

Love of Christ Lutheran Church

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Welcome to LOC's Weekly E-News

3rd Sunday of Epiphany, January 25, 2026



Proclaiming the Good News

When Jesus hears that John the Baptist has been arrested, he moves to Capernaum, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that light has dawned in the land of darkness. There he begins his ministry, proclaiming, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." As he walks along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus calls two sets of brothers—Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John to follow him. Without hesitation, they leave their nets and families to become fishers of people. Jesus then travels throughout Galilee, teaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. What does it look like to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of heaven in our world today?



Pastor Steve will be on vacation 1/23-2/6. Pastor Nanette will be available for any pastoral needs which may develop.



Celebration of Life for Ken Johnson will be held on Friday, January 23rd at 11:00 in the Sanctuary. Reception held after service in Rooms 48 thru 50 in Center of Compassion. Ken's family is suggesting to wear cheerful attire—his favorite colors were blue & yellow. If you wish to send a card, Donna's address: 6624 E. Orion Street Mesa 85215



The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January, 18-25. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul and therefore have a symbolic significance.

Ephesians 4:1-13 speaks to the early church's call to unity:

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high, he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (NRSV)

Unity is a divine mandate at the core of our Christian identity, more than simply an ideal. It represents the essence of the Church's calling – a call to reflect the harmonious oneness of our life in Christ amidst our diversity. This divine unity is central to our mission and is sustained by the profound love of Jesus Christ, who has set before us a unified purpose. As the Apostle Paul asserts in his letter to the Ephesians, **"there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling" (4:4)**. This Bible verse, chosen for this year, encapsulates the theological depth of Christian unity.

A Prayer for Unity

Unifying God, help us find common ground within the diverse body of Christ, understanding that we can be unified in your love without forcing others to conform. Help us stay curious and open to your Spirit, pulling us into relationships of love and justice, even with those we least expect. Remove hatred, prejudice, and any obstacles to godly union and concord. Unite us in one heart and soul, in one holy bond of truth and peace of faith and charity, so we may with one mind and one mouth glorify you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



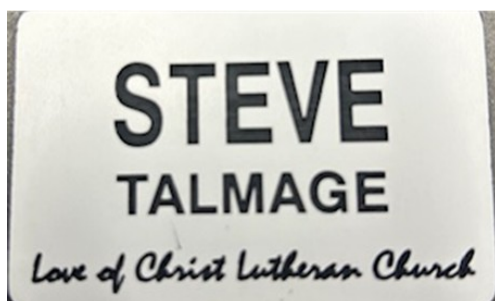
Lent Begins with Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Noon & 7PM Services in the Sanctuary



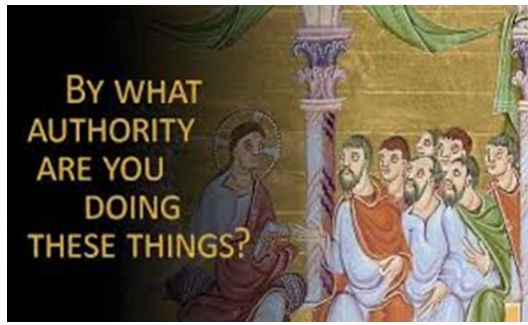
Welcome Seasonal Guests!

During the first quarter of every year, we benefit from the presence of winter guests who model their commitment to Christ through weekly worship in our community. We are grateful for those who choose not to give up the habit of gathering to hear the Word and receive the Sacrament. If you have questions or pastoral needs, please let our office or one of the pastors know. Welcome!



Nametags Foster Community! Nonmembers and Seasonal Guests are welcome to order one!

Whether you are a longtime member or a regular guest for a season of the year, you are welcome to order a nametag from Dianne Oien, (dianneoien@loclc.org). If you want to make a \$5.00 donation, it will cover the cost. The pastors really appreciate it when our community wears their nametags!



By What Authority: Rethinking Early Christian History

Wednesday, at 6PM in the Fellowship Hall

We are on a journey through the first five centuries of the Early Church. It provides helpful background in how the Holy Spirit worked through the global and diverse movement of believers and communities coming together. How they dealt with Emperor and Empire. How they navigated, debated, and determined our early creeds and church organization. This course is on Wednesdays through February 11. Whether you can attend some of the classes or all, all are welcome to join.

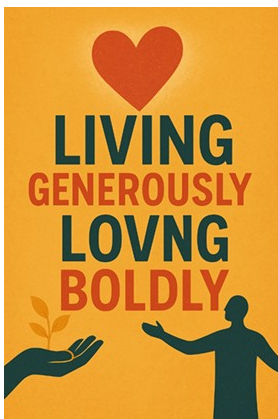
Upcoming Topics: 1/28 Monasticism and Ascetics, 2/4 Missionary Church, and 2/11 Eastern and Western Church.

Two Stories of Living Generously

The following are two stories to remind us of God's image at work within us and others in surprising ways:

A woman shared: "It's been six months since I totaled my car. I've been in and out of the hospital a lot ever since with severe back pain. Although the pain has begun to subside, my recovery forced me to use all my sick time and vacation time for the year. But this morning my boss, who is usually 'all business' and pretty hard on everyone, called me into her office and told me she talked with HR and donated five days of her own unused vacation time to me so I would still get paid when I go out of town to visit my family for Christmas."

A husband shared: "Times haven't been easy lately, but people have been kind. We live in a lower-middle-class neighborhood. My wife was just diagnosed with breast cancer last week, so my 14-year-old son decided that he wanted to raise money to help pay for some of her medical expenses. His idea was to go door to door around the neighborhood with hair clippers and let people shave a part of his head for a small donation of their choosing. He asked me whether a \$100 goal would be too much. I told him not to get his hopes up. He came back home ten minutes ago with a bald head and \$1,225. Three people gave him \$100



The Faith in Action Team would like to thank the Love of Christ faith community that embraces generosity and loves boldly!

Thanksgiving and Christmas Collections: \$6,200 raised for Target gift cards

Thanksgiving Food Banks: \$4,000 split between LSS food banks Victory Lutheran and First Evangelical

Reverse Advent Boxes: 119 boxes average cost \$70 per box for a total of \$8330

ELCA Good Gifts: \$2134 from those members who bought gifts at church. That does not include those who may have gone online and bought gifts.

Faith In Action Christmas totals: \$20,664 helped provide food, clothing, shoes, animals for people locally and around the world!

Music Notes....



Handbell Ringers Needed

Do you read music and count beats? We would love to have you join our Handbell Choir! We are looking for ringers for monthly Sunday performances.

Rehearsals are held **Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Greenroom**. If you're interested, please let me know—we'd love to ring with you! You can contact me at jungmusic@lolc.org

We can't wait to celebrate this wonderful season of music, fellowship, and joy with all of you.

With gratitude and excitement,
Jung Lee



Calling All Bakers

Cookie Ministry is looking for people who like to bake. The Cookie Ministry is part of the Faith in Action programs at Love of Christ. This ministry makes cookies for our various events that are held here on our campus and beyond our campus. If you are interested in baking cookies for this ministry, please contact Eunice Ketterling at ketts14az@gmail.com



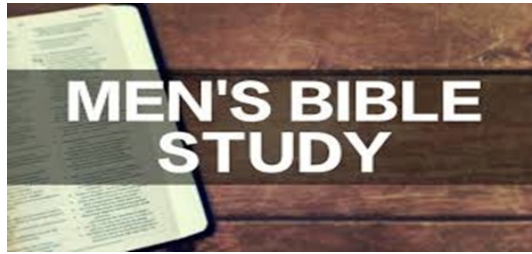
Community Garden News

Come join us and grow something beautiful. Questions, contact Nancy at Dntoll74@gmail.com



Naomi Circle will meet on February 9th, at 1PM in the Fellowship Hall. All women are welcome—invite your friends!

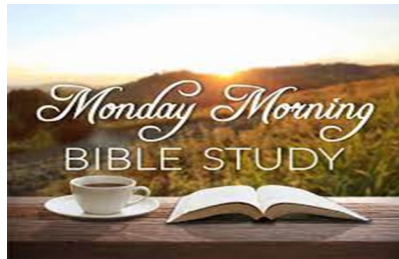
On February 14th, The LOC Hiking Ladies will be traveling to Cave Creek County Park and hiking the Go John and Quartz Loop Trail. This **3.8 mile loop** follows along a low ridge on mostly smooth dirt with occasional rocks, ruts, and loose material, opening to wide Sonoran Desert views. Saguaros and palo verde trees line the slopes, and as an extra treat, we will pass by the Michelin Man cactus. We will meet at 7:00AM. Contact: Pat Shaw at 480 334-9123 (better to text).



Pastor Steve Crittenden is subbing for Pastor Steve Talmage and leading this week's early morning Men's Bible Study on Monday, 6:30-7:30AM in the Leadership Room. We are studying Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Men of all ages are welcome to participate.



Online Video introductions provided by our pastors of Sunday Lectionary readings. They may be found on Facebook, YouTube or loveofchristchurch.net

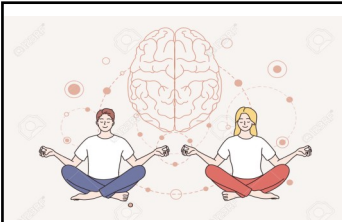


Monday Morning Bible Study in the Leadership Room
10:30 Coffee Fellowship, 11:00AM Bible Study



Prayer Share Care Women's Bible Study

All women are invited to a weekly Bible study group called Prayer Share Care. This group meets on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 in the Leadership Room. This group will be using Marcus Borg's book: ***Reading the Bible Again for the First Time***. Books can be purchased **at class** for \$10. Please contact Ruth Leonard or Margrit Aeschbach at the following emails for more information. (Margrit: mswiss43@gmail.com and Ruth: ruthleonard@icloud.com)



Faith stretch yoga **meets on Thursdays at 9:00am in Outreach room.**
For questions and more information, text Georgia at 406-925-0013 or
email: nonnagg51@gmail.com .



There is hangout this Sunday from 10 to Noon in the Youth Room!

There is Youth Group this Wednesday night from 6-7:30pm in Youth Room!

Contact Mason Weatherly for more info at masonw@locic.org



Confirmation

Confirmation will be held on Wednesday nights from 6PM to 7PM in the room 48.

Next Confirmation class on Wednesday, January 21st

Any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@locic.org

A brief Overview for 2026 Save the Dates:

February 7: Women's Retreat at LoC "It is Well With My Soul"

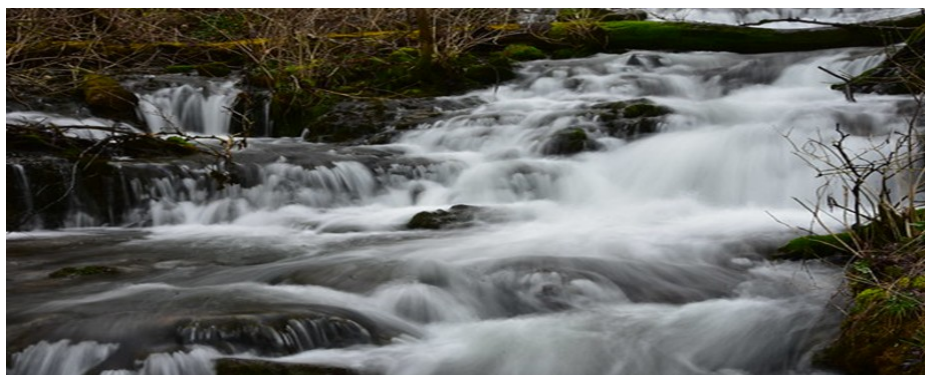
February 23: Lutheran Day at the Legislature, more information coming.

Wednesday during Lent sharing our **Outreach Ministries**

April 12: 40th Anniversary Celebration

June 11,12,13: Synod Assembly at LoC

Women's Retreat February 7th 9:00-3:30 in the Center of Compassion



LoC Women's Retreat — *It Is Well With My Soul: Living Water*

Come to the Well to be refreshed! Throughout Scripture, wells are sacred spaces—places where God meets people, initiates new relationships, and reveals holy purpose. At a well in John chapter 4, Jesus meets a woman carrying the weight of her story, and in that encounter offers living water that restores, renews, and makes her whole.

This year's LoC Women's Retreat is centered on that holy meeting place with the theme "**It Is Well With My Soul.**" Together, we will gather at the well—just as the Samaritan woman did—to be seen, known, and refreshed by Christ.

During our time together, we will explore how God invites us to care for ourselves in faithful and holistic ways:

- **Spiritual care** — tending to our souls through prayer, Scripture, and grace
- **Physical care** — honoring our bodies as beloved creations of God

Emotional care — acknowledging our stories, wounds, and joys with honesty and compassion
Like the woman at the well, we come as we are—and leave changed. Join us for a time of rest, renewal, connection, and living water that truly satisfies.

We will be having 4 guest speakers and a catered lunch. Please go online to sign up.

Cost is \$30.00 and lunch is included. You can pay for it online on our website under donate/ scroll down to Women's Retreat 2026 or pay on Saturday, Feb. 7th at the door.

Faith in Action Ministry of the Month:

LAMA

This month our Faith In Action Team will be focusing on our Ministry partners that are a part of LAMA (Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Arizona). This organization is a part of the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA and works with legislators and our state legislation on Hunger issues in Arizona. LAMA joins with the most vulnerable of our society to voice our common needs in the public square, activating our faith in love.

Lutherans from across Arizona will gather at the Arizona State Capitol on **Monday, February 23, 2026**, from **9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.** for **Lutheran Day at the Legislature**, a day of faithful advocacy hosted by Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona (LAMA). Registration opens at **8:30 a.m.** at **Wesley Bolin Plaza**, where participants will begin the day with a light breakfast and coffee before stepping into a full morning of learning, witness, and public engagement.

This annual gathering equips and encourages Lutherans to live out our baptismal promise *“to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.”* Throughout the morning, participants will meet their legislators, connect with congregational LAMA liaisons, hear from policy council members, and join other Lutherans committed to justice shaped by our Lutheran faith.

You can go to this link and it will tell you more about this exciting day. <https://www.gcsynod.org/news/join-us-at-the-capitol-lutheran-day-at-the-legislature-returns-feb-23-2026-2>

If you are interested in being a part of the Lutheran Day at the Legislature, please contact Charles Martiny our new LAMA liaison at cmartiny@cox.net . Or, you can contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@loclc.org.

Refugee Family Co-Sponsorship with Lutheran Social Services:

Our Co-Sponsorship Team has been helping a refugee family from Syria. The help that is needed is working with the adults who are learning English. This team is making wonderful progress and forming some beautiful relationships with the family as well. We have provided back to school clothing and backpacks for each of the four children, along with teaching them English. If you are interested in learning more or think you might like to join this team, please contact Chris Norden at norden6162@gmail.com



Our Sunday School Ministry continues on throughout the New Year! For ages 4-2nd grade, Sunday School is from 9:10-9:50. Children are to come to church with their parents and are dismissed for Sunday School after the Children's Message. They return to worship during Communion. For grades 3-6, Sunday school begins at 9:50 and they are done at 10:20. Sunday School takes place in the Godly Play room. For any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@locic.org



Grades 4,5, and 6 will meet in the CoC on February 15th for games, a lesson on worship, and an amazing snack! The fun begins at 3:30 and ends at 5:00! Please contact Laura Ontiveros or Pastor Nanette for more information.

WOW! Word on Wednesdays has resumed!

Children's Musical, Adult Bible Study, and Confirmation/Youth Group begin at 6PM. A light meal will be served at 5:30 in rooms 48 & 49 in Center of Compassion.

Children's Musical—The FAB 4 Kids Show—Rockin' the Gospels All the Way to the Cross!

Rehearsal begins on Wednesday, January 14th from 6pm to 7pm in Room 50

Performance: Sunday, May 3rd at 9AM

🌸 MomCo at Love of Christ Lutheran Church! 🌸

Calling all moms! Whether you're in the thick of toddlerhood, navigating teenage years, or somewhere in between — you're not alone.



We're excited to announce that our church will now be hosting MomCo, a community designed for moms, by moms. MomCo is a place where women gather in circles of support, friendship, and faith — because raising humans is both beautiful and hard, and no one should have to do it alone:

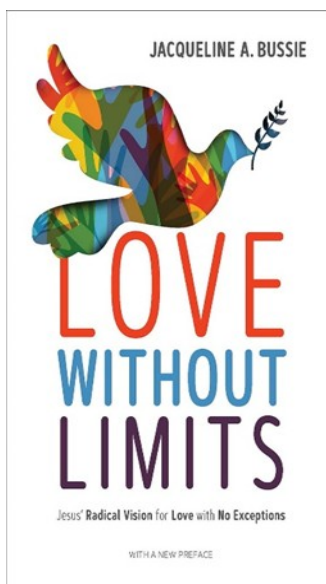
- Build meaningful, lasting friendships
- Encourage and equip moms to lead with love
- Grow the church by nurturing families in faith
- Bring mothers and their families closer to Jesus

Join Us! Location: Love of Christ

📅 When: Next meeting February 4th. We will get back to the 1st Wednesday of the month in February. | 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM in Godly Playroom (Nursery) located in entrance to Center of Compassion.

📞 Contact: Kacey Weir or Pastor Nanette Christofferson 🌐

Online Options: - <http://www.themom.co/groups/loveofchristmesa>



Love Without Limits meets again on February 4th at 4:30 in the Fellowship Hall.

In her book, Jacqueline Bussie says nothing is more scandalous than a “love without limits.” How does a love without limits mirror Jesus and the God we are called to serve? How does this echo Jesus’ ministry in Luke 15 (the parables of being lost) or Paul’s proclamation in Galatians 3:28 (There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one Christ Jesus)? This study is open to all women who are interested in learning about our God who loves without limits! They will be discussing Chapter 4 for the February 4th meeting.



Young Adults are typically between the ages of 18 and 30-5 ish! We are fortunate to have the above Young Adults interested in gathering and learning together. Our next meeting time will be on Sunday, January 25th at 11:45 in the CoC. We will continue with the Small Catechism and make plans for our next service project. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette or Laura Ontiveros.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace News



We are celebrating the 10,000th bed to be delivered soon to a child in the Phoenix area! The Phoenix Chapter began 7 years ago and is still going strong to meet the need of our community.

Thanks to all the donors of time and funds to make this exciting milestone happen. The reason for this effort which improves the lives of children in our community is brought home every time we witness a child receiving a bed for the first time!

We are also fortunate to have a lot of individuals who continue to make blankets and contribute stuffed animals, books and sheets.

THANK YOU!

Scripture Lesson

A Brief Look at Isaiah 9:1-4 with Pastor Nanette Christofferson (10 min)

Isaiah 9.1-4

- Pastor Nanette Christofferson
- Love of Christ Lutheran Church
- Epiphany 3



YouTube: https://youtu.be/B74jcy_tW7g

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/reel/2048034122708764/>

Website: <https://www.loveofchristchurch.net/media/series/7vjwfnk/bible-lessons>

Scripture Lesson

A Brief Look at Matthew 4:12-23 with Pastor Nanette Christofferson (12 min)

*Light breaks in, the
kingdom comes
near, and ordinary
people are called.*

Matthew 4.12-23

Pastor Nanette Christofferson
Love of Christ Lutheran Church
Epiphany 3



YouTube: <https://youtu.be/L-9AU80WQVw>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/reel/1814504879505499/>

Website: <https://www.loveofchristchurch.net/media/series/7vjwfnk/bible-lessons>

Sunday, January 25, 2026, 7:50 am, 9 and 10:30,

some on  &



Pastor Nanette Christofferson—"Proclaiming the Good News"

Isaiah 9:1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Matthew 4: 12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea,

in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan,
Galilee of the gentiles—
the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers.

And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.

Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.