

# Love of Christ Lutheran Church

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## Welcome to LOC's Weekly E-News

2nd Sunday of Christmas, January 4, 2026



### Grace Upon Grace

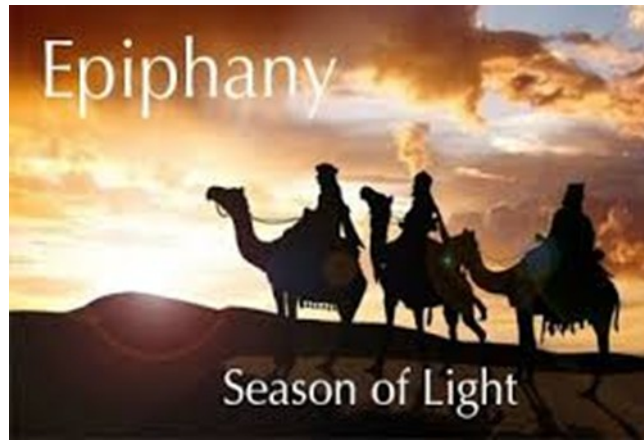
This is one of the most beautiful and poetic scriptures of the New Testament. It is almost as if one can hear the world being created and think of the amazing universe in which we live. It is here where the chords of the symphony all come together as John reveals to us God's grace. It is something to behold! For it is grace upon grace or this gift upon a gift. We are to live in this grace accepting it so that despite our own brokenness we can be offered grace and offer grace for others. We are to be the light that shines. Christ's death and resurrection give us the hope and the gift of the Holy Spirit. God reveals to us through Christ this gift of grace; God reveals to us the seismic proportion of creation; God reveals to us through Christ a way to live, this way to live is by shedding the light of forgiveness, the light of grace, and the light of love.



Pastor Nanette will be gone from January 5-January 18 for a continuing education trip to Egypt. She and her husband will be stepping into Egypt's rich Christian heritage with visits to historic Coptic churches, from the iconic Hanging Church in Cairo to the revered St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. They will also journey to the Pyramids of Giza and see the beaches of the Red Sea. Please add them to your prayers for safe travel and return.



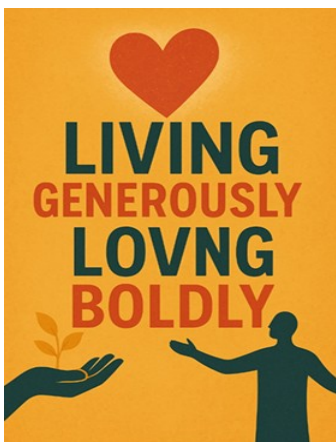
Funeral Service for Judith Olsen on Saturday, January 10th at 10:30AM in the Sanctuary.



### **The Season of Epiphany begins on January 6!**

The visit of the magi/stargazers/wisemen from the East to worship and revere the infant Jesus, the newborn king inaugurates this season of continuing to answer the questions of who Jesus is and what does it mean?

When thinking of these sages from long ago trekking across the desert to see Jesus leads one to consider how we practice the reverence of God in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Paul Woodruff writes: "Reverence is the virtue that keeps people from trying to act like gods. Reverence is the recognition of something greater than the self-something that is beyond human creation or control, that transcends full human understanding. Reverence stands in awe of something, something that dwarfs the self, that allows human beings to sense the full extent of our limits, so that we can begin to see one another more reverently."



A recent Wall Street Journal article shared about a family-owned company in Alabama which made a radical decision when the Eaton Corporation made an offer to buy the company for \$1.7 billion. The CEO of the family business agreed on one condition, 15% of the offer (\$255 million) would be distributed to the employees in the form of bonuses to be paid over a five-year period. Though this company paid their workers a livable wage, the CEO wanted to affirm the value these workers offered in growing the company and staying with the company during difficult times. When the employees were called to meet with the CEO and another staff member, they were handed an envelope which most assumed contained a termination of employment notice due to the sale of the company. When they opened the envelope and saw a check in their name and the amount attached, they were overwhelmed with shock, disbelief, and amazement. These employees received life-changing checks which allowed them to imagine a future. All would still have their positions if they wanted to continue. Most paid off debt, invested in educating themselves or family members, secured reliable transportation, or took a long-postponed vacation. Some realized they could retire. Living generously, loving boldly changes lives for the good and reflects a God who has always been generous and loving.



## **Leadership Needs moving into 2026**

### **1-Endowment Committee Member**

**The Endowment Committee** has responsibility of oversight for and grant recommendations from our Love of Christ Endowment Fund. Over the past several years our Endowment Fund has grown to over \$127,000 and the Committee anticipates making initial grants in 2026. Fund by-laws dictate how the funds are to be disbursed, but the primary recipients are in support of mission opportunities within the ELCA and Grand Canyon Synod. The Committee tries to meet quarterly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month prior to a LoC Board Meeting. There is a need for one Endowment Committee nominee to serve a two-year term beginning 3/1/26. We are always looking for members of the Nominating Committee, who help identify and nominate members to serve on the LoC Board, Endowment Fund Committee and Audit Committee. If you are curious about any of these areas for possibly sharing your time and abilities, please contact one of the pastors or Board President Doug Price. We invite the congregation to pray for the Holy Spirit to raise the gifted people from this congregation to serve the leadership needs of this congregation.



### ***By What Authority: Rethinking Early Christian History***

***Class Resumes Wednesday, January 14 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:** 12/17-1/7 Christmas Break; 1/14 Christianity and Judaism, 1/21 Martyrs and Confessors, 1/28 Monasticism and Ascetics

## **“Who Done It” mystery & Dinner**

**January 18th in the Center of Compassion**

**Attend the Billionaires’ Club Annual Masquerade Ball and help get this soiree back on track by trading clues with your fellow guests, gathering information, and solving the crime before the masked menace gets away! Get ready for an evening of mystery, intrigue and more at this event! Come as you are. No costumes necessary!**



**\$25 Adult**

**\$50 for family of four (recommended for kids 8 thru 17)**

**Pasta/salad/bread & dessert**

**3:00 to 3:30 arrive at event**

**3:30 to 5:00 event**

**Dinner 5:00 to 6:00**

**Tickets can be purchased at our website or after services starting January 4th!**



## **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](mailto:ketts14az@gmail.com)



## **Community Garden News**

All are invited to a potluck on Sunday, January 4th at noon in Fellowship hall. Come join us and grow something beautiful. Questions contact Nancy at [Dntoll74@gmail.com](mailto:Dntoll74@gmail.com)



LOC Women's Hiking Group will start the new year by hiking Silly Mountain in Apache Junction on January 10th to find 25 gnomes that have been hidden there by AJ Parks & Rec. Will hike about 3 miles. Will meet in the church north parking lot at 7:00 and carpool to Silly Mountain. Contact ~ Pat Shaw at 480 334-9123

Gnomes can be found on the following Trails:

Brittlebush

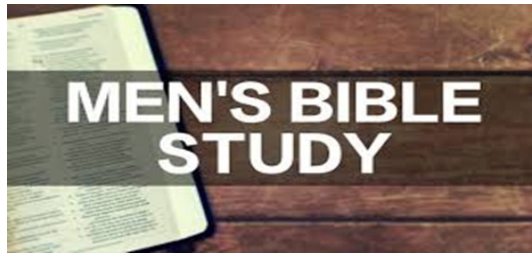
Superstition View

Jack Rabbit

Coyote Loop

Old Baldy

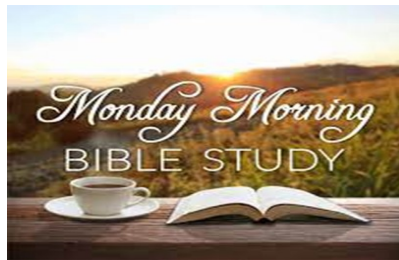




Pastor Steve is leading a weekly early morning Men's Bible Study on Mondays, 6:30-7:30AM in the Leadership Room. We are studying Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Men of all ages are welcome to participate.



Online Video introductions provided by our pastors of Sunday Lectionary readings return January 5. When they return, they may be found on Facebook, YouTube or [loveofchrist-church.net](http://loveofchrist-church.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. Prayer Share Care will resume on January 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. 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](mailto:mswiss43@gmail.com) and Ruth: [ruthleonard@icloud.com](mailto:ruthleonard@icloud.com) )



## Music Notes....

### Dear Church Family,

We are thrilled to invite you into a season filled with music, celebration, and fellowship through our Music Ministry!

### Handbell Ringers Needed

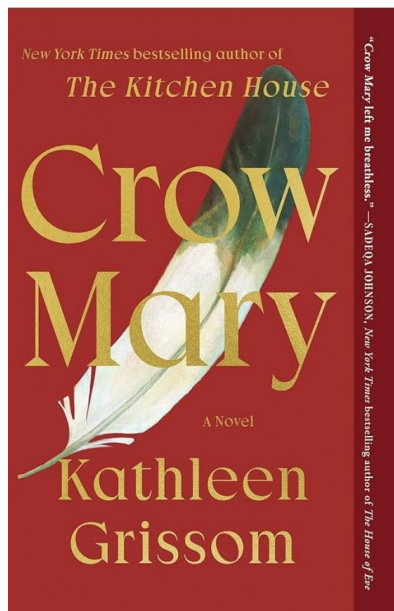
Do you read music and count beats? We would love to have you join our Handbell Choir! We are looking for ringers for monthly Sunday performances.

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](mailto: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

**The LoC Book Club will meet on Sunday, January 11, to discuss the book below:**

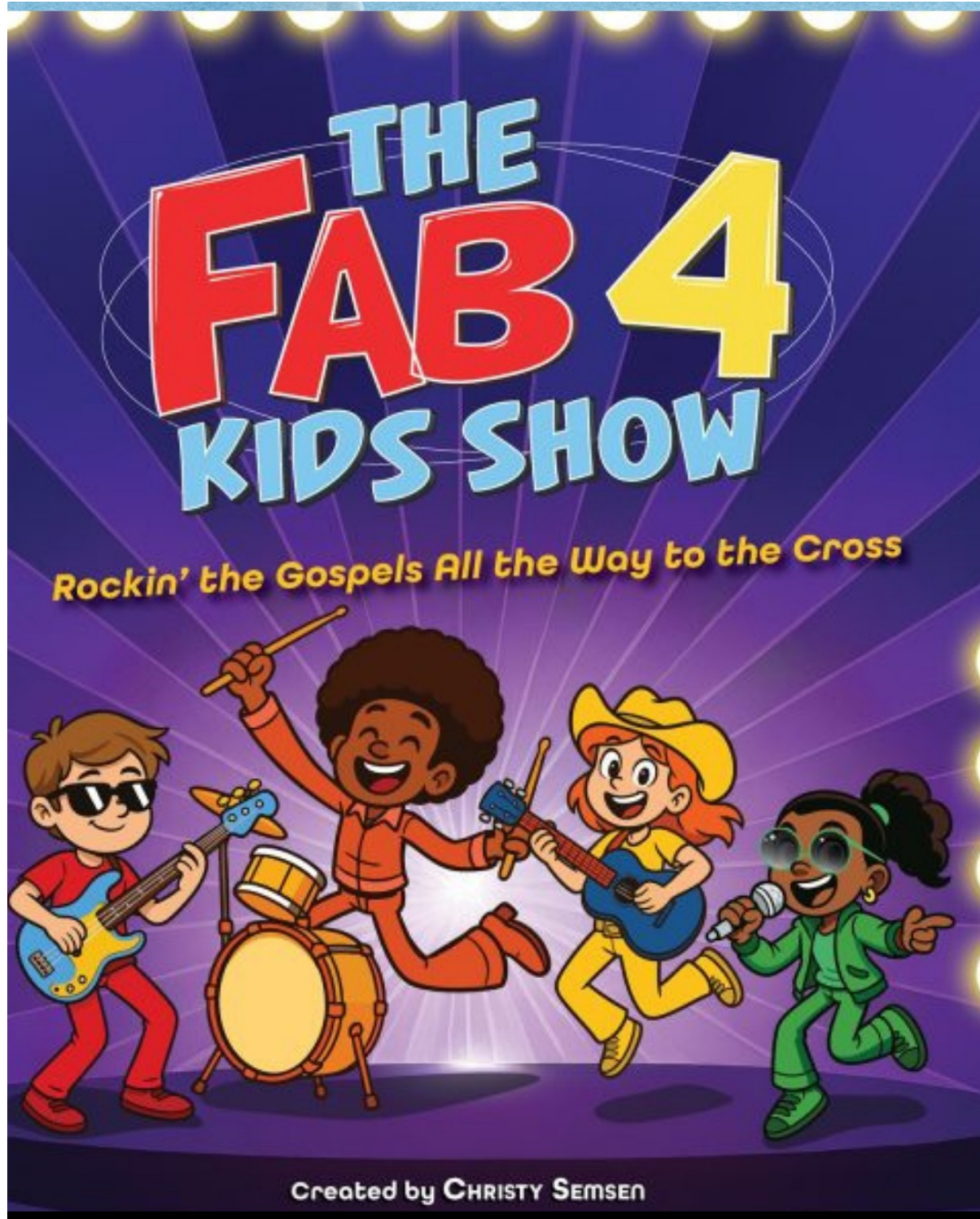


In 1872, sixteen-year-old Goes First, a Crow Native woman, marries Abe Farwell, a white fur trader. He gives her the name Mary, and they set off on the long trip to his trading post in Saskatchewan, Canada. Along the way, she finds a fast friend in a Métis named Jeannie; makes a lifelong enemy in a wolfer named Stiller; and despite learning a dark secret of Farwell's past, falls in love with her husband.

The winter trading season passes peacefully. Then, on the eve of their return to Montana, a group of drunken whiskey traders slaughters forty Nakota—despite Farwell's efforts to stop them. Mary, hiding from the hail of bullets, sees the murderers, including Stiller, take five Nakota women back to their fort. She begs Farwell to save them, and when he refuses, Mary takes two guns, creeps into the fort, and saves the women from certain death. Thus, she sets off a whirlwind of colliding cultures that brings out the worst and best in the cast of unforgettable characters and pushes the love between Farwell and Crow Mary to the breaking point. Contact Penny Day for questions at [ptdayser@gmail.com](mailto:ptdayser@gmail.com)



**Naomi Circle will meet on January 12th at 1PM in the Fellowship. All women are welcome—invite your friends!**



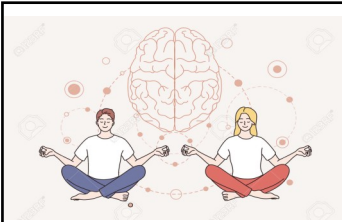
**REHEARSAL BEGINS THURSDAY, JANUARY 14**

6PM~7PM IN RM 50

**PERFORMANCE: SUNDAY, MAY 10 @ 9AM**

[WWW.LOVEOFCHRISTCHURCH.NET](http://WWW.LOVEOFCHRISTCHURCH.NET)





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](mailto: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](mailto: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 14th

Any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette at [nanette@locic.org](mailto:nanette@locic.org)



**A brief Overview for 2026 Save the Dates:**

**January 18:** Fellowship Mystery Dinner sign up online

**February 7:** Women's Retreat at LoC more information below  
and sign up online

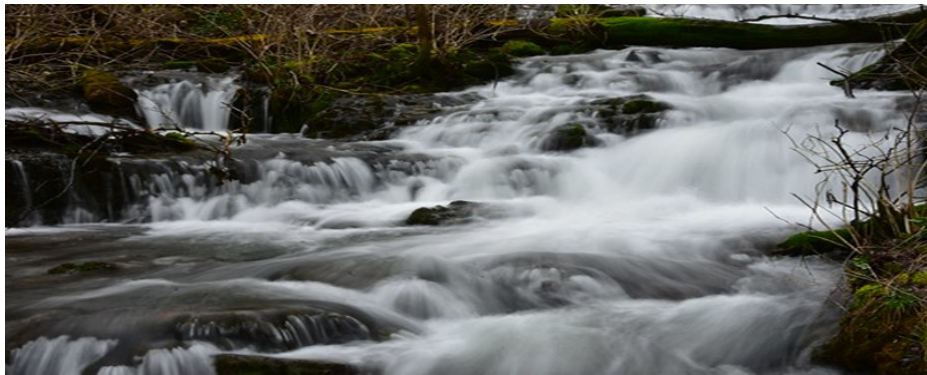
**February 23:** Lutheran Day at the Legislature

**April 12:** 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

**June 11,12,13:** Synod Assembly at LoC

**July 6-10** VBS

**Women's Retreat February 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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](mailto:norden6162@gmail.com)



Our Sunday School Ministry continues on throughout the New Year! For ages 4-2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:nanette@locic.org)



Grades 4,5, and 6 will meet in the CoC on January 11<sup>th</sup> for games, a lesson on the 10 Commandments, and an unusual snack! The fun begins at 3:30 and ends at 5:00! Please contact Laura Ontiveros for more information.

## 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!

## 🌸 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:

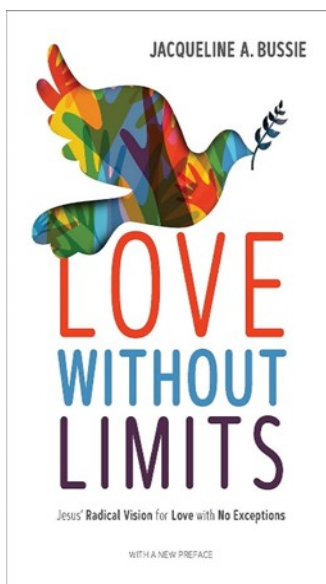
- Build meaningful, lasting friendships
- Encourage and equip moms to lead with love
- Grow the church by nurturing families in faith
- Bring mothers and their families closer to Jesus

Join Us! Location: Love of Christ

📅 When: Next meeting January 14th. 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 January 7th 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 3 for the January 7<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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.



Thank you to the over 25 volunteers who served the families of Family Promise. We had people serve by room preparation and tear down, sleeping over night, making meals, to those who made blankets and stuffed animals, and the many who hosted and greeted the families each night with a smile. It takes a lot of people to make a Family Promise week happen. This congregation is "blessed to be a blessing"!

**WOW! Word on Wednesdays will resume on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>**

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.



Sunday, January 4. 2026, 7:50 am, 9 and 10:30,

some on  & 

**Pastor Nanette Christofferson —"Grace Upon Grace"**

#### **Jeremiah 31:7-14**

For thus says the Lord:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
"Save, O Lord, your people,  
the remnant of Israel."

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor together;  
a great company, they shall return here.  
With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back;  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path where they shall not stumble,  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him  
and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock."

For the Lord has ransomed Jacob  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.  
They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.  
Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry. <sup>[b]</sup>  
I will turn their mourning into joy;  
I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.  
I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the Lord.

#### **Ephesians 1:3-14**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing  
in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ <sup>[b]</sup>  
before the foundation of the world to be holy and blame-  
less before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his  
children through Jesus Christ, according to the good  
pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that  
he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have  
redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our tres-  
passes, according to the riches of his grace that he lav-  
ished on us.

With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the  
mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he  
set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to  
gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on  
earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inher-

itance, having been destined according to the purpose of  
him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel  
and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on  
Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you  
also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of  
your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with  
the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of  
our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people,  
to the praise of his glory.

#### **John 1:1-18**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with  
God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning  
with God. All things came into being through him, and  
without him not one thing came into being. What has come  
into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all  
people. The light shines in the darkness, and the dark-  
ness did not overtake it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was  
John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that  
all might believe through him. He himself was not the light,  
but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which  
enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being  
through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to  
what was his own, and his own people did not accept  
him. But to all who received him, who believed in his  
name, he gave power to become children of God, who  
were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the  
will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we  
have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full  
of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out,  
"This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me  
ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From  
his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The  
law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth  
came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It  
is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's  
heart, who has made him known.