



LIFE OF FAITH
JANUARY 2026
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FROM OUR PASTOR....

Grace and peace to you from our loving God. And happy new year!

It's hard to believe I've already been here for three months. I am so grateful to have been welcomed into the daily lives of members and friends of Faith Lutheran Church and into the rhythms of life here in North Central Washington.

Three months ago, I drove across the country and arrived in wildfire smoke, more or less at the same time as two historic mega-fires; then, just a couple months later, exceptional flooding and wind damage. I promise my arrival had nothing to do with either – correlation, not causation. Those moments have given me a window into the heartbeat of this community: how you show up for one another, how you lift one another up and how you excel at making sure people are connected to what they need.



In my Christmas message, I brought forward an image from *A Charlie Brown Christmas* – that last scene where everyone stands around a small tree and sings. Unlike the Charlie Brown Christmas tree (which is tiny and fragile), the “tree” our community gathered around was a massive ponderosa pine that fell from behind the house next to the church. People got to work immediately: chopping up firewood, coordinating logistics, and making sure the damage was taken care of.



At one point, we had three separate groups sharing space at once: our property team, the Cascadia crew running their wood chipper, and our quilting group that meets every Tuesday. Everyone was in and out of the fellowship hall, warming up, getting dry, and pitching in where they could. I remember walking in and thinking, “wow – it's a party in here!” Here we are, around a tree, building community and embodying God's love in the world. That's just one image of this community of faith, and I'm so grateful to be part of it.

Here's to a new year full of peace and possibility. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Pastor Aaron

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Behold, A Child is born! The church year has begun, the calendar year is ending and I am blessed with a wonderful family, a flock of friends, a white Christmas and a strong and rather amazing church. It is the time to reflect on the past months and gaze ahead into the mists of time.



Fire, floods, hurricane force winds, blackouts and the departure from this physical world of Lisa, Mae and Doris! This year finished fiercely but in the darkness glowed new rays of light. In our darkened home it was candles and Luci lights, but so much more brightly I have seen the love of neighbors shine, the community shoulder to shoulder working together and in this year Pastor Aaron was ordained and came to live among us.

Pastor Aaron, did you know that you would be tested so during the first months of your tenure with us? I suspect not, but I for one am deeply grateful for your presence, your steadfast faith, your musical abilities, and your astonishing agility as all manners of change come pouncing around the corner. Thank You!

May the New Year bring us all Joy, Community, and just the right amount of snow.

Karl Kranz
Faith Council President



FROM OUR PRESIDING BISHOP, REV. YEHIEL CURRY....



HAVE YOU EVER HEARD A WHISPER? | CHRISTMAS 2025

In his Christmas message to the church, Bishop Curry delivers a children's sermon, describing the night when Jesus was born. "One silent night, far away in a town called Bethlehem, the stars twinkled brighter than ever. And the angels were there too. It was as if the whole sky was whispering: 'Something wonderful is happening.'"

Curry emphasizes that "whispers make us stop, listen and pay attention" and reminds us that, this Christmas, we should listen closely because "the heavens are still whispering: *Jesus is here. God loves you. Share that love with the world.*"

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/presiding-bishop/have-you-ever-heard-a-whisper-presiding-bishop-yehiel-curry-christmas-2025/>

EVENTS

Click here for weekly and January special events:

<https://mailchi.mp/flcleavenworth/happenings-at-faith-leavenworth-20251226?e=08f44d7e8b>

You will find:

- Information about Día de los Reyes (The Three Kings) celebration on January 3 Faith members Brisa Peacock and Alex Schmidt are part of the planning team for this popular community-wide celebration. Additionally, our Earth Stewardship group will be providing compostable service items for it! THANK YOU!
- Information about special Adult Forum on January 4 with Jim Martin-Schramm and Barbara Rossing.
- A message from Bishop Curry on the 10th anniversary of the Paris Climate Accord
- FLC Church Council Decmber meeting summary
- Congregational meetings January 11 and 25 after church. January 25 meeting followed by potluck luncheon.
- Community prayer concerns



**Earth Stewardship Movie Night
January 9 - 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall**

Please join us for a showing of the film "Billy and Molly: An Otter Love Story", a movie for the whole family! This is a heartwarming documentary film that explores a bond that develops between a man, Billy, and a wild Otter named Molly. The film follows the true story of Billy as he rescues and cares for a young orphaned Otter, and eventually returns the otter to the wild. In doing so, Billy finds purpose and a stronger connection to nature and the natural world. It is a beautiful, award winning film, featuring impressive cinematography and emotional storytelling, produced by National Geographic and Silverback Films.

Popcorn and drinks provided!

FROM BISHOP MEGGAN MANLOVE, DECEMBER 9, 2025.....



Dear Friends in Christ,

I am writing you with a very heavy heart this morning. Vice President Lisa Therrell's husband Rich let me know around 10:45 am that she died early this morning. For those of you have followed Lisa on Caring Bridge, you know that she had her first chemotherapy in September 2024 and that these past few weeks have included a trip to Hawaii with Rich followed by hospitalization and serious health complications.

Lisa loved the triune God we worship, the larger ELCA, her congregation of Faith Lutheran, Leavenworth, this synod, and serving as our Vice President. About six months into our terms, Lisa and I started checking in by phone every two weeks. Through those phone calls, synod council meetings, Fall Convocations, and the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Lisa became a beloved colleague and a true friend.

My grief is big this morning as we collectively begin to grieve Lisa's death. And yet, in the season of waiting for Jesus' birth and his coming again in the fullness of time, I also carry with me Advent hope. Lisa glimpsed the reign of God coming near and wanted to be part of the inbreaking of God's abundant love and mercy for all creation. I am so grateful to have witnessed her deep care and commitment and joy.

We will inform you about funeral details as plans are made. For now, let us pray for Rich, all of Lisa's friends and family, and our synod:

*Eternal God, you gave Lisa a new birth in baptism
and entrusted her to us to know and to love.*

*As we thank you for the life we shared,
help us now to release her to your mighty keeping.*

Bring us all to that day

*when we shall stand in your presence with all your saints in light eternal;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.*

Amen.

Peace,

Bishop Meggan Manlove



Faith member Barbara Rossing was invited by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to be their representative at the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Belém, Brazil in November.

Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action: Reflections from Belem, Brazil

By Barbara Rossing

My week at the United Nations climate negotiations in Belem Brazil, in the Amazon region, filled me with gratitude, urgency, and a deepened commitment to climate justice action.

This year marked ten years since the signing of the Paris Agreement, the 2015 agreement that committed all nations, including the U.S., to limit global warming to well below 2°Celsius (C) while also pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

Much has happened in the ten years since the Paris Accords, but much more needs to happen. Unfortunately, President Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Accords his first day in office, but thankfully there were still U.S. voices present at the conference -- mayors, governors, elected leaders, including the organization *We Are Still In* (<https://www.wearestillin.com/>) as well as scientists, business leaders, environmental organizers, activists, faith leaders. Negotiations among all the nations' official delegations set important policy for implementing the Paris Accords.

I am still reading and reflecting on the Belem meeting accomplishments and how I can draw on this experience. A few impressions:

- It was really hot and humid! A good reminder that extreme heat kills more people than any other aspect of global warming.
- I was inspired by the Indigenous communities, many of whom had traveled for days by canoe. They come to Belem to lobby for recognition of Indigenous lands and rights, and protection of the Amazon rainforest—truly the lungs of our planet. Indigenous communities succeeded in getting



limited protections for forests into the final agreement, including a mechanism “Tropical Forests Forever Facility.”

- The People’s Climate March with 30,000 to 70,000 people (estimates vary) was glorious! Chants, songs, a giant inflatable Earth, puppets of world leaders; Indigenous communities in traditional face paint; huge signs calling on the world to stand up to fossil fuel corporations; imaginative skits and stunts. Young people participated in large numbers.
- I was inspired by faith communities’ presence in the Climate March and the negotiations, including the Lutheran World Federation and many others. Anglicans carried placards with photos of numerous environmental leaders who had been killed defending the Amazon. The next day, at a Sunday worship service at the Anglican cathedral, those placards were part of the procession.



I spoke on a panel with faith leaders from Bread for the World, Catholic Relief Services, and other organizations, about how U.S. Faith communities can carry forward the Paris commitments. Trigg Talley, a U.S. negotiator during the Biden administration and leader of *We Are Still In*, underscored that faith communities play an important ethical role in climate negotiations.

I am most excited about working on the [World Council of Churches Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action](#), which runs from 2025 through 2034. I believe this Decade can provide a vital occasion to expand the ELCA's climate work. The WCC North American Vice President Rev. Angelique Walker-Smith

introduced this Decade to us in the worship service, starting about minute 1.16.45 in this recording: <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/tapiri-closing-service-brings-climate-justice-decade-to-cop30>. As she says "This decade is about a spiritual journey, it's about prophetic witness, and practical actions, and living witness."

I plan to bring a resolution to the Faith Lutheran Church annual meeting from Lutherans Restoring Creation, asking our congregation to encourage our synod and ELCA to fully participate in this WCC Decade of Climate Justice Action.

Stay tuned!



FROM LUTHERANS RESTORING CREATION...

Greetings Faith Lutheran,

Gabrielle from Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC) here, expressing gratitude for your kind support over the past year. Last year, you generously gave out of your endowment fund to support my role as the Outreach Coordinator at LRC.



On an (in-person!) site visit this spring to a partner

On a personal note, I'm feeling especially thankful for you not just as a financial sponsor– but a community that fed me holistically. During a family emergency this March, it brought me great comfort to take communion with you in Leavenworth! It was a beautiful thing to break bread with you, knowing our connection was not simply economic, but deeply relational. That being said, your financial support has gone a long way this year. I wanted to highlight two Spirit-full projects that grew out the extra capacity we gained.

First, the Young Adult Climate Justice Alliance launched in 2025! This is collaboration between LRC and ELCA Young Adults, giving young adults the opportunity to connect their faith with their deep call to climate justice. As the demographic in our world who is going to feel the depth of our changing global climate, we are often asked to be the champions of climate justice, but not always given the tools to do so. Hearing this frustration repeated from young adults in my network, I wanted to make a place for young adults, by young adults, to affect change intergenerationally. So far, we've gathered over 70 young adults to advocate with our elected officials, move our money from fossil fuels and be in virtual community.

This summer, I found myself staring into the smoke-filled skies, trying to fight off dread about the climate impacts I was seeing (and literally breathing in) by trying to write a grant for climate resilience hubs. I imagined churches as places of physical refuge in disaster, distributing food and care, as well as offering spiritual care to the trauma of disaster, but the way forward seemed unclear. As I shared my obstacles with a fellow ministry/organizing friend, we realized that we were 1) both working on the same grant application and 2) both applying to create church climate resiliency hubs. As we discussed with amazement our complimentary strengths, our next step became obvious: we needed to join forces for our projects! Out of that coincidence– or Spirit-propelled moment– came the Congregations Engaging Disaster and Resilience (CEDAR) project. Already, the advisory team for CEDAR has met to illuminate next steps.

The sprouting seeds of these projects have already brought me joy and hope, and I hope it does for you as well. Thank you so much for helping plant them.

Yours in grief, growth and hope,

Gabrielle

Outreach Coordinator for Lutherans Restoring Creation



The CEDAR team advisory meeting (on my property!)

Immigration/Race Justice Group (I/RJG)

Summary, December 15th, 2025 in a private home

Present: All seven of our members were present.

Mutual Support: Another time of building trust, supporting one another, and holding confidences during our meal together.

1. Administration/Education:

1. A financial summary was requested for 2025: A detailed accounting spread sheet was presented. Donations: \$10,421 (from individuals, grants, and church endowments). Distributions: \$11,063.
2. Current at CVB balance was reviewed and discussed.
3. Dia de los Reyes event received \$150 from the I/RJG who will have an info table at the Festhalle offering "Family Safety and Security" packets assembled by a member's group of Cascade H.S. students in their Unidos. Well over 600 people attended last year. Check the Wenatchee River Institute's website for more details. <https://wenatcheeriverinstitute.org/event-calendar.html/event/2026/01/03/d-a-de-los-reyes-celebration/544100>
4. City of Lwth has extended to us a \$3,750 grant for 2026. The group spent much time discussing its conditions and stipulations. Monies will only be given to the I/RJG based on approved receipts and that these need to be from events/persons/activities within the city limits. Also the city expressed a preference for assistance to groups rather than individuals. After reviewing our distributions in '25, we will need to adjust how we conduct/record our direct support in the future to make use of this grant.
5. Cascade United Universalist Fellowship (E. Wenatchee) inquired last month regarding an anti-racism training and would like to host a "Building Bridges of Understanding" workshop. Alex will meet with their pastor again in January to consider the possibilities. <https://sites.google.com/view/buildingbridges>

2. Direct Support:

1. The community member family we assisted w/purchasing tickets to Mexico to be with their deported father over the holidays have arrived safely. We were able to contribute \$1,400. Four individuals from. Faith Lutheran gave \$724.
2. Driver's Ed Applications: The group extended \$400 to a Cascade H.S. student for her Driver's Ed registration. She was complimented on her fine job of filling out the revised application.
3. Two of our group will continue checking on two of our recently assisted community members to determine how we might be able to continue accompanying them. One has returned to WVC with the hope of going to medical school. The other family continues living in an apartment with 9 inhabitants.

3. Advocacy:

1. \$100 donation has been sent to WA Immigrant and Solidarity Network (WAISN <https://waisn.org>) as part of our annual renewal.
2. Continue supporting financially as you are able WAISIN and Global Refuge (formally Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services) <https://www.globalrefuge.org>. Both are trusted non-profits serving and advocating for immigrant justice

Next meetings: Third Monday of each month: January 19th and Feb. 16th, at 6 p.m. w/dinner. Call Alex for details: 509.548.7012.



Grief Groups in Wenatchee: Two new grief groups are beginning in Wenatchee in January and February. If you or someone you know are interested, let Pastor Aaron know and he can connect you!



WENATCHEE
VALLEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Our local symphony is outstanding! says Faith member David Nierman.

David reminds us that the Wenatchee Valley Symphony Orchestra offers special broadcasts of concerts on NCW Life. The next opportunity is a performance of *Star Wars Saga*, January 1 at 12:00 pm and 10:30 pm.

Thank you, David for highlighting this opportunity!



Faith Lutheran has received multiple \$250 grants through Trivent Action Teams over the years. In the past, these grants have supported our Little Free Pantry and family game nights.

Thrivent launched the Action Teams program 11 years ago and to date has led 1.2 million projects, engaging more than 16 million volunteers and raised more than \$1.9 billion to support causes they care about. Thank you, Thrivent! Learn more at:

<https://www.thrivent.com/insights/magazine/winter-2024/celebrating-10-years-of-thrivent-action-teams>

Our LIFE OF FAITH



Making swags on Advent I. Thank you Heather and Pat for providing conifer varieties for all of us to create swags to adorn our homes.

Homemade communion bread contributed by Pastor Cindy Carroll.

Thank you, Cindy!



Thanks to Dawn and Karl Kranz for leading the clean up process after recent storms



Wednesday evening Advent worship by candlelight during power outage



Decorating cookies after church. Thank you Ellen, Mara and Adam for making this happen! Take note of the large-screen TV in background. Thank you Church Council!



*Christmas Eve worship
Christmas Day at Mountain Meadows*





Mission Statement

As disciples in Christ, we are called to incarnate the gracious, healing and reconciling presence of God through sacramental worship, congregational nurture and ministries of peace, mercy and justice for all Creation.

Vision Statement

Living in God’s amazing grace, we envision Faith Lutheran Church as a diverse beacon of hope, healing and reconciliation in a broken world.

Faith Lutheran Church is a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) congregation



We provide a safe and healing environment where people of any race, sexual orientation, gender identity, social or economic status can be nourished in their journey of faith.

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Thanks to all who contributed articles and general interest information for this newsletter! Please forward contributions to Mary Steeber at mary.steeber@gmail.com by January 24 or the February issue.