

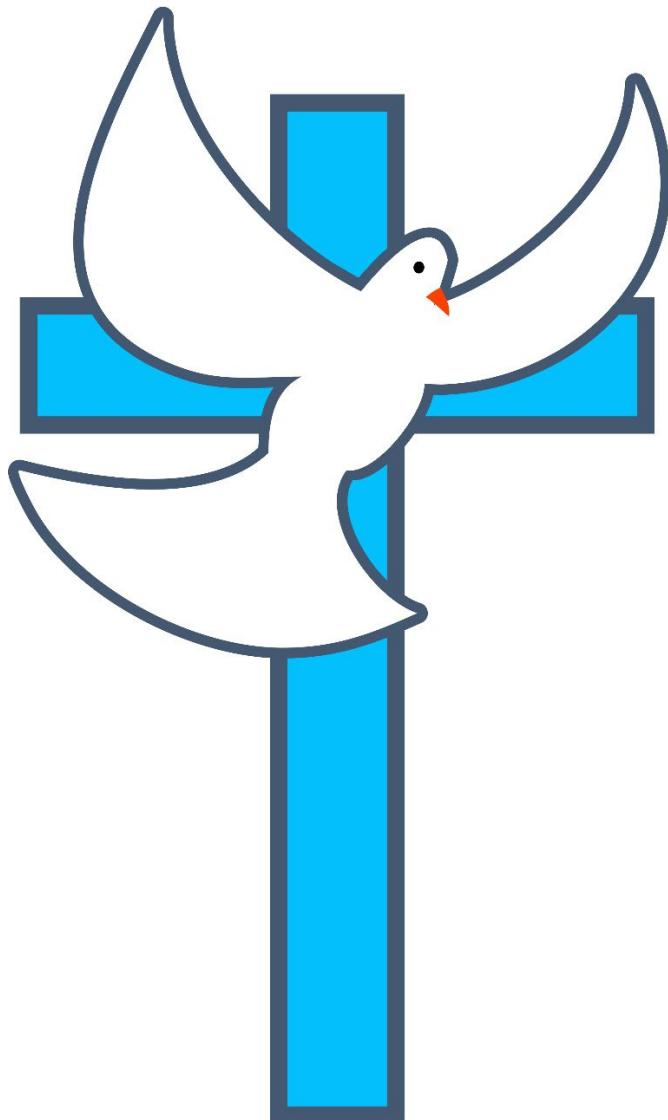
Lutheran Church By The Lake



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Sharing the GOOD NEWS
January 2026



Pastor's Corner

January 2026

New Year. New Opportunities. New Creation.

The turning of the calendar has a way of making us take stock. Some of us feel energized—fresh pages, fresh plans, fresh motivation. Others feel the ache of what didn’t get done, what didn’t change, what couldn’t be fixed. And for many, January is a mixed bag: hope and hesitation, expectation and exhaustion, all living in the same heart.

So I want to offer a word that is deeper than “do better” and sturdier than a New Year’s resolution:

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NRSVue)

That verse doesn’t describe a minor upgrade. It announces a *new reality*. In Christ, God doesn’t merely encourage us to try harder—God begins to *re-make us*. And that matters, because many of us already know this: some things cannot be repaired by willpower. Some burdens don’t lift because we finally “got our act together.” Some fear doesn’t disappear because we repeated a phrase to ourselves.

But the gospel is not the story of what we can accomplish with enough effort. The gospel is the story of what God does in Jesus—creating life where we had none, hope where we had little, and love where we were running dry.

That’s why our congregational Purpose is more than a slogan. It’s a confession of faith:

Purpose: “Renewed in Jesus, released for love.”

Renewed. Not just improved. Not just polished. Renewed—because Jesus doesn’t patch us up and send us back out unchanged. He forgives. He heals. He re-centers. He reshapes. He keeps working on us, patiently, persistently, tenderly—making us more fully alive.

And then—released. Which means the gospel does something powerful: it loosens what has clenched our lives. Fear. Guilt. Old stories we’ve told ourselves for decades. The pressure to prove ourselves. The ache of being unseen. The worry that we’ll never belong. In Christ, we are released—not into laziness, but into freedom.

And freedom has a direction: **for love**. Not love as a vague feeling, but love with hands and feet. Love that listens. Love that welcomes. Love that shows up. Love that offers practical care, honest friendship, and steady prayer.

From that Purpose flows our Mission:

Mission: “Gather, Grow, Go: Sharing Jesus’ Love with All.”

In January, this rhythm matters more than ever.

- **Gather:** We come together because worship is not a religious chore—it's where God does His work on us. Word and Sacrament aren't symbolic pep talks. They are God's living gifts that meet real people in real life.
- **Grow:** Not everyone grows the same way or at the same pace. But we do grow—through study, service, fellowship, prayer, and the everyday shaping of the Spirit. Growth often looks like small steps: a new habit of prayer, a deeper patience, a softened resentment, a renewed courage to serve.
- **Go:** We don't gather just to stay comfortable. We go because Jesus sends us—especially into the very places where people are quietly longing for connection, belonging, purpose, and hope. And yes, that includes right here in **Savannah Lakes Village** and beyond.

And it's all held within our Vision:

Vision: “Community, Renewed by Grace, Alive in Jesus’ Hope.”

Hope is not denial. Hope doesn't pretend life is easy. Christian hope is grounded in what Jesus has already done—and what Jesus is still doing. That's why hope can live alongside grief. That's why hope can stand up inside uncertainty. That's why hope can still breathe even when we feel like we're starting over again.

And then come our Core Values—anchors for who we are and how we live:

- **Jesus at the Center:** Everything flows from Him. Not our preferences, not our nostalgia, not our anxiety—Jesus.
- **Compassionate Love for Neighbor:** Real grace always moves outward. No strings attached. No scorekeeping.
- **Faithful Stewardship:** Time, talents, treasures—gifts to be used wisely, joyfully, and generously.
- **Life-Giving Community:** A church family marked by warmth, respect, encouragement, and genuine care.

Here's why I think this is especially timely for January in our community: life transitions are real. Retirement. Relocation. Downsizing. Loss. New health challenges. New seasons of loneliness—or the sudden awareness that “busy” isn't the same as “connected.” Many arrive here with excitement and also with a quiet question: *Where do I fit now? What am I for now?*

In Christ, you are never reduced to a stage of life. You are never “past your prime” in the kingdom of God. The Lord is still renewing people. Still calling people. Still releasing people—for love.

So as this New Year begins, here's a simple prayer to carry with you:

Lord Jesus, renew me. Release me. Make me new. And send me—gently and boldly—to love in Your name. Amen.

With you in hope and joy,
Pastor Greg Van Dyke



President's Page- January 2025

Sherri Kumle

Thank You!

Simply stated, we can all be so thankful for what God has given us at Lutheran Church By The Lake, and grateful for the avenues He has prepared for us to serve Him, the community, and the world through this church. We have learned over recent years that no matter what the struggles might be, God has a plan for LCBTL and each of us has a purpose in fulfilling that plan! As I recall the many ways in which folks have stepped up, I am reminded of so many “little things”, each of them powerful as building blocks or steppingstones in building God’s Kingdom in LCBTL, SLV, McCormick, and beyond. Each week, we call for faithful servants to “help”, and each week, together, we meet the needs of this church. Because we are an organized church, we *could* put together a list of all the folks and categorize by “tasks completed”, and marvel at the many names and all that they have done; however, we are comforted by knowing that each person is serving according to God’s plan, and for that we are so grateful.

Turning the Page

The promises of a New Year and the possibilities that lie before us bring hope and excitement for all that LCBTL can accomplish in 2025. Opportunities for sharing God’s Word in our community, for worshiping together in meaningful ways that broaden our spiritual lives, for studying and learning from a variety of teachers and resources that help us understand our faith, for giving to God’s glory through our financial gifts as well as our talents, for serving in new ways that shape our desire to truly understand the meaning of “servanthood” – all of this and more lies before us in the next 365 days, giving each of us an opportunity to “Be the Church” at Lutheran Church By The Lake. For this and many more reasons, it is exciting to begin another year of serving with you at Lutheran Church By The Lake!



Winter 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

Lutheran Church By The Lake

Invitation to Serve as an Offering Counter

"Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."— 1 Chronicles 29:14

Dear Friend in Christ,

When the ushers bring forward our Sunday offerings, the visible moment ends—but a sacred, unseen ministry has only begun. **Offering counters** safeguard every gift the congregation entrusts to God's work, turning loose coins, checks, and digital receipts into a clear witness of integrity and gratitude.

What Does a Counter Do?

Pray first, count second. Each session opens with thanksgiving that *all* we receive flows first from God (James 1:17).

Serve in pairs. Two **unrelated volunteer members** work together for about one hour, following our step-by-step count-sheet procedure.

Verify & document. Using dual tallies, endorsement stamps, and signatures, counters create the audit trail that protects donors and the church alike.

Flexible Ways to Serve

Month-at-a-time rotation: Volunteers count for a month usually on a Monday or Tuesday.

We are flexible and build each schedule around travel plans and family commitments—service that fits real lives.

Why This Ministry Matters

Trust & Transparency — Internal controls are not about money for money's sake; they are how we honor the generosity of God's people and keep the community's confidence strong (2 Cor 8:20-21).

Strength for Ministry — Accurate counting frees council leaders, ministry teams, and *Pastor Greg* to focus on mission, teaching, and care rather than troubleshooting numbers (Eph 4:12).

Participation in God's Giving Nature — God does not *need* our offerings; instead, giving shapes us into Christ-like givers. By treating every dollar prayerfully and carefully, counters model the joyful stewardship Paul commends (2 Cor 9:6-8).

Quiet Discipleship — Like the temple gatekeepers in 1 Chronicles 26, counters work behind the scenes, yet their faithfulness undergirds every baptism, Bible study, and act of compassion funded by those gifts.

Is God Nudging You?

Do you value accuracy, confidentiality, and teamwork?

Are you looking for a low-visibility, high-impact way to bless the body of Christ?

Would you enjoy beginning a brief weekly task with prayer and ending it knowing the saints are equipped for ministry?

If so, the Offering Counter Team may be your Spirit-given niche. Training, written checklists, and supportive partners make the learning curve gentle—no accounting degree required!

Please pray about joining us. We are in the process of registering counters for 2026. To explore further or to sign up for the rotation that suits you, reach out to **Eileen Hurlbut, Financial Secretary**, utilizing one of the contact methods listed below. We would love to welcome you into this ministry where attention to detail becomes an act of worship, and every recorded dollar testifies: "*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it*" (Psalm 24:1).

Thank you for considering this vital service. May the God who "richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Tim 6:17) guide your discernment and bless the work of your hands.

Grace and peace,

Eileen Hurlbut

864-391-8614 Landline

732-241-7505 Mobile phone

ethurlbut@aol.com

How To Get Your Group Info to church members and the wider SLV Community

Miscommunication is a problem for everyone. There are 4 methods to get your announcements out to our church members and also those within the SLV community.

Sunday Bulletin: Our bulletin is printed each Wednesday for the upcoming Sunday. Please email your announcement to the church office by **noon on Tuesdays**. We will then print your information in the bulletin. Please write out exactly how you want it stated in the bulletin and instruct the office that you want it placed in the Sunday bulletin

Realm Email “Blast”: If you would like to see your announcement sent via email , again, write out exactly how you want it stated in the email and instruct the office that you want an email sent out through Realm and what date you would like to have it sent. Please allow the office staff enough time to prepare the email for distribution. It usually takes us an hour to turn it around.

Monthly Newsletter: Please email your announcement/news exactly how you want it printed in the newsletter. **Deadline for submissions is the 19th of the month** for the next month's newsletter. Again, instruct the office that you are submitting this item for the Newsletter.

SLV NeighborLink: If you would like to see your announcement in NeighborLink, write out exactly how you want it stated in an email and submit to either the Council President or Pastor Greg for approval. They will then send your approved announcement to the office. Please allow all involved enough time to prepare your announcement for submission to NeighborLink. Please inform the Council President or Pastor Greg the dates you want the submission to run. Also make yourself aware of the guidelines involved in a NeighborLink submission.

Most important is the fact that you let the office staff know how you want your communication to be handled:

Bulletin
Email Blast
Newsletter
NeighborLink

We try hard to help you with your communication needs, and your help with this is truly appreciated.



QUILT CIRCLE

Thanks to everyone who participated in the quilt fundraiser. It was a huge success.

Our next quilt circle will be Saturday January 24th from 10-2pm in the Ark. Please bring a lunch and your sewing machine.

Karen Divita and Denise Uitto

Lutheran Women in Mission

Dear Sisters-in-Christ,

After a beautiful and meaningful Advent season, we celebrated the birth of our Lord and rejoiced with the world. Lutheran Women in Mission had a cozy and delicious Christmas lunch at Elijah Clark State Park, and now we prepare to usher in a new year...2026. With the New Year will come an end to the Co-Presidency of Lutheran Women in Mission that Christie Ziebell and I have shared for the past two years.

During these past two years, LWM has had annual yard sale events, a first-ever election day bake sale, and our fundraising efforts have allowed us to fully fund all of the wonderful circles that work tirelessly to sew, crochet, knit, support, share, and provide examples of God's light and love through our hands, feet, voices, and endeavors. We have also been able to provide support for community non-profit agencies that care for children, create shelter for people in need, feed people in need, provide structure and opportunity for area youth, support individuals dealing with addiction and domestic violence, and, in so doing, we join the network of care and support for our community and surrounding communities. Additionally, our fellowship activities have been opportunities to visit, laugh, share meals, and reflect. What a diverse and vibrant group we are!

A groundwork has been initiated to develop relationships with the women's group of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Greenwood, with hopes that the future will bring some shared events and meetings. This will allow our members to work with our sisters-in-Christ from a neighboring community, sharing ideas, projects and fellowship with one another. A January meeting is scheduled for the turnover of officers for LWM, and the program involves some Statewide members of WELCA coming to speak with our members about activities and plans for WELCA.

Our current Secretary, Karen Divita, Vice-President, Debbie Frederickson, and Treasurer, Susan Mazur are all willing to accept another two-year term on the Board. We are still in need of a leader to serve as President to take this wonderful group forward and continue our mission of service and fellowship. Our prayer is that God will touch the heart of one (or two) of you, allowing the work of this dynamic group to continue.

Christie and I thank our hard-working and dedicated Board for all their efforts, ideas, willingness and enthusiasm over the past two years. Karen, Susan and Debbie, you are the best team I could imagine! We thank the women who have attended events, all who have helped with fund-raising and offered encouragement and friendship, including our Church Council and Lutheran Men in Mission.

Wishing you God's peace now and always,

Karen Spilker



Deadline for the February Newsletter
is January 19th



5th Harry Hafer	21st Doug Chalifour
6th Jim Mavity	22nd Marian Smallwood
8th Joanna Feloni	23rd Virginia Higgs
10th Lynn Flom Sue Lundy	24th Bill Castle
13th DeeAnn Bauer	25th Eileen Hurlbut
15th Sharon Fergusson	27th Erick Sward Jeanne Thayer
16th Ron Feloni	29th Lee Sautter
18th Linda Harris Sherri Kumle	



1st Dale and Kathie Nixon	14th Debbie and Fred Frederickson
2nd Bill and Margo Kite	19th Phyllis and Michael Roth
4th Chuck and Denise Uitto	27th Lea and Steve Shaw



JANUARY SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Communion Assistants 9:00 AM

4th Glora Bramble, Raylene Emerich
11th Robin Bush, Linda McCullough
18th Ann and Gerry Wasserman
25th Lynnette and Kelly Jordan

Communion Assistants 10:30 AM

4th Donna Irmis, Candy Zimmerman
11th Gloria Bramble, Ann Anyder
18th Judy Greiger, Sherri Kumle
25th Gloria Bramble, Lynn Flom

Lectors 9:00 am

4th Lea Shaw
11th Sandi Atols
18th Gerry Wasserman
25th Joanna Feloni

Lectors 10:30 am

4th Ann Snyder
11st Judy Greiger
18th Eric Randall
25th Julie Crane

Ushers 9:00 am

4th Gloria Bramble, Raylene Emerich
11th Sandi and Jim Atols
18th Anne and Gerry Wasserman
25th Lynnette and Kelly Jordan

Ushers 10:30 am

4th Paul Klein, Betty Palone
11th Maureen Mooney, Jim Snyder
18th Margo and Bill Kite
25th Elaine Beggs, Maureen Mooney

January Altar Flowers

4th Denise and Chuck Uitto
11th Bill Kumle
18th Phyllis and Mike Roth
25th (open)

(Please consider an open date on the Flower Chart in the Narthex for 2026)

Altar Guild

Linda Klug, Susan Skyzinski, Lorna Soule and Diane Kerne

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.