

March 2026
Volume 66
No. 3



Pastor's Column

March 2026

Several years ago I was online looking at artistic photos on the site [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com). I have a page there; it's where I put most of my pictures. It has no algorithm and no ads (because you pay). There I found a picture of a wall of speakers set up with a white, glowing cross in the middle. It was from a French, Christian, techno duo. When I got into conversation with the photographer, he said it was from a concert, and he felt it was the most "spiritual" experience he'd had. A big mass of people, in a room, dancing together, lost in the moment, taken to a higher place. It isn't my thing; I don't listen to that style much. But it did make me realize that people in our world are seeking experience of the divine in music and community still. The desire isn't gone. The passion for it isn't gone, even in super-secular France.

This isn't new, the idea of music taking you to an experience of God. It was one of Martin Luther's big reforms, to have more of it and in the language of the people. It spawned the long history we have of church music, including the great Lutheran Johan Sebastian Bach, among others. And it's funny, how some people find Bach and Handel (the guy who wrote the Hallelujah Chorus) repetitive. Of course it is. But they're also popular, and people have found God in that music for centuries.

Music is something we understand at a primal level; it takes us up and causes us to lose our focus on the day-to-day and bring us closer to God. It's losing yourself to find yourself, as the mystics taught. About half of our worship service is music. Between the hymns and the liturgical pieces, they create the experience as much as anything I can say.

Our music is critical to our faith development and evangelism. Music that moves and inspires and fills us with joy recharges us for the week, and inspires us to share with others. Music that touches the heart of a visitor, or someone following online, moves

them to check us out in person, and can move them to a new-found faith in Jesus Christ. You can't grow a church without music that moves.

At this point we get into the debate about style: what kind of music? What instruments? How loud? All important questions. I try to take a bit of a spiritual/practical eye to these questions, and ask what will bring people to have that experience in our pews that that French guy had at that techno-concert? Why are we giving up "spirituality" to secular concerts, mountain hikes, and meditation apps? Shouldn't our Lutheran church be a place people can find that? When it comes to picking hymns and their styles, length, speed, instrumentation, I bring it back to "does this create the moving experience of the divine?"

I happen to believe you can do that in the context of a liturgical worship order. I've been to "song-sermon-song" services, and, frankly, I tire of the band going on for 35+ minutes. I've only been to one where the band was so good I did lose myself. Then the pastor got up and talked about women's submission as the key to Biblical living, and I was asking myself how quickly I could get out of there. The answer was 45 minutes later! Ugh.

On the flip side, we do have to acknowledge that we live in a world with diverse musical tastes, and a majority of the population with no exposure to either liturgy or hymnody. To grow, we need to tailor our service music to open the eyes of those who haven't experienced it, music that they can connect to, without having grown up in the church. We need sounds that stir hearts and souls without requiring years of teaching to appreciate. And in our more ethnically and culturally diverse world, we need music that isn't just out of Scandinavia, Germany, and England.

All that's to say why you are hearing new instruments and a new liturgical setting on Sunday. First we got a new electronic keyboard with speakers. This system serves several purposes: to allow the organist to switch to piano-style music without running up and down the stairs, for the choir director to accompany practices in the balcony, and for any special music events outside the sanctuary – say we wanted a concert on the lawn or a service at vacation Bible school.

After that, as I'm sure you've seen, there's a new piano in front, a Yamaha 5'8" baby grand. We got it with a special donation of funds specifically for music. With so much of newer worship settings, and by "newer" I mean in the last 40 years, being made for piano, this allows us to expand our offerings.

I love the organ, and we are absolutely keeping it. You probably won't hear a ton of the piano off the bat, however, as we are still in the process of looking for a new musician who can play it and the organ on Sundays. Auditioning should start soon.

Thirdly, I changed the liturgy to the sixth setting in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal (from 2006). It's nicknamed "The Gospel Liturgy", as that's where it borrows its sound from. It's one of ten settings in the ELW, and we'll use this one for a while and revisit other settings this summer. The old tones I grew up on in the LBW have minor keys and, while I love them (which is why I picked them for Advent-Epiphany), they can sound sad to a lot of people today. This should be a good change, one of many. I also love Marty Haugen's Now the Feast and Celebration, but I don't want to wear that one out. Instead, we're going to look for more settings like that in other hymnals.

The goal is not to abolish anything, to be anti-tradition, or to subtly phase in some sort of praise-band service. I've done contemporary worship in many forms for years, and that's not my endgame. I would not be against it, if we had a ton of people clamoring for it, and the existing service was bursting at the seams, but that's just not where we are. That said, I often feel like churches with two services put their liturgical one into hospice mode and just play the same-old-same-old over and over to keep people happy, while investing all their energy and creativity into the contemporary. As someone who loves liturgy, this makes me sad. Instead of phasing out liturgy, let's make it alive, inspiring, moving, accessible, creative, and diverse. We can do that. That's totally within our reach.

My philosophy on change is that you can't grow without it, but it does need to be necessary. You don't change for change's sake, but to accomplish goals. Tradition is valuable, and all things new are not necessarily better. You need to speak the language of the people you want to reach, without always validating the culture as it is. It's a bit of a dance, so we do it the best we can, carefully and thoughtfully, but try not to take too much time and over-analyze until it becomes ineffective.

So here's to another Lent, another 40 days of spiritual renewal and discipline in faith. Don't miss the Lenten soup dinners and services each week. And don't skip Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, as it's only through the cross that we get Easter. Pastor John and I will be back with more reflection at adult education hour on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Cost of Discipleship.

Peace,

Pastor Lars

New Piano

You may have noticed the new piano in the sanctuary, sitting up front by the pulpit. It's a Yamaha G2, 5'8" baby grand. Its purpose is to expand the musical offerings of our church, with new hymns and such, not to replace the organ. The cost of the piano was covered by a bequest from the estate of our former organist Cynthia Knutson. She had not designated a place for her money, and her family graciously decided to give it to Christ Lutheran, as we were a big part of her life. Those same funds purchased the electronic keyboard in the balcony as well.



Adult Ed offerings for Lent. Meet in the Library after worship.

- March 1 – “What is happening in Walla Walla with immigration and what can I do to help?” with Charlene Kaaen and Kari Isaacson
- March 8 – Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Cost of Discipleship*, ch.7 “The Visible community”
- March 15 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Cost of Discipleship*, ch.12 “Revenge”
- March 22 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Cost of Discipleship*, ch.13 “The Enemy – The ‘Extraordinary’”



Save the Date:

**This year’s WW Sweets
Baseball Game will be on
Saturday, June 27th**

This year the price per person will be \$26
This includes gate entry as well as “Sweet
Spot” entry and all you can eat ballpark
food and non-alcoholic beverages; alcoholic
beverages are available for purchase.

More details to come!

If you have any questions feel free to ask

Janet Mobley

509 200-1363

Service Is Fun!

An opportunity to engage with Christ Lutheran Church's youth and young families has presented itself. Currently, our wonderful Godly Play teachers (Kirsten Brannon, Sara Pinkerton, Emily Stone, and Alison Tabacco-Hines) serve double-duty as both teachers and hall monitors. The hall monitor escorts the children between the sanctuary and the Godly Play classroom after the Children's Sermon. Most often, the hall monitor simply stays and observes the Godly Play lesson until time to return with the children to the sanctuary. Occasionally, the hall monitor helps out as an extra set of hands, but he/she does not teach. The presence of hall monitors in the classroom also satisfies church policy to have at least two adults in a room with children.

The Godly Play teachers would appreciate volunteers to serve as hall monitors so that they can attend worship in person more often. Several people have already offered their support, and Kay Shelton is recruiting more people – both men and women- who want to help. Volunteers will have fun learning the names of our CLC kids and observing their cute personalities as they interact in Godly Play. If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Kay, who will coordinate the hall monitor schedule.

March Birthdays!

Kirstin Ostrom	3/1
Kurt Hoffman	3/2
Dale Hedman	3/3
Jim Peterson	3/5
Bob Fitzgerald	3/6
Jeffery Wagner	3/6
Judith Hedburg-Duff	3/9
Larry Johnson	3/9
Gordon Heimbigner	3/10
Robin Tabacco -Hines	3/10
Logan Pinkerton	3/11
Anneliese Haug	3/12
Julia Jacobs	3/12
Amanda Heimbigner	3/14



Odon Peterson	3/14
Rowan Brannon	3/15
James Pinkerton	3/21
Blake Rutledge	3/23
Ruth Ladderud	3/24
Rob Riley	3/24
Mara Palumbo	3/25
Leslie Anderson	3/26
Kathrine Holce	3/26
Everett Knudson	3/28
Jayla Ortiz	3/29
Margaret Ley	3/31
Gene Walker	3/31

March National Quilting Day 2026

March 21, 2026, is National Quilting Day and we at CLC and Lutheran World Relief have a LOT to celebrate. For more than 80 years, compassionate people have put their faith into action and made quilts for people in need around the world. Not just a few but over 28 million quilts. These gifts of love make life brighter, softer and a bit more comfortable for our neighbors about the world struggling with chronic poverty, illness, natural disaster and conflict. Thank you!

One year ago, LWR expanded Quilt and Kit Ministry to our neighbors in crisis here at home. To people facing devastating wildfires, hurricanes, flood and tornadoes, your kits and quilts have been a true godsend. Your faith in action embraces those who have lost everything and restore hope.

When disaster strikes, your love is the first to surround our hurting neighbors. After **Hurricanes Helene** and **Milton** decimated communities across the **Southeast**, your kits were already on the move. Even before landfall, 10 shipping containers – filled with more than 60,000 handmade quilts and 76,000 essential kits were in route across six states. You also provided more than \$1 million in cash grants to trusted local partners. This allows families to purchase exactly what they need most – food, medicine, housing or gas – restoring dignity and hope in a time of chaos. In **Central Texas**, your compassion reached neighbors devastated by horrific flash flooding at record speed. Within 12 hours, LWR Quilts and Kits were in the hands of those who most needed them. Because of you, love doesn't just arrive quickly – it stays longer. It enables partnerships with local organizations creating safety nets for our most vulnerable neighbors: the unhoused, veterans, children and the elderly. In **North Carolina**, you helped launch the Faith360 Network, uniting congregations, faith-based organizations and volunteers to coordinate efforts and build resilience and hope.

Response help after wildfires in **California** joined partners in **12 states** for rapid deployment of assistance in areas with reoccurring natural disasters. This month celebrate our part working with Lutheran World Relief to help our neighbors and those around the world. **Thank you CLC for supporting our mission with LWR.**



Hello from the Property Committee

We are looking for someone to help us with lawn mowing this spring. If there is someone that likes to ride a riding lawn mower and make our property more beautiful, please let me know. 509-386-5203 Anne Swant



The property committee includes John Funderburk, Dan Grinstead, Jim Peterson and myself. Let us know if you have any ideas or concerns for our property. We are here to help.

Thank you property committee for all your hard work!

Art Committee

The Art Committee has been meeting and will be displaying some original artwork from 7 of our church members. They are Joyce Anderson, Peggy Haug, Judith Hedberg-Duff, John Knapp, Gracie Nelson, Cassie Spangrude & Jeff Wagner. The first display is planned for 3 months. Please thank these talented artists for sharing their God given talents with us. We know the art will bless our congregation & our property. Also, Aanen Gjovik built the display rails - we want to thank him for the work.



Attendance Report

Average Sunday Worship Attendance

February 2025 - 115

February 2026 - 83

CLC'S FINANCES

January 2026

Total Income: \$34,767

Total Expenses: - \$30,812

Net Gain \$3,955



Christ Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2026

Council President Kay Shelton called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm. Those attending were Pastor Lars Hammar, Greg Romaniuk, Lori Peterson, Janet Mobley, Melanie Hein, Jim Peterson, Anne Swant, Peggy Haug, Kirsten Brannon, Linda Lohrmann, and Julie Michener.

Devotions - Janet Mobley

January Minutes - approved by email affirmation January 22, 2026

Financial Reports - Greg Romaniuk - The January 2026 financial reports were submitted through email.

Pastor's Report - Lars Hammar – Pastor reported work being done to update the live stream of church services. It has a few challenges that should be resolved in the next two weeks. Pastor also included three documents: Youth Ministry Strategy – *proposed*, Youth Coordinator job description – *proposed*, 8 Faith Factors (i.e. the top eight things that keep kids coming to church after confirmation) and discussed a job description for a new Musician/Organist position.

Committee Reports:

Finance & Budget: Jim Peterson - January operating budget revenue was good. Offering for the month was higher than the budgeted amount. We also received a large interest check when a CD matured at Mission Investment Fund. We had the interest sent to the Church and we reinvested the original principal balance. The interest had accumulated at MIF for over a year. Two additional CDs at MIF mature in March. The Council will make decisions regarding the funds that are available at maturity. A process for collecting and securing the Wednesday Lenten offerings was established.

Property: Anne Swant- John Funderburk has joined the Property Committee. The Design Committee met once and began the process of evaluating the building together. This will be an ongoing process. The garbage disposal in the kitchen is not working well, options for repair or replacement are being considered. Jim Peterson has been a huge help with this task. Finally, we are creating an arts committee to encourage our members who are active artists to share their God given talents with our congregation. A plan is being developed with a starting date of Feb. 22. Aanen Gjovik will assist in building the shelves to hold the art and allow it to be easily rotated. This project is estimated to be less than \$500 for the materials and installation.

Worship: Peggy Haug - Our congregation is grateful to James French for filling in as organist and on piano for mid-week Lenten services until we can hire for this position. A job description has been developed and will be posted. We will use a new liturgy during Lent. We have asked Clarice Swanson to work with us in learning the ELW setting 6. Also, she has agreed to lead a group of us for a choir to perform on Palm Sunday.

Evangelism: Linda Lohrmann - Two new members will be presented for approval in February.

Fellowship: Janet Mobley - CLC has reserved the “Sweet Spot” on Saturday, June 27th for a Walla Walla Sweets Baseball Game. Tickets this year are \$26 per person which includes entry into the ballpark, burgers, hot dogs, salads, chips and non-alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverages will be available to purchase. This event is not limited to members only so bring a friend and enjoy a night out cheering on our hometown Sweets.

Stewardship: Lori Peterson - Pastor Lars and Lori will meet after the February council meeting to plan Stewardship for 2026. They plan to have more information available in March.

Personnel report: Mara Palumbo - Peggy, and Pastor Lars, and Mara met to review the organist position and draft a current job description. The team also put together a concise version of the description that can be posted on online platforms for recruiting a candidate. Pastor Lars also shared information on the youth coordinator position and goals for the program.

Outreach: Melanie Hein: SJAG has put out our Welcoming Statement and are looking ahead at other projects. Mission groups continue to meet. Lent will soon be starting, which means 40 days of Giving information will be handed out. The new Care Committee is being organized. Information is being sent out in the E Blast, Temple talks, and Adult Ed. Anyone interested can contact Peggy Haug or Melanie Hein. We continue to serve

meals at the Sleep Center and Christian Aid Center. We encourage anyone who would like to join any of these groups to please contact us. All are welcome.

Youth Education: No report

Youth & Family: Kirsten Brannon: We just returned from a weekend "Back to Camp" retreat at Lutherhaven Ministries on Lake Coeur d'Alene. We had four of our youth participate as well as Pastor Lars, Sara Pinkerton and me. The kids participated in youth focused worship, camp songs, and activities. Gaga Ball was a big hit for the weekend.

UPCOMING: This Sunday the 15th, there will be a meeting regarding VBS planning directly after church in the Godly Playroom. Lent and Easter events will be in the works as well.

Adult Education: No report

Continuing Business:

QA re: Property Report – Anne shared that an Art Council has been established. Their focus is to add color and interest to the halls and rooms of the church by displaying art. They should have some pieces displayed on the first Sunday of Lent. The Design Committee is evaluating the church for needed updates. The garbage disposal works but repairs or replacement should be considered. It was recommended that we add lawn care to Sexton's job description.

Synod Assembly Delegates – Peggy Haug made a motion to appoint Cheryl French and Jill Roznowski as Christ Lutheran's Delegates to the Synod Assembly. The motion was seconded by Melanie Hein and passed by unanimous council vote. (Note: Jill is unable to attend; another delegate will need to be appointed.)

New Business:

Peggy Haug was appointed Council Liaison for Adult Education and John Knapp as the Coordinator.

New Membership Applications –A motion to accept Mark Elmore and (Nellie) Manuella O'Dell as new members was made by Linda Lohrmann, second by Janet Mobley, passed by unanimous vote. Linda suggested that the congregation have permanent name tags. She will do research on type and cost.

Lenten Service offerings will be donated to the Senior Center's Meals on Wheels. Jim reviewed the process for securing the offering after Lenten Services and emailed details to the Council members.

Lenten Soup Suppers host list is complete.

Personnel Report – Pastor Lars shared information concerning the need to hire a new position, Musician/Organist, to replace Eleanor who has retired as church organist. Pastor also shared a job restructuring of the lead position for youth programs. The position will be Youth Coordinator.

Heilman Building use request for Avis Hudson's Celebration of Life on February 22. – Motion by Linda Lohrmann and seconded by Kirsten Brannon, unanimously approved by council. A request from the Walla Walla Weavers to use the Fellowship Hall on April 17th and 18th, motion to approve by Peggy Haug, second by Melanie Hein, motion carried.

Action on Mission Investment Fund CD that matures March 1, 2026 – Jim Peterson recommended we reinvest \$25,000 for one year at 4% interest, motion to reinvest made by Anne Swant, second by Peggy Haug, motion passed.

Restricted Memorial Fund - Pastor requested \$2000 to purchase a keyboard to assist with the development of a new choir. Jim made a motion that \$2500 from the restricted memorial fund be used to purchase the keyboard and accessories, second by Lori, passed by unanimous vote.

Future Dates:

April 5 - Easter

April 24-26 - Synod Assembly in Kennewick

June 15-19 - VBS

June 27 - Sweets Game, 6pm in the Sweet Spot

Adjournment at 7:30 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted, *Julie Michener*, Council Secretary

CLC youth had a great time despite the rainy weather at Camp Lutherhaven early in February. They learned about prayer with a guest speaker and then enjoyed time doing arts and crafts, playing Gaga ball, and hanging out together.

On March 15th, we will have a team from Camp Lutherhaven at CLC to provide parents information about summer camp. It'll be a fun event for all ages. Please plan to come!



Weekly Happenings at CLC

- Godly Play - Sundays during Worship
- Adult Education - Sundays after service in the Library
- Quilt/ Mission Group - Tuesdays 9 to noon & 6:30pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month
- Men's Group - every other Tuesday at 10am
- Bible Study - Thursdays at 1pm

March 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play 11:00am Adult Ed.	2	3 9am Mission Group 10am Men's Group 6:30pm Mission Group	4 3pm Confirmation Class 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lenten Service	5 1pm Bible Study	6	7
8 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play 11:00am Adult Ed.	9	10 9am Mission Group 5:30pm Council Meeting	11 3pm Confirmation Class 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lenten Service	12 10am SJAG 1pm Bible Study	13	14
15 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play 11:00am Adult Ed.	16	17 9am Mission Group 10am Men's Group 6:30pm Mission Group	18 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lenten Service	19 1pm Bible Study	20	21
22 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play 11:00am Adult Ed.	23 Newsletter Deadline 7pm Design Team	24 9am Mission Group	25 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lenten Service	26 1pm Bible Study	27	28
29 9:30am Worship Service 9:30am Godly Play	30	31 9am Mission Group 10am Men's Group 6:30pm Mission Group				



Christ Lutheran Church

1420 South 2nd Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-4502

Return Service Requested

We're on the Web!

www.christwallawalla.org

March 2026

CHURCH COUNCIL AND STAFF

·President·

Kay Shelton

Pastor

Lars Hammar

·Finance/ Budget·

Jim Peterson

·Secretary·

Julie Michener

·Office Manager·

Dee Kasten

·Worship·

Peg Haug

·Treasurer·

Greg Romaniuk

·Sexton·

Jeff Wagner

·Youth Education·

Vacant

·Stewardship·

Lori Peterson

·Organist·

James French

·Youth & Family·

Kirsten Brannon

·Fellowship·

Janey Mobley

·Personnel·

Mara Palumbo

·Adult Ed/ Library·

Vacant

·Outreach·

Melanie Hein

·Property Management·

Anne Swant

·Evangelism·

Linda Lohrman

Mission

We are God's people, united by faith in Jesus Christ, forgiven, chosen and called by him through the Word and Sacraments to make disciples, and to serve in the world God loves.