

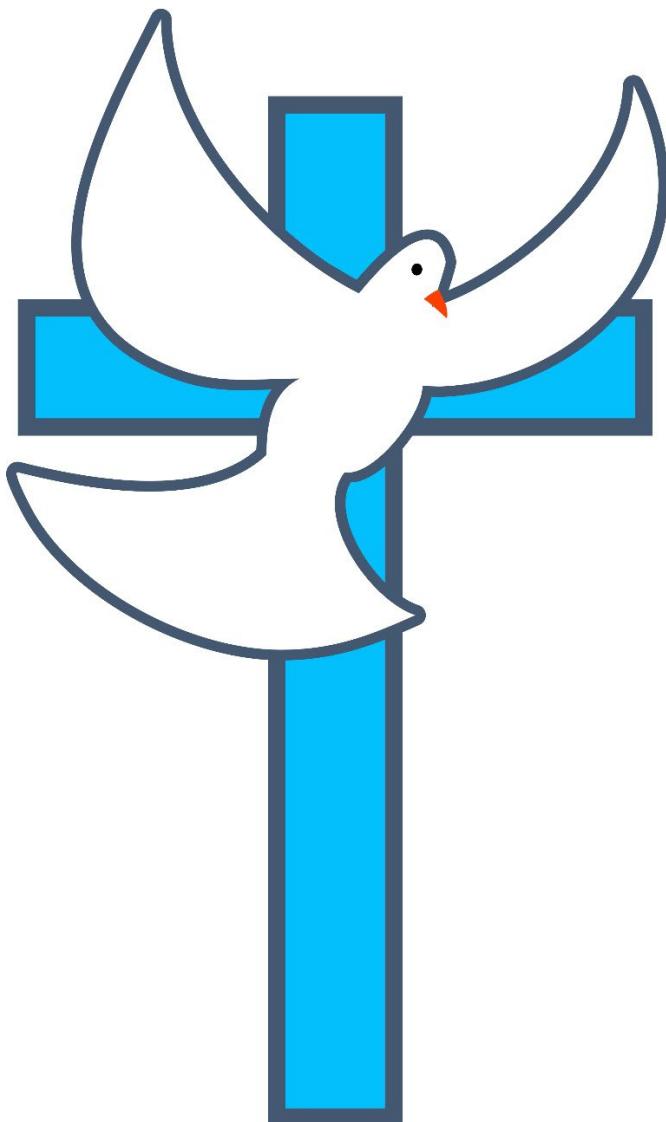
Lutheran Church By The Lake



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Sharing the GOOD NEWS
December 2025



Pastor's Corner

December 2025

Ragebait, Advent, and the Peace of Christ

We have just crossed the threshold of Advent—the season of waiting, preparing, and hoping. Christmas lies just over the horizon, its light already beginning to glow as we anticipate and remember God made flesh for the salvation of the world. A new year also waits just ahead, full of possibilities we can't yet see—joys and celebrations, yes, but also unknown sorrows, struggles, griefs, and guilts.

And into all of that, we live in a time when rage is big business.

Not long ago I read an article about a new marketing strategy that has become so common it has its own name: **"ragebait."** Companies are now deliberately trying to make us mad, offended, or disgusted because they've learned that outrage keeps us watching, clicking, commenting, and sharing. Controversial AI gadgets, provocative billboards, edgy clothing ads, and even tongue-in-cheek "cheating tools" are designed less to help us and more to get us stirred up enough that we can't look away. The product almost doesn't matter; the reaction does.

In other words, a lot of what we see—especially online—is not an accident. It is crafted, tested, and refined for one purpose: to grab our attention by agitating our hearts.

That constant agitation takes a toll. It frays relationships. It heightens anxiety. It makes it harder to trust our neighbors and easier to assume the worst. And for those of us who follow Jesus, it can quietly shape our souls in ways that run directly against the grain of the gospel. Scripture is blunt about this:

"...your anger does not produce God's righteousness."
(James 1:20)

By contrast, **the life we have in Christ pulls us out of a world ruled by rage and calls us into a kingdom marked by peace, forgiveness, kindness, mercy, hope, grace, compassion, and love.** We are not air-dropped out of the world—we still live right in the middle of its noise, temptations, and manipulations—but we belong to a different Lord, and we are formed by a different story.

Think of how Paul describes life in the Spirit:

"By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22–23)

That list is everything the rage-economy cannot sell and does not value. You can't monetize gentleness. You don't trend by being patient. Peace rarely "goes viral." And yet these are the very gifts the Holy Spirit grows in us through the gospel.

At Christmas we hear again that

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."
(John 1:5)

The darkness John speaks of is not just ignorance; it is the whole tangled mess of sin's chaos: lies, manipulation, fear, and yes, rage. God does not sit safely beyond that darkness. In Jesus, God **steps into it**—into our history, our flesh, our headlines, and our scrolls—bringing a light the darkness cannot extinguish.

And the angels' song over Bethlehem still speaks into our divided age:
"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"
(Luke 2:14)

Notice the order: **glory to God, peace on earth.** The more we seek our own glory—our own rightness, our own victory over "them"—the more we feed the fires of outrage. The more we turn our hearts toward God's glory—toward the crucified and risen Christ—the more we are freed for peace with our neighbor.

Our Lutheran confessions talk about this in a different key. They remind us that we are justified *by grace alone through faith alone, for Christ's sake alone*—not by winning arguments, not by being more outraged than the next person, and certainly not by our own righteousness. Because we are already made right with God in Christ, we are **set free** to love and serve our neighbor without fear of losing our place. Grace doesn't just wipe our slate clean; it re-orient our whole life away from self-justification and toward merciful, patient, self-giving love. So what does that mean in a month when the culture around us is both festive and furious? A few Advent invitations:

- **Pay attention to what is shaping your heart.**

If a steady diet of news, social media, or commercials leaves you angrier, more suspicious, or more contemptuous of other people, that is a warning light on the dashboard of your soul. The goal of many messages you see is not your well-being; it is your engagement.

- **Let worship interrupt the rage cycle.**

In worship we do something the algorithms cannot script. We confess our sin; we hear God's absolution. We listen to God's Word rather than to the loudest voice in the feed. We receive Christ's body and blood as a gift for *you*—for forgiveness, healing, and wholeness. We are reminded that our true identity is "beloved child of God," not "outraged consumer."

Practice a different speech.

Paul urges the church:

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt..." (*Colossians 4:6*)

In a world trained to snap, mock, and pile on, even simple kindness is a counter-cultural act of discipleship. Slowing down, listening carefully, and answering gently are not signs of weakness; they are signs of the Spirit's strength.

Trust the steady faithfulness of God more than the volatility of the moment.

In Christ, God has already acted decisively for our salvation. The Augsburg Confession says that through faith in Christ "we receive forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God." That promise holds when the world feels calm and when it feels like it is coming apart at the seams.

Our hope and peace are anchored in the cross and empty tomb, not in the outrage of the day. I don't believe the world is simply "bad." It is the good creation God called into being and declared "very good." It is also the world that "God so loved...that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). The problem is not the world as such, but the sinful powers—old and new—that twist God's good gifts. Ragebait is just one modern example of how sin exploits our fears and anger.

But the good news is this: **God's truth still shines into sin's chaos. Christ's love still overcomes rage.** The One whose birth we celebrate at Christmas grew up to stretch out his arms on the cross for a world that yelled, mocked, and rejected him—and from that cross he prayed, "Father, forgive them."

This Advent and Christmas, my prayer for you—and for our congregation—is that we would be a people who live from that forgiveness. A people who know they are loved, who breathe more slowly, who listen more deeply, who respond more gently. A people who, by the grace of God, look just a little less like the rage-soaked world around us and a little more like Jesus.

May the peace of Christ, which “surpasses all understanding,” guard your hearts and your minds in this season and in the year to come. (*Philippians 4:7*)

In the hope of the newborn King,
Pastor Greg

Celebrating Our Blessings, Embracing Our Future

An Message from Sherri Kumle, Council President of Lutheran Church By The Lake (*presented initially at the Nov. 2025 Annual Meeting*)

At the congregational Annual Meeting in November, I shared that I am an advocate for showing a spirit of gratitude—for being grateful for all that God has done through us this past year and inspired by the goodness that fills this congregation. I hope that, as I reiterate a few highlights, you'll feel as blessed and hopeful as I do.

Reflecting on This Year's Blessings

We have so much to celebrate. Together, we've reached out and made a difference in the McCormick Community. Whether it was a helping hand, a kind word, or a shared meal, your generosity has touched lives. Our Lutheran Women in Mission led a wonderful Yard Sale—thanks to their dedication and your donations, we not only raised funds but also built connections with our neighbors. The Lutheran Men in Mission's Golf Tournament brought laughter, fellowship, and resources for our outreach. And through our LCBTL Endowment, we extended God's love even further, awarding grants to local non-profits making a real impact. Every step, every dollar, every prayer mattered and made a difference.

Celebrating Our Enthusiasm and Outreach

I am especially grateful for the cheerful enthusiasm of our members during the Golf Cart Blitz. So many of you took to the streets, delivering flyers and warm invitations. Because of your efforts, we welcomed many new faces into our worship—some who hadn't heard about us before. That simple act of reaching out brought God's Word to new hearts. The good news is, we're doing it again soon! The next Blitz will help us spread the word about our 2025 Advent and Christmas events. I invite each of you to join this joyful effort—let's fill our sanctuary with guests and God's love.

Growing in Stewardship and Connection

This year also marked important progress behind the scenes. We worked hard to strengthen our internal controls, making sure that every gift is managed with care and transparency. I'm excited to share that we've implemented new software to help us steward our resources and stay better connected as members. It's a tool that will help us serve you—and our mission—even more effectively in the days ahead.

Giving Thanks for Shepherding Care

One of the brightest blessings has been our new Shepherding Care Ministry. Through phone calls, visits, home communion, heartfelt prayers, and caring cards, this team has made sure no one is forgotten or alone. If you have received a card, a call or visit, or felt the power of prayer from our prayer warriors, you know the comfort and hope it brings. If you have served as a Shepherd or team member, thank you—your kindness is a living example of Christ's love.

Looking Ahead with Hope and Vision

As we look to the future, my heart is full of hope as we partner with Pastor Greg in dreaming of new ways we can share God's Word—of ministries yet to be born, of partnerships waiting to be formed, of hearts longing to be reached. With your energy and faith, there is no limit to what we can do together. We are a thriving, forward-looking congregation, and I am grateful beyond words to serve with you.

Closing Thanks and Encouragement

Thank you, each and every one of you, for your prayers, your presence, your service, and your gifts. Thank you for making Lutheran Church By The Lake the warm and welcoming community it is today. I am excited for what's ahead—let's keep shining God's light, together.

May God bless you, may God bless our church, and may our next year be filled with even greater joy, service, and love. Amen.



Emergency Preparedness Announcement

The Savannah Lakes Disaster Planning Task Force is proud to announce a major advancement in the community's emergency preparedness. The American Red Cross has granted their official certification to a shelter located at the Lutheran Church By The Lake, creating a vital resource for residents throughout the county, including those living in Savannah Lakes, during times of crisis.

Shelter Location and Purpose

The certified shelter is located at 100 Twelve Oaks Dr, McCormick, SC. This facility serves as a safe haven for residents whose homes become uninhabitable due to emergencies or disasters. It also provides a dependable place for individuals and families to seek safety and obtain essential support when needed.

Services and Amenities

- Temporary housing for individuals and families who are displaced from their homes
- Charging stations for electronic devices to help maintain communication
- Basic living essentials to meet daily needs during displacement provided by the Red Cross
- Wi-Fi access, allowing residents to stay informed and connected

Next Steps and Additional Information

This shelter's certification represents the first step in improving the safety and resilience of the Savannah Lakes community. Additional buildout of the facility to support the needs of everyone is ongoing. Obtaining and installing a generator through grants is our top priority. Details about additional amenities will be shared as they come online.

Acknowledgments

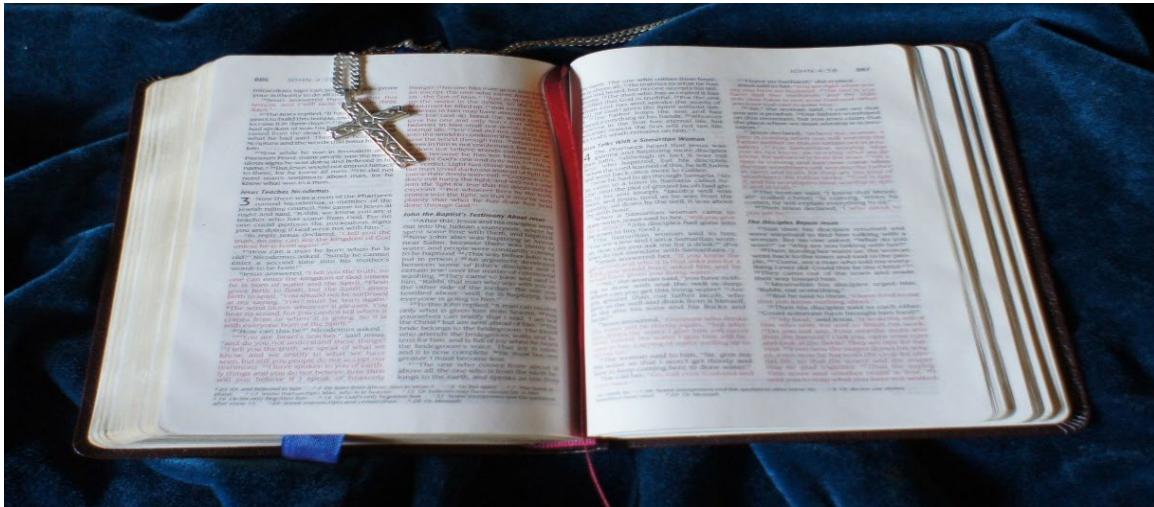
We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who worked tirelessly to make this accomplishment possible, including The American Red Cross, Pastor Greg and his staff, SLV leadership, and the SLV Disaster Planning Task Force.

In service,

SLV Disaster Planning Task Force

service@slv-sc.com

BIBLE STUDY NEWS



Fall Bible Study

Bible Study: Jim Kinsler in the Ark @ 10:00 A.M. will be presenting "Walking in Faith Along the Appalachian Trail" on 1/6, 1/13, 1/20, 1/27, 2/3, 2/10, & 2/17.

Your Guide For Requesting Prayers, Visits, Calls, Home Communion, or Cards at LCBTL



What Is Shepherding Care?

Shepherding Care is a ministry at Lutheran Church By The Lake that combines the **Pastoral Care** of Pastor Greg combined with lay leaders of the congregation who have volunteered to assist him by providing **Coordination of Requests**, (*Sherri Kumle*) and Caring Leadership **in Eucharistic Visits and Calls** (*Candy Zimmerman*), **Prayers** (*Julie Crane*), **and Cards** (*Denise Utto*).

Should I Connect with Shepherding Care?

Everyone in the congregation is invited to connect with Shepherding Care for themselves, a loved one, or in some cases neighbors and friends if there is a need for prayer. Although prayer is always available for all those in need, Calls, visits, and cards are primarily for the people of Lutheran Church By The Lake.

Why Not Just Make a Request in Person to Pastor or A Lay Leader?

Mentioning needs is always appropriate; however, to ensure that the request is recorded and that your wishes are fulfilled, making a request through Shepherding Care is also recommended.

How Do I Connect?

- Email Shepherding Care anytime using a secure email address that only Pastor and the Shepherding Care Lay Leaders will see: LCBTLshepherdingcare@gmail.com
 - Or
- Call the church office at **864-391-3000** and ask for a specific request to be sent to Shepherding Care.
 - Or
- Go to the blue covered table in the Narthex and **fill out a request form** that may be placed in the GOLD BOX for a Shepherding Care Leader to pick up and respond to. (For your convenience, the **QR CODE** on the table goes directly to LCBTLshepherdingcare@gmail.com).
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What Can I Do ANYTIME To Make a Request?

- You may add a name (first name only) to the RED Intercessory Prayer Book
- You may fill out and drop a Request Form in the Gold Box for any of the three caring ministries
- You may place a name in the Prayer Vessel to be read on Sunday Morning



Deadline for the January Newsletter
is December 19th



3rd
Jo Graziano
Peggy Thomas

4th
Joann McEvoy

5th
Craig Granger

6th
Bev Sautter

7th
Julienne Leibrandt

11th
Barbara Hinkel
Christie Ziebell

15th
Cathy Clark

16th
Mauren Mooney

18th
Nena De Arment

19th
Martha Kinsler

23rd
Amanda Flom
Marc Metayer
Nancy Spinner

25th
Dusty Rhodes

27th
Sandy Gresham

28th
Rob Leibrandt



1st
Bob and Vickie Leonard

16th
Pat and Bruce Bryant

18th
Rev Chris and Jane Craig-Jones
David and Mary Markle

21st
Gloria and Bill Bramble???

26th
Betsy and Russ Griffeth

30th
Julie and Scott Crane



DECEMBER SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Communion Assistants 9:00 AM

7th Kelly and Lynette Jordan
14th Gloria Bramble and Linda McCullough
21st Raylene Emerich and Jeanne Thayer
24th 4 PM Ann and Jim Snyder
28th Gloria Bramble and Chuck Gresham

Communion Assistants 10:30 AM

7th Bill and Margo Kite
14th Candy Zimmerman & Lynn Flom
21st Donna Irmis and Judy Greiger
24th 7 PM Sherri Kumle and Lynn Flom
28th Ann and Jim Snyder

Lectors 9:00 am

7th Lea Shaw
14th Roseanne Selby
21st Lea Shaw
24th 4 PM Barbara Hinkle
28th Joanna Feloni

Lectors 10:30 am

7th Eric Randall
14th Linda Wakefield
21st Barbara Hinkel
24th 7 PM Joanna Feloni
28th Ann Snyder

Ushers 9:00 am

7th Kelly and Lynette Jordan
14th Dick and Roseanna Selby
21st Raylene Emerich and Robin Bush
24th Ann and Jim Snyder
28th Jeanne Thayer and Gloria Bramble

Ushers 10:30 am

7th Candy & Mike Zimmerman
14th Ann and Jim Snyder
21st Lynn and David Flom
24th 7 PM Bill and Sherry Kumle
28th Candy & Mike Zimmerman

December Altar Flowers

7th Chancel Choir
14th Marty Gunzanhauser
21st Phil and Heather McNally
28th Peggy and Mike Thomas
28th Ron and Diane Price
28th Julianne and Rob Leibrandt

Altar Guild

Lorna Soule, Nena DeArment, Donna Irmis, Maureen Mooney

CHURCH COUNCIL



OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

President	Sherri Kumle
Vice President	Cherlyn Johnson
Secretary	Julienne Leibbrandt
Treasurer	Paul Klein

COUNCIL MEMBERS

President	Sherri Kumle
Vice President	Cherlyn Johnson
Secretary	Julienne Leibbrandt
Treasurer	Paul Klein
Financial Secretary	Eileen Hurlbut
Discipleship of Education	Bill Kite
Discipleship of Evangelism	
Fellowship Leader	Judy Greiger
Servant Leadership	Jeanne Thayer
Stewardship of Life	Charlie Clark
Stewardship of Property	Bill Kumle
Stewardship of Technology	Doug Bauer
Worship Leader	Bill Hutchinson

ORGANIZATION OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Endowment	Candy Zimmerman
	Elaine Beggs Treasurer
	Carol Hornung Secretary
LMM	Bill Kumle and Fred Frederickson
	Co-Chairs
	Doug Chalifour Treasurer
	Paul Klein Quartermaster
LWM	Karen Spilker, Christie Ziebelle
	Co-Chairs
	Debbie Frederickson Vice President
	Karen Divita Secretary
	Susan Mazur Treasurer

LUTHERAN CHURCH BY THE LAKE MISSION STATEMENT

We are called as a community of faith to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission to our neighbors and the world.