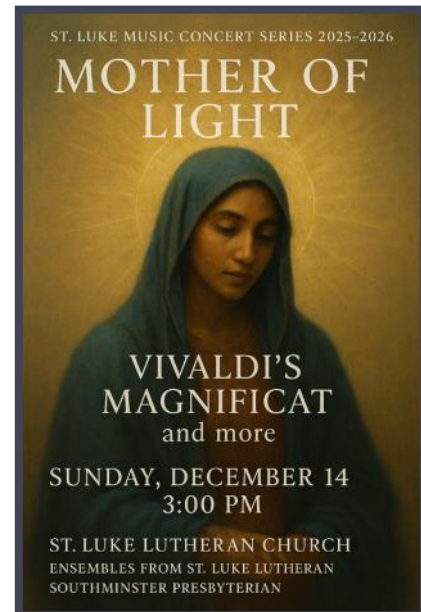
As we enter the Advent and Christmas seasons, the Music Ministry at St. Luke invites you to join in worship, song, and community through a variety of beautiful offerings.

Mother of Light – Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 14 at 3:00 p.m. | St. Luke

Celebrate the season with Mother of Light, a collaborative Christmas concert presented by the music ministries of St. Luke and Southminster Presbyterian Church.

This inspiring program weaves together choral, instrumental, and congregational music that illuminates the wonder and peace of the season. Seating is limited — please check the Weekly Press for information on ticket reservations.

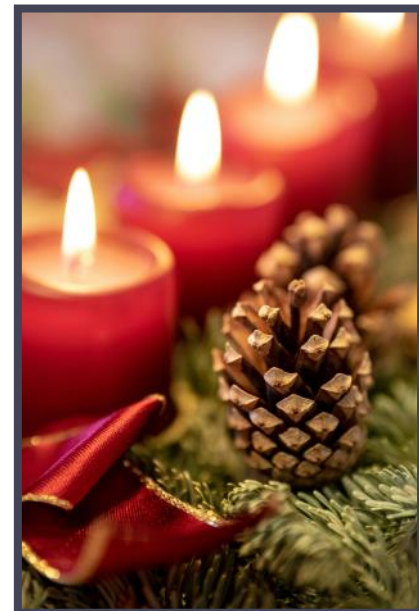


Holden Evening Prayer

Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. | December 3, 10, & 17

Join us for this cherished Advent tradition!

Holden Evening Prayer is a contemplative vespers service of candlelight, prayer, and song — a time to pause and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.



MUSIC MINISTRY

JOIN A MUSIC ENSEMBLE!

No experience required, just a love of music and community.

St. Luke Youth Music (SLYM)

Songbirds (K–3) — Wednesdays, 5:00–5:45 p.m.

St. Luke Ringers (Middle School-Adults)

Wednesdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m. (Upstairs Music Room)

Modern Worship Team (Middle School-Adults)

Thursdays, 6:00–7:15 p.m. (Sanctuary)

Rejoice Choir (High School-Adults)

Thursdays, 7:30–9:00 p.m. (Choir Loft)



LOOKING AHEAD: SPRING 2026 SEASON

After Christmas, rehearsals will resume **Wednesday & Thursday, January 7–8.**

We'll begin preparing music for Lent and Easter — from the haunting beauty of the Lenten season to the triumphant joy of the Resurrection.

ALL MUSICIANS WELCOME!

We welcome **new and returning musicians** to all of our ensembles— whether you've been part of St. Luke music for years or are joining us for the first time.

If you have any questions or curiosities about our music offerings, please reach out to me.

Steven Schaefer, Director of Music
steven@stlukechurch.com

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

This fall ...

We've been reflecting on how we can show up in the world and what we can do for others right now.

Partnering with Children's Ministry Team Member Caroline Eddy and Community Table, we filled dog food bags to share with our furry friends on St. Francis Day.

We've tagged blankets on Quilt Sunday with Priceless Quilters to donate to someone in need.

This fall ...

We've worked on building community with one another. We brought our stuffies to get blessed by Pr. Beth on St. Francis Day.

We play tone chimes and sing with weekly pop-in visits from Music Director Steven Schaefer.

We enjoy the process of discovery and curiosity with science activities led by the Children's Ministry Team.



We've hosted special guests like Pastor Patti Welch and Martin Luther himself! We co-op with the children weekly: the children volunteering their voices to lead liturgy practices, modeling worship elements.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

This fall... (cont.)

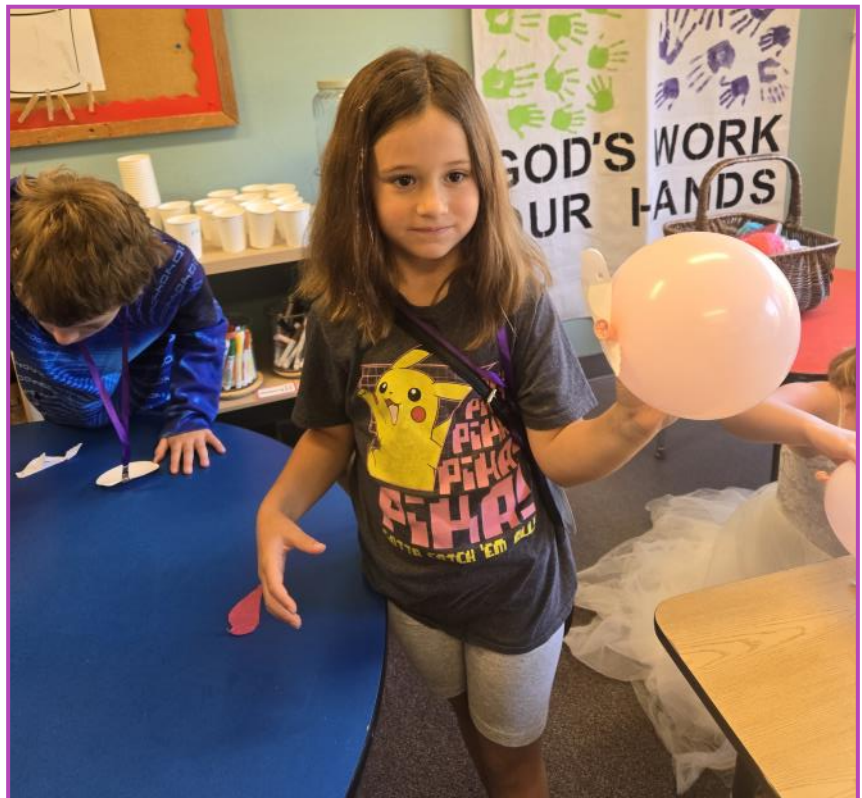
Here are some photos from our Fall Sundays, including our Fall Festival!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

This fall... (cont.)

More Fall Fun!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

WINTER PROGRAMMING



ADVENT FESTIVAL - December 6th

2:00-3:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall Let's all celebrate the season together! Intergenerational offerings include: Crafts for adults and children and a Hot Cocoa Bar. Please bring cookies to share!



NATIVITY STORY - December 7th @ 10:30 a.m. service

Our children will bring the nativity story to life for all to enjoy!



Children's Ministry Holiday Schedule

Classes will not meet on 12/21 or 12/28

Classes resume on 1/4/2026

Nursery will remain open on Sunday mornings for children birth to 5 years

Classes and Groups Continuing on Sundays

Youth Classes (Children, MSM, and SLY) at **10:30 a.m.**

*Check in for Children's Ministry in Fellowship Hall;
Classes held in Room 109*



Parent Group resumes at **10:30 a.m.** in Upper Shalom Living Room

Children's Church continues at the **9:15 a.m.** worship service

Nursery is open **Sundays, 9:00—11:30 a.m.** for children and infants from birth to five years old

Location: Room at south end of Fellowship Hall

Thank you for your continued support of St. Luke Children's Ministry!

Kim Weber, Director of Children's Ministry
childrensministry@stlukechurch.com

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTRY

*Immersing Middle Schoolers in the love of God...
so that they can minister with hope & love in St. Luke and the wider world.*

Want to volunteer? Want to sign your MSM student up for an event? Click the following link for your one-stop shop to see all that we are planning for the year and how you can get involved! [MSM 2025-2026 Planning & Sign-ups](#)

Looking Forward!

Advent Festival and Cookie Share Saturday, Dec. 6 – Opportunities for fun and service: baking cookies, leading crafts, and creating care packs for homebound members! A new sign-up sheet for this is linked above.

Youth-led Worship: Sunday, December 7th! (We sit together in worship.)

Winter Retreat – Saturday, Jan. 25 & Sunday, Jan 26 – drawing from the Prophets, working for justice!

Winter Retreat Leaders' & Helpers' Zoom – Weds or Thurs, Jan. 22 or 23 in the evening.

Sunday Gatherings @ 10:30 a.m. in Lower Shalom: December 14; January 4, 11, 18; February 1, 8, 15, 22

We'll continue our Old Testament year of our three-year cycle, as we explore the different characters in Scripture and how they were like us.

Our Christ Kin ministry continues! Christ Kin are St. Luke members & mentors for our middle schoolers.

Each Christ Kin models the love of God by praying daily for their student, by connecting with their student through encouraging notes/treats, and by taking part in hands on activities with their student.

Kudos to our Christ Kin coordinators!

Looking Back!

Thank you to all who helped make our Fall Retreat a success!

We had a fantastic time building relationship, exploring Genesis 1, learning about our history with our indigenous siblings, playing, leading worship, and serving at Community Table!

Check out a selection of photos from our time together on the next page.

Middle School Ministry Holiday Schedule

Classes will not meet on 12/21 or 12/28

Classes resume on 1/4/2026



Pr. Beth Brashear
pastorbeth@stlukechurch.com

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTRY

MSM Fall Retreat (cont.)

More photos from our Fall Retreat!



SLY HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY

Looking Back on Fall!

We have had a strong start of the school year. We meet in Vermont House Sunday mornings from **10:30-11:30am**, starting our time together with breakfast provided by awesome volunteers and then dive into a scripture lesson and some fun connecting with each other.



Eighteen of our high schoolers participated in **Youth-Led Worship on Sunday, September 28th**. They shared reflections on their experiences from the summer SLAM mission trip, read scripture and prayers, served communion, and led worship through music. In preparation, we began ongoing conversations about what it means to be part of the life of the church.

In October, students boarded the church bus for our second Mystery Field Trip (see below right). We enjoyed a fall-themed gathering with time around the fire pit, seasonal treats, crafts, and a devotion.

The evening concluded with a stop at Pastor Beth's home to "ding-dong ditch" a bag of Halloween goodies—which we later learned ended up on the wrong doorstep! (The treats did eventually make it to her doorstep :)



Many of the participants were freshmen or guests of our regular attendees, which represents a strong start to welcoming new students into our high school ministry.

SLY engaged in service and the life of the St Luke community by helping with Rally Day, the Fall Festival & Chili Cookoff, and the church-wide clean-up day. We have begun taking a regular turn at making sure the St. Luke Mini Food Pantry is full and clean and we are starting to make plans for future service projects of our own in the community. Our youth are very service-driven!

Looking Forward to the Holidays!

SLY is excited about joining Children's Ministry for the telling of the Nativity Story and Youth-led Worship with MSM on **Sunday, December 7th**. We will rehearse on Saturday, December 6th followed by participation and helping with Advent Festival.

"Carols and Cookies?" Oh yes! All high school students are invited to join Pastor Beth and Jodi on **December 6th, following the Advent Festival**, to visit homebound members and share in the joy of the season. We will deliver cookies and sing Christmas carols together.

Our SLY Christmas Party will be held at Jodi's house on **December 20th** and will include a Tri-Met bus ride to Peacock Lane. All high school students are invited! Please RSVP to jodi@stlukechurch.com.

For more information about St Luke Youth (SLY), or interest in volunteering, please contact Jodi Swigart the email below!

Join Us for a St Luke Community

Advent Festival

Let's All Celebrate the Season Together!

Hot Cocoa Bar Provided

Bring Cookies to Share

Intergenerational Offerings
Enjoy crafts & cookie decorating

Sat, Dec 6th, 2-3:30pm, Fellowship Hall

Post Festival outing with Pastor Beth, caroling, cookies, and cheer to our home bound members

Jodi Swigart, Interim Director of HS Youth
jodi@stlukechurch.com

ADULT EDUCATION

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

Three special educational opportunities were offered this fall at St. Luke. The first was a **Scam Prevention Workshop** in September, co-sponsored by Fifty and Beyond (FAB) and the Adult Education Team. The second was the **October Wednesday Church Night** focused on “Recycling,” sponsored by the Climate Justice Ministry. The third was the **November Wednesday Church Night** celebrating “50 Years of Welcoming and Sponsoring Refugees at St. Luke,” sponsored by the Social Concerns Committee.

Table Talks, led by Theologian in Residence Mark Brocker, resumed this fall on a monthly basis. The September theme was **“Lord, When Did We See You Thirsty in Gaza?”** The October Table Talk tackled the challenging topic **“The Kirk Assassination and the Scandal of Enemy Love.”**

On Sunday mornings in September and October Mark Brocker taught a five-week class entitled “Following Jesus 101: The Evangelical Lutheran Course.” The Tuesday Men’s Bible Study, the Tuesday AM Women’s Bible Study, and the Men’s Friday Morning Bible Study continued to meet in the Fall. Two ongoing groups resumed meeting: the Parents’ Group, every Sunday, 10:30a–11:30a, in Upper Shalom House; and the Good Words Book Group, every 3rd Sunday, 9:15a–10:15a, in the Conference Room.

Christian Education is a core ministry initiative in Evangelical Lutheran congregations. Being nurtured in our faith and equipped for ministry is a lifelong process. We encourage persons of all ages at St. Luke to be intentional participants in this educational process.

Rev. Mark Brocker
Adult Education Committee Chair

WINTER PROGRAMMING

Table Talk with Rev. Mark Brocker

How Do We Keep Showing Up Without Burning Out?

Saturday, December 6th, 11:00 a.m.-12 noon, Conference Room

Tuesday, December 9th, 7:00-8:00 p.m., Zoom

Gathered around the table in his home, Martin Luther talked freely and openly with his colleagues and students about matters of faith, theology, and varied aspects of daily life. In an effort to cultivate this kind of spirited discussion at St. Luke, I invite you to participate in the next Table Talk either in person or on Zoom this December.

In pursuing mercy and justice, even the most committed follower of Jesus can run the risk of burning out, especially in a challenging time such as this, when it often feels like the ground is moving under our feet. In the Sojourners article titled “How to Keep Showing Up without Burning Out,” Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, former General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America and chair of the board of Sojourners, offers eight reminders or insights intended to help followers of Jesus to stay rooted as they fulfill their call. He shares that it is “your inward journey with God that will sustain you in your outward journey, joining in what God is doing in the world.”

To prepare for this Table Talk, I encourage you to read Granberg-Michaelson’s June 2025 Sojourners article, [“How to Keep Showing Up without Burning Out.”](#)

ADULT EDUCATION

WINTER PROGRAMMING (cont.)

Women's Chronological Bible Study

Tuesdays, 8:00 a.m., Zoom

All are welcome! Ever wonder how things in the Bible fit together? We're "chronologically" reading the Bible, with the aid of different annotated Bibles and the combined wisdom and life experiences of the dozen or so women who attend on Zoom each week.

We are now in the New Testament exploring the Acts of the apostles immediately following Jesus's death and resurrection.

We have great discussions every week! Join in and we will share the reading list! Join and we will share the reading list!

Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Fridays, 7:30-8:30 a.m.

Miller's Homestead Restaurant

Join us to study the appointed Bible readings for the coming Sunday. BYOB (Bring your own Bible).

Parent Group

Sundays, 10:30 a.m., Upper Shalom

This is a great opportunity to sit still, enjoy coffee, share discussions, and build meaningful friendships.

For parents of littles to parents with kids in college to parents who are empty nesters. A Sunday morning ministry carefully built into our Sunday morning schedule, to give you options for worship.

WELCA Gather Bible Studies

Second week of each month

All women are encouraged to attend one of the following groups for bible study and fellowship!

On the second week of each month, we meet:

Sundays, 6:30-8:00 pm in the St. Luke Library

Mondays, 9:30-11:00 am in the St. Luke Library

Mondays, 1:00-3:30 pm in members' homes

It was a blessing to have Bp. Laurie Larson Caesar worship with us on Thankoffering Sunday!

WELCA is planning a luncheon for all women to attend in February — Stay tuned for more details!

Lenten Retreats

Men's Retreat: Feb 20—22, 2026

Women's Retreat: Feb 27—Mar 1, 2026

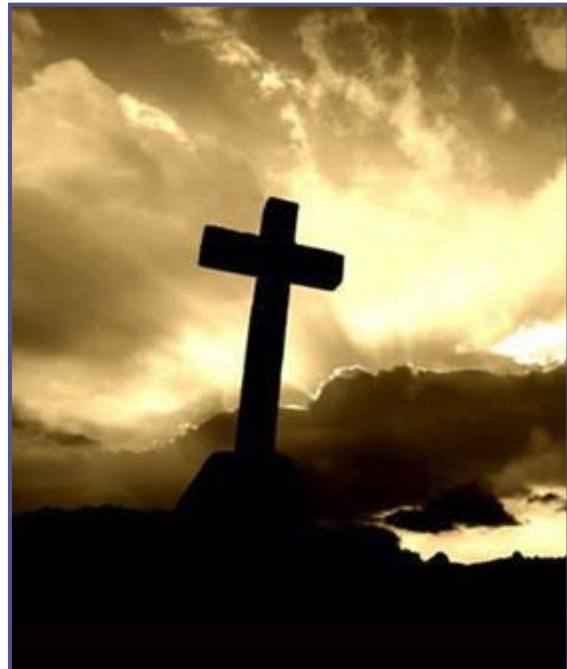
This Lenten Season at Alton Collins Retreat Center in beautiful Eagle Creek, Oregon, St. Luke will be offering two retreats on consecutive weekends.

Rev. Mark Brocker, Theologian in Residence, will lead our Men's Retreat, and Pr. Patti Welch will lead our Women's Retreat.

See Page 15 for detailed retreat descriptions.

Thanks to generous underwriting by the Trust Fund, double-occupancy rooms—including six meals—are available for just **\$150 per participant**.

Single-occupancy rooms are available for an additional **\$82 per participant**.



ADULT EDUCATION: LENT 2026 RETREATS

ST. LUKE MEN'S RETREAT

Life Together:

The Dynamics of Christian Community

FEBRUARY 20-22, 2026

German Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer begins his book *Life Together* with Psalm 133:1: "How very pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity." Bonhoeffer would eventually be executed by the Nazis on April 9, 1945, for his role in a conspiracy to assassinate Adolf Hitler. In *Life Together* he offers an account of the "life together" of Bonhoeffer and his students at Finkenwalde, an illegal seminary of the Confessing Church, which resisted the inroads of the Nazis into the life of the Protestant church in Germany. He hoped that *Life Together* would serve as one contribution to the renewal of Christian community in the church as a whole.

In this retreat we will explore the dynamics of life together at Finkenwalde, but we will be especially attentive to the dynamics of life together in our own St. Luke community of faith today. We will also consider how our life together as the people of St. Luke can be a form of resistance in an unsettled political time, when it feels like the ground is moving under our feet. In the flow of the retreat we will get a taste of the daily "liturgy" of the Finkenwalde community that balanced communal worship, study, personal meditation, meals together, service to others, confession, and recreation/leisure.

Each participant will receive a copy of the paperback edition of *Life Together/Prayerbook of the Bible*, volume 5 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). It would be helpful for participants to do an initial reading of *Life Together* in preparation for the retreat.

Our retreat leader is Dr. Mark Brocker, St. Luke Theologian in Residence and a leading Bonhoeffer scholar.

ST. LUKE WOMEN'S RETREAT

Awakening the Holy Within:

Walking with the Wisdom of Women Mystics

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 1, 2026

This Lent, you are invited to step away from the noise and enter the quiet sanctuary of your own heart. *Awakening the Holy Within* is a sacred weekend for women of all ages—a time to slow down, breathe deeply, and rest in God's loving presence. Together, we will create space to listen—to the stirrings of the Spirit, to the wisdom of our hearts, and to one another.

Guided by the luminous voices of Christian women mystics—Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Teresa of Ávila, and the Desert Mothers—we will explore how their lives of prayer and courage speak into our own Lenten journey. Through shared reflection, silence, and simple contemplative practices, we will trace the movements of God's love that invite us toward healing, wholeness, and renewal.

Throughout the weekend, sacred space will be set aside for quiet, creative prayer. Participants are invited to pray with their hands as well as their hearts—through journaling, drawing, collage, or simple handwork. These gentle practices flow from silence and contemplation, opening new avenues to feel God's presence and to give form to what is stirring within. No artistic skill is needed—only an open spirit and the willingness to be surprised by grace.

In the spirit of Lent, we come not to strive, but to soften—to let go of what no longer serves, to make room for what is being born, and to awaken to the divine life blossoming within and around us.

Our retreat leader is St. Luke Lead Pastor, Patti Welch.

Thanks to generous underwriting by the Trust Fund, double-occupancy rooms—including six meals—are available for just \$150 per participant.

Single-occupancy rooms are available for an additional \$82.

[Click here to register at the Giving page on our website or call the church office.](#)

Both retreats will begin on Friday at 5:00 p.m. and end on Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

ALTON COLLINS RETREAT CENTER

Alton Collins Retreat Center is located at:
32867 SE Highway 211, Eagle Creek, Oregon.

[Click here to learn more about Collins Retreat Center at their website!](#)

Nestled in a Pacific Northwestern forest, Collins Retreat Center creates the perfect environment for individual and personal growth, study, and reflection.



Photo Credit: [Alton Collins Retreat Center](#)

CHURCH UPDATES

COUNCIL PRESIDENT UPDATE

Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every purpose under the heavens.” I am truly savoring the beauty this season brings—from the vibrant colors of the leaves to the crisp, refreshing mornings. Change is all around us, both in nature and on our campus. Some changes are more visible than others! Our new intergenerational outdoor space, OASIS, will soon be fully open for everyone to enjoy. I, for one, am looking forward to gathering there for conversations when the weather allows. I encourage committees and groups to take advantage of this wonderful new space once it’s available.

Lower Shalom has been refreshed, creating more room for Community Table—it looks fantastic and was much needed. The elevator will be updated soon, and I’ve heard we’ll have air conditioning this summer, which will be a welcome comfort.



Council had a great time serving at the fall festival and chili cookoff—thank you to everyone who helped make it such a fun event! In November, we welcomed P’Nai Or, who will be using our Narthex for worship once a month.

Your Council continues to listen and work diligently on your behalf. We are grateful for your thoughts and prayers as we carry out the work you have entrusted to us. As Romans 8:28 assures us, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Hoping your Thanksgiving is joyful and, with Advent now upon us, a time of rest and renewal!

TRUST FUND COMMITTEE

The St. Luke Trust Fund Committee is charged with managing the funds contributed to the church thru bequests, memorials, insurance proceeds, and gifts. Per the bylaws, the funds should be spent with attention to categories of property, education, worship and outreach. Only church staff and Committee Chairs can request funding.

Trust Fund Balance

The October month-end balance for the Trust Fund is **\$1,659,648**. (This is exclusive of Benson Scholarship funds). Approximately twenty-five percent of this total is the Brunk estate funds restricted to funding “educational purposes.” The remaining seventy-five percent is a combination of Unrestricted funds and a small amount of Endowment funds.

Looking Ahead to Winter 2026

The Trust Fund Committee voted in 2024 to give **\$500,000** to the Capital Campaign Fund. At the end of October, **\$421,000** of that gift remains to be spent. It is expected the remaining money will be requested in the First Quarter to pay for the new HVAC system. At the November meeting the Trust Fund Committee approved a donation of \$20,000 to Social Concerns for use in 2026 to support their mission of “outreach.”

Benson Foundation Scholarship

For the 2025 calendar year Benson Foundation scholarships totaling **\$186,184** were paid out to three Lutheran colleges and universities for tuition and fees for **11 students**. Benson Foundation Scholarship residual money for 2025 amounted **\$23,816** and was forwarded to the Social Concerns Committee.

The Benson Foundation Scholarship process for the 2026 - 2027 academic year will kick off in January as the Committee makes plans for Table Talks, Zoom presentations, Weekly Press, and Sunday Bulletin notices about the scholarship application process culminating in scholarship applications being accepted in the month of March and awards being offered in April. Exact dates are yet to be determined.

Winter Planning

The Chair and the scholarship recipient positions will rotate off the Committee at the end of January and be replaced with candidates approved at the congregational meeting.

CHURCH UPDATES

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY: FALL APPEAL FOR 2026

Your Stewardship Ministry Team's recent activity has been our **Fall Appeal for 2026 ministry**.

We launched our Appeal in October entitled Courageous Generosity. This is a bold title as **Courageous Generosity** requires selfless giving of one's time, love, and resources rooted in deep faith – even when it's risky or uncomfortable.

St. Luke is community of faith that has also exhibited spiritual generosity which requires courage—to go against norms, to give when it hurts, and to trust God will provide. This spiritual courageous generosity transforms both giver and receiver. It builds communities, deepens faith, and reveals divine love in action. It's not just about charity—it's about living with open hands and a brave heart.

Stewardship is about how our congregation can engage in God's work. Your Stewardship Ministry Team's continuing goal is to encourage engagement and growth of our St. Luke Beloved Community.

Our continuing goal is to encourage engagement and growth of our St. Luke Beloved Community.



FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee has three important updates to share as we approach the end of the year. First, we are working diligently to balance the church's budget. At this time, we are approximately **\$74,000** short of our financial goal for November. We kindly ask the congregation to keep St. Luke Lutheran in your hearts and consider making year-end gifts, which are crucial to supporting our ministries and operations as we close out the year.

Second, we are excited to announce the beginning of our migration to the Subsplash Giving platform and closing down the Vanco portal. Subsplash will become our central hub not only for online donations, but also for group communication, service sign-ups, and event management. This platform will allow members to easily keep track of their contributions and access up-to-date giving records. We look forward to the added convenience and transparency that Subsplash will bring to our church community.

Third, we continue to work with the LIFT Committee to coordinate the financing of the church's three **"Must-do"** agenda items (Outdoor Space, HVAC and elevator). Our Treasurer has worked diligently to fine-tune our account management.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with St. Luke Lutheran. Your commitment to the church's ministry is greatly appreciated!





LIFT Capital Campaign

Leaping in Faith Together, Caring for Creation



WINTER 2025 UPDATE

We have already reported that our “Celebration Goal” of **\$1.75 million** in pledges was exceeded by a generous combination of promised gifts by members along with a matching gift of **\$500,000** from the Trust Fund. Although we have only received 38% of our pledged donations so far, those funds, along with the Trust Fund match, are sufficient to complete our priority “must do” projects. We expect that giving, which will continue over the next 2-3 years, will allow us to complete other important projects and initiatives.

“Must-Do” Projects (Phase I)

A question from the congregation: **"Why did work start on the outdoor space first when what we really needed to do was get the HVAC done before winter?"** LIFT treated the "Must-Do" projects equally and did not give preference on which project would go first.



The **Outdoor Activity Social Intergenerational Space** (“OASIS”) project was ready to proceed once the design was created back in December 2024.

It only required the necessary funding and selection of contractors to complete the OASIS work in Phase I. OASIS opened on Sunday, November 16th for play and gatherings.

Work will continue to install above-ground structures and educational fixtures through spring 2026 of next year.

Conversely, the **HVAC system** required consultant design work completed spring 2025 and an engineering assessment completed in October 2025. The HVAC project is very

complex and has required substantial time and effort to get viable bids and come up with a workable plan. Original design specifications generated only one bid from six contractors we consulted. All recommended a different design. The process required two rounds of contract bidding to get to a workable HVAC design.

A contract for the new HVAC system was signed in late October with **American Heating**. The HVAC project is scheduled to be completed by **June 30, 2026** in time for summer. Then the church building will have a newly-installed heating and cooling system to replace our existing heating system.

Mandatory Elevator upgrades will bring the Dover elevator up to Oregon code by replacing the electrical software. The contract was signed in August. The elevator is safe to use in the interim. The elevator parts are being manufactured and are expected to take nine weeks to complete. Shipping will add another three weeks. The project is expected to be completed **March 2026**.

Thank you to **the Property Committee** for the work on the HVAC and elevator projects.





LIFT Capital Campaign

Leaping in Faith Together, Caring for Creation



WINTER 2025 UPDATE (cont.)

Phase II

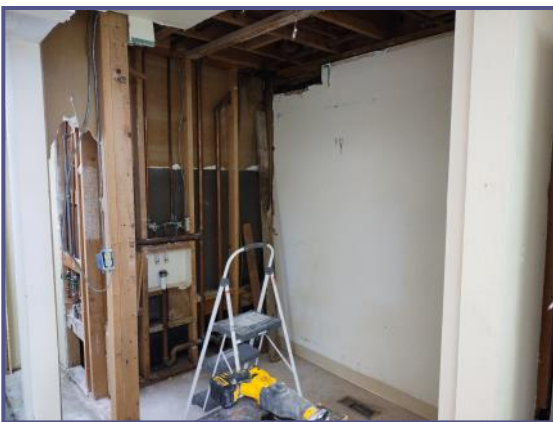
The church has three separate mortgages, one for the main church building, one for the Vermont House and one for the Commercial Property. With a **6.5% interest rate**, the pay-down of the mortgage on the main church building is a high priority for the LIFT Continuation Committee and the Finance Committee. The church has LIFT donations that exceed what is necessary for the “must do” projects, so we can start the mortgage paydown. This would provide the dual benefit of completing the initiative in the Feasibility and Visioning study that was a high priority on the survey of members conducted in fall of 2024 and eventually lower the mortgage cost on the church’s annual budget.

The other two mortgages are at a more favorable interest rate of **3.7%**. The installation of new windows and doors in the church building will improve our energy efficiency. The timing on these Phase II projects will be dependent on the receipt of LIFT donations after completion of the “must do” projects and pay-down of the main church building mortgage.

Phase III

This phase will involve additional upgrades to our Shalom Center along with upgrades to the Vermont House and around the church campus.

The remodel and installation of a new commercial refrigerator and freezer in lower Shalom was completed in September for Community Table (**see right and below**). Community Table can now store fruits and vegetables to better serve our growing number of food insecure neighbors.



The LIFT Continuation Committee welcomes your input. We encourage you to visit the LIFT section of the church website for more detailed information: [LIFT Webpage - St. Luke Lutheran Church](#).

Again, thank you for your continued financial support!

CONNECT

FAB (Fifty And Beyond)

The FAB (Fifty And Beyond) Planning Team welcomes any suggestions for day trips and coffee-hour activities. Our Planning Team meets the **Second Wednesday of the month, from 10:00-11:30 a.m.** in the Conference Room.

Please contact one of the seven team members with any ideas you might have, or better yet, to say you'll join our team!

Looking Forward

For the Winter months, the FAB team has tentative plans for Wednesday gatherings in the Fellowship Hall as follows. Look for details regarding the dates, timeframes, etc. in upcoming publications of the Weekly Press and Sunday bulletins.

- **December** coffee hour and movie
- **January** pre-Valentine's pizza party
- **February** coffee hour and presentation

Looking Back

On **Wednesday, September 17th**, 34 of us enjoyed a private complimentary luncheon at Courtyard Village, to include a presentation on "Healthy Aging and Brain Health" by Janae Taylor with OHSU School of Nursing.

On **Wednesday, October 29th**, 20 of us gathered in the Fellowship Hall for a Halloween Pizza Party with no tricks, just treats, and to watch the not-so-scary movies – "Charlie Brown's The Great Pumpkin" and "Young Frankenstein."

On **Wednesday November 5th**, 22 of us gathered in the Fellowship Hall for a coffee hour and presentation by St. Luke members about their trip in the Fall of 2024 to the Ancient Mediterranean region. What a treat for all who attended!

On **Wednesday, November 19th**, FAB group rode the church bus to Rise Church in Tigard to attend NW Senior Theatre (NWST) performance of *Happy Holidays, Weather Permitting*. This was our fourth outing to see the semi-annual NWST show and it was as delightful as ever!

CONNECT DATES

Wednesday Church Night

Dec 3 — Jan 7 — Feb 4

FAB Team Meetings

Dec 10 — Jan 14 — Feb 11

Memory Café

Dec 11 — Jan 8 — Feb 12

Good Words Book Group

Jan 18 — Feb 15 — Mar 15

Cancer Support Group

Contact Church Office for future dates

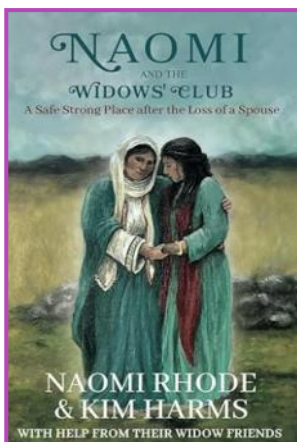
Memory Café

Memory Café is a monthly ministry for persons with memory loss and their family/friend care partners.

We gather together on the **Second Thursday of the month from 2:30-4:00 pm** in Fellowship Hall. Memory Café is open to the community, welcoming people of all faiths and no faith, to gather together on a monthly basis to enjoy fellowship, refreshments, and live singalong music.

Our winter meetups are **Dec 11th, January 8th, and February 12th.**

Book Review: *Naomi and the Widows' Club*



In the Bible story of Naomi and Ruth, we learn that God holds a special place in His heart for widows.

In this book, a modern-day Naomi forms a grief group of eight widow friends. Each widow shares her life story (before and after the loss of her spouse) and her experiences with the 'after' shock, grief, loss of identity, loss of social standing, economic insecurity and loneliness that follow.

Most importantly, through their weekly Zoom meetings, all members of the Widows' Club experience a shared journey of renewal with one another and their ever-present God.

Although each widow grieves differently, all of their stories reflect hope, thanks to the faithfulness of God and the encouragement of Naomi.

[Naomi and the Widows' Club: A Safe Strong Place after the Loss of a Spouse](#) by Naomi Rhode and Kim Harms is available at book retailers everywhere.

CONNECT

Cancer Support Group

The Cancer Support Group is small (thankfully), but valuable to those in the cancer journey. Those of us who are a few years past the main trauma are able to share information with those newly diagnosed.

We ask each other questions about what to expect with various treatments, share stories, support each other, and pray together.

The group meets irregularly about once a month. We recently met on November 16th and plan to meet again sometime in January.



Memorial Services and Receptions at St. Luke

Ever wondered what goes into planning a memorial service or reception to honor the life of your loved one?

While there are many decisions that need to be made by the family after a loved one dies, our Pastors and Staff are here to guide you through the process of planning the memorial service. You'll meet with a Pastor to decide appropriate music, scriptures, and the sharing of family memories through a eulogy or photos. Our Music Director and Administrative Assistant are also available to support.

As a faith community, we share in the grief of those who mourn the death of a loved one. For families who are interested, the Memorial Reception Committee is available to help plan a reception. A variety of options are available: from a simple reception with cookies and beverages in the Narthex, to hors d'oeuvres or even a full luncheon in the Fellowship Hall.

If you are interested in a price sheet of the costs associated with memorial services or receptions, please contact the church front office staff.



Good Words Book Group

Join **GOOD WORDS BOOK GROUP** in 2026 on the **third Sunday of the month at 9:15 a.m.** in the Conference Room.

We combine fellowship and good books of all kinds. New members are **always welcome!**

Here's our book list for the next few months:

Jan 18 *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles
Feb 15 *Calico* by Lee Goldberg
Mar 15 *1984* by George Orwell



Altar Flowers

*...Honor or remember a loved one...
...Commemorate a special celebration...*

The flowers on the altar are sponsored by members of our family and also beautify the sanctuary and enhance our worship. The Sunday morning flowers cost **\$90.00** per Sunday. You can sponsor either the entire floral arrangement (**\$90**) or share the expense (**\$45**).

The sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board in the ministry center. If you wish to sponsor the full cost, please sign your name on **BOTH** lines for the Sunday you would like to sponsor. If you wish to sponsor half the cost, please sign your name on **ONE** line.

Payment can be made online or with a check sent to the office. Please note on the check that payment is for **Altar Flowers** to avoid confusion.

Extra flower vases in your cupboard? Altar flowers are split into smaller arrangements and taken to homebound members of our family or those in the hospital. We need vases for these arrangements (**NO bud vases or extra large vases**). Please donate your extra vases in the Ministry Area box marked "Vases." Thank you!

CONNECT

Celebrating 50 Years of Welcoming Refugees

In honor of our **50th** year of welcoming and resettling refugees – St. Luke has sponsored more than 200 people over the years – we gathered St. Luke members with members of the families we've helped to resettle over the years for an incredible **Wednesday Church Night** on November 5th.



Approximately **130** of us gathered in fellowship over delicious Syrian food catered by Ahmed Al Masri!

We thank God for the gifts of human diversity – and for the opportunity to welcome and accompany people through incredible transitions!

Here are some words shared by our first family that was sponsored:

"Our family came to the US as refugees from South Vietnam. St. Luke Lutheran church was looking to sponsor a family for the first time and we were lucky enough to be the recipients so that's how we came to southwest Portland. Over the years St. Luke continued to sponsor families from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Iran, Kurdistan, Togo, Eritrea, Syria, and Afghanistan. The church had a celebration for 50 years of sponsoring families and it was wonderful to see families from all around the world come together; forever connected by the generosity of the members of St. Luke. Everyone in my family is eternally grateful for the love and support from St. Luke that allowed us to re-plant our roots in Portland and continue to grow our family tree. This is how you build community."



If you'd love some great Syrian food, visit the **Abbas Food Cart** (below) at **5215 N Lombard St, Portland**.

**Thank you to all who
made this special event
possible!**





Social Concerns Committee Update: December 2025

Activity and Program Highlights

Grauer Back to School: 323 students served; strong volunteer turnout; \$17,493 on hand to purchase coats/shoes now; anticipated 2026 Social Concerns budget to increase to accommodate approximately 400 students @ \$100/student. Preliminary budget is \$41,000.

Community Table: Serving ~600+ individuals /approximately 150 families monthly; distribution moved to 2x/month; Shalom remodel and new freezer; increased demand expected due to WIC/ SNAP and Oregon Food Bank reductions. Anticipated budget for 2026 is \$42,000.

Outreach: Neighborhood House facility tour
November 14, 3pm for Committee and others.

Committee member farewells and thanks.

Approved Disbursements & Designated Gifts

Paid/processed: \$500 to Burns Paiute Tribe; \$2,500 for Maplewood Helping Hands gift cards

\$10,000 designated donation from member of congregation to Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP)

Internal transfer approved: \$2,000 donation to Social Concerns Refugee Families Fund

Giving Tree Planning: 50 tags each for Letty Owings Center and Lutheran Community Services NW; \$25 cap per tag approved

SLY: At our June meeting, we also learned that the St. Luke Trust Committee will contribute \$5,000 to SLY for this year only. Our earlier commitment of \$2500 of benevolence for SLY through the Social Concerns Committee continues for 2025.

Balances and Recurring Costs

Grauer Back to School - \$41,000 budget request from Social Concerns for 2026.

Community Table balances reported: \$20,000 in bank; \$3,000 in gift cards; working balance reported as \$17,000. \$12,000 Social Concerns pledge; \$6,000 paid; \$6,000 balance to be paid this quarter.

In response to substantial reductions in federal support as well as increasing costs, the Community Table budget request for 2026 is **\$42,000.**

Community Table estimated monthly costs:
\$3,000 food/mo; \$300 household goods/mo.

Discretionary funds available this year: \$3,652 for distribution at October meeting. \$2500 allocated in October for Maplewood Helping Hands at Maplewood Elementary School. \$957 remaining balance to be distributed before year end.

Benson Grants, LIFT Campaign, Wreath Sale, and Social Concerns benevolence focus for 2026

Benson Scholarship residuals: Trust Committee to remit **\$22,786** to SC in 2025 for Benson Grants.

Trust Committee held \$30,000 from the 2025 residual amount due to mistaken residual payment to Social Concerns in 2023.

Social Concerns Committee will focus 2025 Benson Family Foundation Grants on three mission outreach categories: Hunger/Food Insecurity; Homelessness/Shelter; St. Luke sponsored refugee families and current partner nonprofits that support refugee resettlement.

This focus is in response to substantial reductions in federal funding for food; homeless; and dramatic cuts to refugee financial support.

Due to reduced Benson residuals this year, recipients of Benson grants in 2024 were notified that our committee did not invite grant proposals this year. We also notified St. Luke members that committee will not invite nominations of nonprofits.

LIFT Campaign: Benevolence portion 5%; Social Concerns to receive 50% of that benevolence; projected Social Concerns allocation of \$43,750 available in 3 years; Committee to direct funding toward food insecurity/hunger.

Wreath Sale again this year with MLP, a nonprofit supporting migrant women farmworkers.

Cost: \$45. Only 35 available. **Order through Sign-Up Genius.** Pick up in narthex, Sunday, December 7.

Refugee support: Active follow-up by Committee and other members of our congregation with refugee families

St. Luke long-standing refugee family support was highlighted in a November 3-7 devotions.

Report Continued on Next Page



SERVE

Social Concerns Committee Update: December 2025 (cont.)

Celebrating 50 Years of St. Luke Refugee Sponsorship on November 5, 2025

About 75 members of the St. Luke congregation shared a very special Wednesday Church Night dinner with 50 refugees who our congregation has sponsored since 1975 as we celebrated 50 years of St. Luke Lutheran Church Refugee Sponsorship.

The Fellowship Hall was filled with families of all ages from around the world and members of our congregation enjoying Middle Eastern fare.

For those in attendance – and for the many in our congregation who have supported refugees over the years and joined us in spirit – we enjoyed a memorable gathering of our shared humanity as an experience of what God’s love “looks like” as expressed in welcoming refugees from around the world into our Portland community.

Our first refugee family spoke of the support of St. Luke members who welcomed his extended family who were then fleeing Vietnam by boat, with nothing other than the clothes they wore. Speaking for not only his family, but for others as well, he expressed his profound gratitude for the generosity of our congregation.

Establishing Priorities/Budget Proposals

The Committee has established priorities for Social Concerns 2026 benevolence focusing on three mission outreach categories: Food Insecurity, Homelessness/Shelter, and Refugee support.

Initial discussions in October and November meetings to narrow list of nonprofits to be considered in 2026. Submission to Council of two budgets: The first budget submitted to Council includes our two intergenerational ministries:

\$42,000 - Community Table

\$41,000 - Grauer Back to School Project

The second budget includes both our congregational intergenerational ministries above as well as initial budgeted amounts for selected nonprofits in our ministry outreach categories of concentration: Food Insecurity/Hunger; Homelessness/Shelter, and Refugee support.

—Social Concerns Committee



SERVE

Christmas in September Recap

Thank you for a great Christmas in September drive!

We collected **946 pounds of donated goods** for the NE Emergency Food Pantry packing this car to the max!



Community Table

Our campus food pantry distribution program, Community Table, is helping our neighbors in Portland and the surrounding area. A generous donation was received that provided the purchase of a storage shed. This will allow Community Table to store signs and equipment to free up space in lower Shalom for our growing ministry.

We have had an increased number of guests visiting our food pantry and our twice-monthly distribution is now serving around **160 households each month, impacting 690 individuals.**

If you are interested in lending a hand during the week to assist with deliveries or packaging or stocking shelves, or if assisting guests at one of our Saturday distributions interests you, please contact Caroline Eddy. Our Winter distribution dates are:

December 13 and 27, January 10 and 31, February 14 and 28.



Giving Tree

In the spirit of generosity of the Advent Season, we are partnering with **Lutheran Community Services Northwest and the Letty Owings Center.**

Please visit the Giving Tree in the Narthex and either take an ornament from the tree or scan the QR code on the ornaments. You may also click [here](#) to sign up to donate a gift or gift card. **Suggested value of gifts and gift cards is \$25.**

Donations for Lutheran Services Community Services NW should be at St Luke by **12/7**. Gift cards for Letty Owings should be brought to the narthex by **12/15**.

Caroline Eddy, Volunteer/Service Coordinator
caroline@stlukechurch.com

SERVE

SWITCH Housing Justice

The **Pathways Home** group that included local organizations and communities of faith, such as St. Luke, St. Andrew's and Village Grace (was Riversgate), have decided to move into 2026 with a new name: the group is now called **SWITCH (Southwest Initiative to Change Homelessness)**.

On **October 22nd**, SWITCH completed a three-part 2025 series with the HereTogether SHS ([Supportive Housing Services](#)) review and discussion at St. Andrew's Presbyterian ([see below](#)).



The discussion explored information about what the audience understood about the Metro tax that extends to 2030 to support housing. Information was shown by county as part of a slide presentation. Annual work plans for each county can be found [here](#).

The **SWITCH** group will dig more into this information through the end of the year and into 2026. St. Luke members are welcome to volunteer regular support with planning for events at regular virtual meetings.

Mini Pantry: Our Non-Perishable Food Ministry

Since it was erected along the St. Luke driveway in 2021, the mini pantry has had a 'reason for being'. It's always been a fast and easy option for food access. At this moment in time, with food insecurity rising more than anyone has ever imagined and SNAP benefits being strung along, please know that you and any of your family or neighbors have a small bright place where our community can very quickly support those in need.



We try our best to keep different food options and brown paper sacks available for those who many visit the pantry. Whenever possible, it's helpful to have the cans with pull tabs for opening rather than adding canned goods that require a can opener. Think simple hearty foods and simple prep.

Drop off food at the pantry, or during hours when the church is open, you may bring items into the Ministry Center area inside the St. Luke for others to take to the pantry. *With school holidays coming we are pulling together to add food and complementing our other strong twice-monthly food resource, Community Table.*

Another way you may want to help is to sign up to tidy the pantry on Sundays or Wednesdays: [Mini Pantry Sign-Up](#)

Climate Justice Ministry

On **October 1st**, CJM hosted the first Wednesday Church Night of the 2025-2026 program year! Our discussion focused on recycling, with presentations from Gretchen Sandau, DEQ Materials Manager Regional Specialist, and David Muller, James Recycling consultant.

Gretchen presented Oregon's new [Recycling Modernization Act \(RMA\)](#) which went into effect July 1, 2025. She presented what can now be recycled in your curbside bin and alternatives for items that cannot go in your bin. ([Click here to access DEQ's Curbside Acceptance List.](#))

[James Recycling](#) accepts many items that cannot go in your curbside bin. David gave us a great overview of what those items are and how to bring them to James Recycling.

Here are the two big takeaways from the presentations:

First, if the item in question is NOT on the curbside acceptance list, please do not put it in your curbside bins. Second, be sure to recycle clean items free of food, grease, oil, or other materials.

We thank Gretchen and David for sharing their time and expertise. Our state is moving forward to protect our beautiful, fragile Earth. [Click here to email Gretchen Sandau with any follow-up questions.](#)

Handouts with specific recycling information are also available in the narthex. Thank you for your support of Climate Justice Ministry!



IN THE NEWS

FALL 2025 CHILI COOKOFF

Congratulations to our Fall 2025 Chili Cookoff Winning Recipe!

Now everyone can recreate the chili magic at home:

TURKEY PUMPKIN BLACK BEAN CHILI

Slow cooker size: 4 to 6 quart

- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped yellow bell pepper
- 3-4 garlic cloves, pressed or minced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1½ tsp dried oregano
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp chili powder
- ¼ tsp fresh-ground black pepper
- Salt, to taste (start with 1 tsp)
- 2 15-oz cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups (or 16-oz can) pureed pumpkin
- 14½-oz can diced tomatoes (or fire-roasted diced tomatoes)
- 1 lb ground turkey
- ½ cup chicken stock



1. Cook and crumble ground turkey along with the oregano, cumin, chili powder, black pepper, and salt. Add to slow cooker.
2. Sauté onion and yellow pepper in oil until soft.
Add garlic and sauté one more minute. Add to slow cooker.
3. Deglaze pan with chicken stock. Add to slow cooker.
4. Add beans, pumpkin, and tomatoes to slow cooker, and combine.
5. Cover slow cooker and cook on **LOW** for 7-8 hours.
Taste for salt level, and adjust.

In a hurry? Here's the Instant Pot version:

- Combine all ingredients
- Cook for 10 minutes on HIGH pressure.
- Let the pressure naturally release for 10 minutes.

Vegan Version:

- Instead of the ground turkey and chicken stock, combine:
 - 1½ cup TVP (textured vegetable protein granules)
 - 2 cups chicken-style vegetarian broth (I love the Massel brand)
- Add to slow cooker and cook as above.

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