

Lynnewood Lines

ISSUE: 4

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER OF
LYNNEWOOD UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

November 2025

LYNNEWOOD
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Pastor Jenn's Letter to the Congregation

The most wonderful time of year is almost here. We call it Advent; a season filled with activity, anticipation and waiting! We decorate the tree, put lights on the house, bake the same cookies, clean, shop, wrap, repeat. And in between all this hurried activity, we wait. We wait in long lines. We wait for parking spots. We wait on deliveries, out of town family to arrive, and so much more. We wait and we work and we know that, no matter what, Christmas is coming. December 25 will happen whether we are ready or not.

But Advent is not just about Christmas. There is more to Advent than a countdown to Christmas. That's the strange thing about this season. Advent plunks us down in the "in between" space between what God has done in Jesus Christ and what God is still doing to build God's kingdom on Earth. Advent reminds us that because of Christ's birth, we are going somewhere as a people. We are headed for a new way of life; a time of peace, grace, love and joy. We are headed for a time in which war, poverty and hate will give way to sharing, celebrating and forgiveness. We aren't there yet, but we are on the way.

So, what do we do to prepare for Christ and his kingdom? We wait. We listen and we act. We wait in stillness, in prayer and in song. We wait - with our ears and our hearts open for Christ speaking to us about what to do while we wait. It will be different for everyone. This year we may hear that it's time to revive an old friendship or mend a broken one. We may hear that it's time to pick up an activity we used to do because our soul is thirsty without it. We may hear Christ calling us to speak up for justice, care for the poor, welcome a neighbor or practice radical kindness. For all of us, we wait, we listen and then we act. We act in faith that we are participating with God in a kingdom that is still being born among us.

We wait on so many things. But, some things simply can't wait. What are those things for you? Let's spend this season of holy waiting and preparing doing what matters most for God, for our loved ones, and for our truest, deepest selves.

May Christ's Peace fill your days,



Pastor Jenn



Worship Series - Advent and Christmas 2025



Advent is the season of waiting. As children, we waited on Santa, so we could finally unwrap our presents under the tree.

As adults, we wait for family to arrive from out of town, presents to arrive at our door step in time for wrapping, parking spots to open up and on and on.

Advent is the season of waiting, but how do we wait for God? Do we sit around doing nothing? Or do we live as if the God we wait for is already here?

In preparation for Christ's coming, we will ask together - what simply can't wait? What requires our attention and presence? Is it forgiveness and reconciliation? Is it kindness and mercy? Is it healing or praise? This Advent, we invite you to join us as we imagine, prioritize and prepare.

Maybe some things just can't wait!

November 30: Hope Can't Wait (Isaiah 2: 1-5)

December 7: Repentance Can't Wait (Matthew 3: 1-12) - Holy Communion

December 14: Joy Can't Wait (Luke 1: 39-56) - A musical celebration with Choir, Joyful Noise Choir, Ukulele band, a baptism and more!

December 21: Love Can't Wait (Matthew 1:18-25)

December 24: 4:30 PM Family Service w/Wellspring Band & candlelight
7:00 PM Traditional Lessons and Carols Service w/ Choir & candlelight

Music Notes

One of the strangest aspects of being a professional musician is the annual habit of listening to Christmas music...in June.

Because that's when I start searching for music for the Christmas season, so that I can order and prepare. I have been very excited for some new music projects we'll be bringing to worship, and you can get involved in any number of ways.

Now is a great time to try your voice in the choir! Drop by for the first hour of rehearsal starting in November, and we'll be focusing on music for the Christmas Season.

There's still time to strum with us. Ask any of the members of the Ukulele Choir who picked up their instrument for the first time recently: it's an easy and fun path to start making music right away.

Do you have an old clarinet, viola, or glockenspiel you haven't dusted off in a while? The Christmas Orchestra will prepare some readable carols and worship music.



Young voices (and those young at heart!) are still encouraged to join the Joyful Noise choir on Sundays after worship. Speak to Raeanne Passantino if interested.

Finally, the first Friday evening of the month is set aside for Wellspring Band Jam Sessions. December 1st we'll be rocking through contemporary Christian worship music and some modern settings of carols in preparation for Christmas eve. We'll have pizza, instruments to pick up and try, and a good bit of fellowship.

For all of these opportunities, look for details in the Friday email, or email me directly at Michael@lynnewood.org

I look forward to making Christmas music every year. I would be ecstatic if you come help celebrate the season with us.

Make a joyful noise, friends! Michael



Family Ministry

Thankfulness

As we venture into the Holiday season - what are you truly grateful for?

Let's be honest for a moment - the world right now can seem pretty bleak and hopeless at times especially depending on which ways we consume news and media everyday. Yes, there are a lot of bad things going on right now. Yes, there is a lot we at this church want to continue to work towards changing. Yet, I want us to ask ourselves everyday - what are you truly thankful for?

When we answer that question - the obvious answers will most frequently come to mind - a place to sleep, food to eat, friends, family, church, relationship with God, etc. I want us to be more and more thankful each day for the obvious blessings in our lives.

(I only say this because I too need to be more thankful for the obvious blessings). However, I really want us to all dig deeper and maybe more simply when answering this vital spiritual question. I am thankful for my favorite pen on

my desk. I am thankful for Chal's cute spurts of energy. I am thankful for the full body cuddles our Lab gives me. I am thankful for the crunch of a fallen leaf. I am thankful for the laughter in the church office everyday. I am thankful for the cold mornings as the seasons change.



The more I become thankful for the simple and less obvious blessings, the more I can see God in everything and everywhere. So, this upcoming Holiday season, be thankful for all of the small and big things that God has blessed us with that bring us peace, joy, and love.

Yours in laughter,

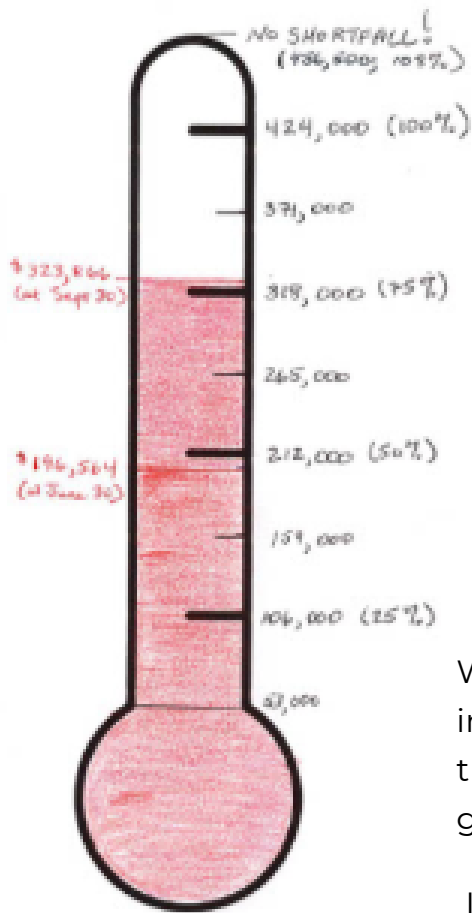
Corey

Finance Update

"I press on towards the goal..." (beginning of Philippians 3:14)

Lynnewood began 2025 with a deficit budget, meaning that our best estimate was that our expenses would exceed our receipts by approximately \$32,500. Not ideal, but we knew we had the reserves to cover that deficit, if need be.

Where are we today? Because of your generosity, our goal to end 2025 in the black, while a stretch, is still within reach. Here's some numbers:



2025 Contributions to General Fund

	1 st Qtr	2 nd Qtr	3 rd Qtr
General Giving	\$93,777	\$102,787	\$127,302
Designated Giving	\$25,917	\$46,338	\$7,979
Total	\$119,694	\$149,125	\$135,281

Note: Designated giving means giving towards a specified usage. For example, giving to Tri-Valley Haven.

While we haven't officially closed out October, if we include the unofficial giving numbers from October and the 1st Sunday in November, we are within \$101,500 of our goal of ending the year with no shortfall. This is Exciting!

I recognize that these are not normal times, given the government shutdown and the anticipated rise in health care premiums. However, if it is within your ability to give to Lynnewood to maintain its vibrant witness to the community and also to give to Alameda County Foodbank or other charities that aid those encountering tough economic times, I encourage you to do so.

Finally, a word of gratitude: if you are reading this newsletter, YOU are what makes Lynnewood a caring community of faith. We are blessed by your presence in our midst and are grateful for the gifts you bring to the Lynnewood family. Thank you!

May you all have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Donna Kirch, Finance Committee Chairperson

Committee Spotlight

Finance Committee: LUMC Endowment Fund

Since 1993, over 200 separate gifts have been made to the LUMC Endowment Fund, for a total of \$101,128.73. Wait, Lynnewood has an Endowment Fund? Yes, it does! The LUMC Endowment Fund began with a single gift of \$17,000 dedicated to music ministry. Since then, two other categories of giving have been created: Non-Specific and the Phil and Elva Cooper SSP (Sierra Service Project) Memorial.



Gifts to the Endowment Fund become a permanent source of financial support and a living memorial. The Endowment Fund is designed to provide income in perpetuity: the principal is invested, and only the income from the investment may be spent for purposes that are not part of Lynnewood's established programs funded through the annual operating budget of the church. Funds have been received from congregants who included the Endowment Fund in their estate plan or who have made one-time or ongoing contributions through the Lynnewood office or via online giving to see their gifts in action, now.

We're excited about 2026! Endowment Committee projects include new investment strategies, updating existing Endowment Fund policies, providing information on different ways to give, and new ideas for distribution. Past distributions have supported the Chancel Choir, Knitters Group, Shower of Stoles, and tech equipment to ensure those unable to attend in-person meetings can participate from home.

The Endowment Committee is very grateful to those who have included the Fund as part of their estate planning and appreciates those who make contributions throughout the year. As you plan your year-end giving, will you consider a gift to the Endowment Fund?

For more information about the LUMC Endowment Fund, please pick up a brochure in the Narthex. Or, you can reach out to the Endowment Chair, Raeanne Passantino (auntirae2@yahoo.com).

Committee Spotlight

Outreach -The Annual Giving Tree is Coming To Lynnewood!

This year, we will be continuing our years-long tradition of bringing holiday blessings to many Tri-Valley children & their families. We will be delivering gifts to the homes of approximately 50 children from Marylin Avenue Elementary in Livermore, and will also be distributing gifts to approximately 30 children identified by the Pleasanton Unified School District's social workers.

Many of the children are in need of clothes, sweaters, jackets, etc., though it is especially appreciated if they have a toy or two to open on Christmas. The signups this year will once again be online as a Google sheet. This will allow our members and guests who are still worshipping from home (or afar) an opportunity to participate as well.

Important dates...

Sunday, November 23: Online signups for gift donation and deliveries begin.

Sunday, December 7: Wrapped & labeled gifts MUST be delivered to the church by this date!

Thursday, December 11: Gifts for PUSD students will be distributed from Lynnewood.

Saturday, December 13: We will meet at 8:30am to deliver gifts to Livermore families.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to request donation pickup, please contact Betsy McClellan at eamcclellan@yahoo.com or at (925)640-1402.

Thank you so much for your continued generous support of this truly worthwhile project!!!



Committee Spotlight

Social Justice Team

The Social Justice Team has been busy since it's beginning in January of this year! We have had two community book studies, had wonderful speakers come (Stan Mitchell, Paula Stone Williams, Holly Berkeley Fletcher and PFLAG's Lainey and Tyler), encouraged participation at the No King's Rallies, Peace Corner, and Pots and Pans for Gaza and we were at the Livermore Pride event.

In our beginning month, we had about 20 people who were signed up to receive notifications of justice related events and action items. Nine months later, we have just over 100 people signed up! Of those people, around 30 are from Lynnewood and the remainder are people from our community. If you are interested in receiving this email, please let me know! You can reach me at care@heartsforchange.net.

We have a few of things we really need some help on! In Genesis, God tells us that we are to be stewards of this earth. We are to take care of it and watch over it. So, Lynnewood, let's GO GREEN! In Jane Goodall's interview in the "Famous Last Word's series on Netflix, she talks about the power of everyone doing just one thing. We hope to be sharing some ideas about that with you in the near future. AND if this is your thing, your passion, we need you to help make it happen. We are looking for our GO GREEN person. We are also going to be updating the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall!! Are you creative and love to do displays?? We would love your help!! Would you like to be our Bulletin Board Person? Also, if you have something you would like to see posted there, let me know!



Jan Villott



Small Groups



Nourish at Noon

Join Pastor Jenn at noon on the fourth Monday of the month for a time of sharing and prayer. This women's spiritual formation group reads a variety of books, poems, and articles. It's not a Bible study: the readings are a starting point for conversation, personal reflection, and discerning God's movement in our lives.



Women at the Well

Friendship and Connection
Great conversations about issues that matter, big & small.

Please join us Wednesday mornings, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary. Contacts: Jan Villott & Susan Gillaspy.



Yoga

Come join us to refresh your mind, body and spirit. Class led by instructor Joy Ellebrecht on Mondays at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall . Please bring your yoga mat and blocks. Class donations go toward UMCOR.



Prayers & Squares

Please remember whenever we have a quilt, it is not finished until you participate by tying a knot or laying your hands on a knot and saying a prayer. If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact Michele at 447-9141 / micheleohair@gmail.com, or Jane at 846-6412.



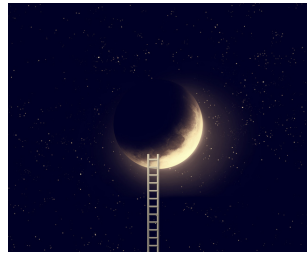
Joyful Noise Choir

The Joyful Noise Choir, for children ages PreK-6 grade, meets after Worship on Sundays from 10:40 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. We first meet in the Fellowship Hall, have a quick snack, and then sing. Please join us in making a Joyful Noise. We welcome anyone who wants to have fun while learning to sing. There's even room for those who aren't quite sure!



Dare to Question

A Monday night Bible study. Join this group every Monday at 7 P.M. to read and discuss thought-provoking books and other topics. All are welcome to join! Meetings are over Zoom. ID: 813 2116 9421 Passcode: 411564



Dream Group

Dream Group meets every third Thursday from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. It is facilitated by Lisa Rigge, who has facilitated dream groups for almost 20 years. Dream group is open to anyone who would like to explore any aspect of their dreams. Dream group is a safe and confidential place to explore and work with your dreams. Please consider joining - we'd love to have new members. For more information: Lisa Rigge (lbrigs202@gmail.com) or Claire Chow (clairechow@comcast.net).



Seasoned Citizens

Seasoned Citizens meets once monthly at a local restaurant. We typically meet the on the second Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.

This group offers a welcome break from the daily routine with a chance for togetherness and visiting with other church members you may not typically see or talk to during regular church services.

We visit a variety of restaurants with an opportunity to experience different cuisines. So if you're retired or just free for lunch you qualify to join us to relax, connect, meet new friends, and enjoy each others company!

To join, please email Carrie Cochran at carriecochran@comcast.net or text at 925-989-4548.

Contacts

Office

(925) 846-0221 / office@lynnewood.org

Care Team

Prayer Requests - If you would like the prayer chain to pray for you, send a request to Marsha Grimes: marshagrimes@att.net. Please indicate if you'd like this prayer to remain with the prayer chain or have it shared with the congregation in worship.

Visits - Linda Van Pelt: Ivanpelt3513@att.net
Raeanne Passantino: auntirae2@yahoo.com
Mary Ellen Huey: failedretirement@comcast.net

Pastoral Care and Support -

Pastor Jennifer Murdock: pastorjenn@lynnewood.org
Corey Dao-Forrester: corey@lynnewood.org

Stephen Ministers

Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life. Their commonality? A passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need. You don't have to go through the difficult times alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide you with confidential, one-to-one Christian care and support to help you through a tough time. Our Stephen Ministers are there to care. To find out more about Stephen Ministry for yourself or someone you know, please call Linda Van Pelt at 510-376-0483 or email her at Ivanpelt3513@att.net.



*As a **reconciling congregation** that dares to question, love, and serve, we offer wide welcome to all people regardless of age, sex, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, physical or mental ability, or economic or immigration status.*
