



THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE

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www.flcws.org

January 2025

PASTOR'S PAGE — *Making and Keeping Promises*

I've never been one to keep New Year's resolutions. I have made resolutions more times than I can count. For me, making resolutions is the easy part. Keeping them is another story altogether. I admire those who can keep them. My track records isn't so great. I often have good and even grand ideas about how my life should improve. I have vowed to put these ideas into action, but for me, keeping resolutions usually has a brief shelf life.

I suspect there are many reasons for this, not the least of which is a tendency to have high expectations for myself and others, but the higher the goal or ideal, the quicker it falls. I'm still on a learning curve when it comes to keeping goals simple and realistic.

Over the years, I've come to appreciate the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord, always celebrated on the first Sunday after Epiphany. The Baptism of our Lord is a time for all of us to remember and renew our baptism into Christ. When we are asked to recommit to the baptismal promises, it like entering the New Year with a fresh start in nothing less than the mercy and grace of God.

The promises we renew from time to time are the same ones an individual makes when affirming their baptism:

*To live among God's faithful people
To hear God's Word and share in the Lord's Supper
To proclaim the good news of God in Christ in word and deed
To serve all people following the example of Jesus
To strive for justice and peace in all the earth*

These promises are a rich description of the Christian life. We could approach them as another set of resolutions, but I am afraid that such an approach would be futile. For many of us, their destiny would not be unlike the other kinds of resolutions we endeavor to make and keep.

Rather than a set of resolutions, we can approach God's newness by saying "yes" to these promises by seeing them not as high goals but as a continual Spirit driven turn to God. We ask God to help us keep these promises. They are not fueled by our abilities. God is active and alive in all of them. We don't have to make them up! And God joins us to the community called church where we are free to share life in Christ, not as those who keep perfect resolutions but just as we are, dependent on God's forgiveness and mercy to live in the freedom of the Gospel.

On January 12 we will renew these promises again at worship. That very day we also begin a series of adult formation sessions to explore the baptismal promises. When we respond to the questions about our intention to live in this covenant relationship given to us by God, we say, "Yes, and we ask God to help us guide us."

Asking God to help and guide us makes all the difference.

Peace,
Pastor Bryon Hansen

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Wishing you all a Happy New Year! Our congregation experienced many transitions this past year. I hope that we can settle into our processes and build upon momentum.

First up is the 2025 Annual Meeting and Report, which will be held on Sunday, January 26, 2025, following the 10:30 AM liturgy. At our Mid-Year Congregational Meeting in July, the congregation passed the initial vote needed for the constitutional change then. The second and final vote will be held in a separate special session just prior to the Annual Meeting.



As previously written in the June 2024 Messenger, here is a recap of the proposed changes:

The original wording for C11.02 is as follows: “The officers shall be elected by the congregation and shall serve for two years. This election shall occur during the first General Meeting of the calendar year. Their term of office shall begin twenty-four hours following their election.”

The proposed wording of C11.02 that failed to receive a majority is as follows: “The president and vice president shall be elected by the congregation and may serve two consecutive, two year terms. This election shall occur during the first General Meeting of the calendar year. Their term of office shall begin twenty-four hours following their election. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. The President and Vice President shall be eligible to serve two consecutive two year terms (four years total each), while the secretary and treasurer are eligible to serve three consecutive two year terms (six years total).

At the Special Congregational Constitution Changes Meeting Vote #2, held January 28, 2024, a council approved revision of C11.02 was presented. It was not voted on because it had not been presented/distributed to the congregation in the time frame that the constitution requires. It was shared as informational only, to be voted on at the Midyear meeting.

The revised wording of C11.02 is as follows: “*The President and Vice President shall be eligible to serve one two year term plus an additional year added consecutively to the term (three years total each), while the Secretary and Treasurer are eligible to serve three consecutive two year terms (six years total). This election shall occur during the first General Meeting of the calendar year. Their term of office shall begin twenty-four hours following their election. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.*”

Also necessary to keep items in the constitution consistent and not redundant, C11.03 will be deleted, and C11.04 will become C11.03. The congregation was notified of the proposed changes 30 days in advance back in June of 2024 prior to the Mid-Year Congregational meeting.

I hope everyone had a joyous Christmas season. Many thanks for our relationships, generous gifts, and blessings upon our church. May we continue to increase our financial support for the church's future. May we continue to grow in our steadfast faith.

-Steve Liang
President, Church Council

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: Beginning after services this Sunday, *January 5*, our coffee hour will happen weekly, meeting in the lounge. See the article in this Messenger for details..

ADULT FORMATION Join us in Room C & D. We will resume on the 12th after Coffee Hour. This series of sessions on **Life in Christ** will follow the pattern of the baptismal promises we make and routinely affirm. Those who desire to continue toward becoming a part of FLCWS will meet in Lent for preparation of their baptism or renewal of baptism at Easter.

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD: On Monday, January 6, we will celebrate Epiphany in a shared Eucharist with our sisters and brothers from St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in West Seattle and their rector, The Reverend Elise Johnson. The service takes place at FLCWS at 7:00 p.m.

FOOD BANK COLLECTION: The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in room C. Suggested donations for January are pastas, noodles and sauces. Compass Housing Alliance is in need of socks for men or women for the winter months. Any non-perishable foods, personal products, or grocery store gift cards are welcome. Your much needed donations are taken to the West Seattle Food Bank, Compass Housing Alliance, Mary's Place, and Westside Neighbors (American Legion Hall Shelter).

RIVERTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH is still in need of help in housing the hundreds of immigrants that keep arriving. To help, go to: <https://rivertonparkumc.com/donate> . (See also the article in this Messenger about creating Kitchen Welcome Kits for refugees who achieve permanent housing.)

ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORT: The 2025 Annual Meeting, and the Council's presentation of the 2024 Annual Report will be Sunday, January 26, following the Sunday service. As always, it will be a potluck in the Parish Hall. (*Council Members and Parish Staff: please submit your articles for the Annual Report to Casey by January 10—casey@flcws.org.*)

EXTENDED MINISTRY: Support the Food Bank with Your Thriftway Receipts! The generous folks at West Seattle Thriftway are giving back 1% of sales from receipts turned in to benefit our local food bank! Simply drop off your receipts in the marked envelope at the Extended Ministry bulletin board outside Room C—we'll take care of the rest. Every receipt counts and makes a difference to those in need in our community. Thank you for your support!



STEWARDSHIP

I felt inspired to write a stewardship article after hearing Pastor Hanson's sermon based on the Bible verse from Mark 12:41-44. Stewardship refers to the idea that everything we have, including our money, is a gift from God and should be managed responsibly and generously, with the focus not on the amount given but on the heart behind the giving. However, in these Bible verses, we learn of the poor widow who gave a small amount but it was all that she had, which demonstrated a greater commitment than the wealthy who gave large sums from their abundance. We are not owners of our possessions but stewards. We are entrusted with managing them wisely and responsibly for God's purposes. We know too that stewardship applies to all aspects of life, including our time, talents, and resources, which should first be used to serve God. May we all feel inspired by the poor woman who gave all that she had.

-Kathryn YoungChurch Council

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

We are expanding our Coffee Hour from once a month to gathering every Sunday. And the meeting will take place in the lounge, which has more comfortable seating and is more welcoming and visible to visitors. This weekly event will be scaled back from the offerings of our monthly get-together. We will have coffee and tea, along with cookies to enjoy while catching up on news with fellow members.

To make this happen, we will need Cookie Bakers and a Hosting Duo each month. The Hosts' duties will be to make the coffee and set out the cups, napkins, and cookies. Then afterward, the Hosts will make sure someone runs the vacuum around the carpeted area, get the coffee pot & cups returned to Room C, and the dishwasher loaded. We hope to have a list of Cookie Bakers that each monthly Host can call on to provide cookies each week. The Host won't necessarily need to bake cookies – they just need to make sure one of our Cookie Bakers have promised cookies each week. Patty Lofthus has volunteered to be January's Host. A sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board in the hallway to sign up for a month of Hosting and also to sign up as a Cookie Baker.

KITCHEN WELCOME KITS FOR FAMILIES MOVING INTO PERMANENT HOUSING

Can you contribute one or more items on the list for Kitchen Welcome Kits? Many of these items can be found inexpensively at Goodwill, the Dollar Store, Marshalls, & Ross. Maybe your kitchen contains an extra colander or baking dish that looks nice but isn't needed. Donate it! Donated gifts will be assembled into Welcome Kits.

The Riverton Park UMC community has long offered needed assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. With this support, they are able to eventually receive their Work Permits and get jobs. The new families then become part of the community by moving into permanent housing. The Kitchen Welcome Kits are like a house-warming gift, giving them a helpful start in gaining their independence.

Place your donated items in the large plastic bin marked KITCHEN WELCOME KITS in Room C. Let's see how many kits we can put together. If you have questions or to help assemble the kits, contact Teri Korsmo at tkorsmo@flcws.org.



✠ PARISH PRAYERS ✠

Remember in prayer before God those whom He has made your brothers and sisters through baptism.

Pray for members and friends of our congregation that God will bless and strengthen them in these days: Nancy Lawson, Peter and Dana Morrison, Paula and The Rev. Douglas Lindsay, Shirley Graham, Nora Vanhala, Don Minter and children, Rick Hansen, Mary Ann Johnstone, and Don & Ieva Young.

Pray for the homebound that the light of Christ may give them joy: Joan Olson, Mona Ayer, Jeannine Lingle, Robert Schorn, Lou & Lori Landino, CJ Christian, and Melanie Johnson

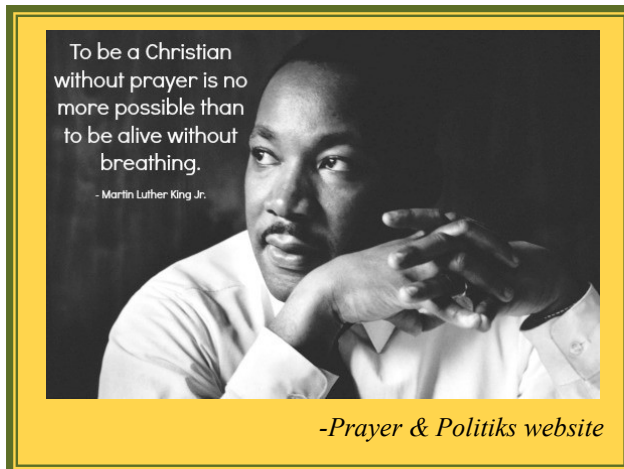
Pray for our bishops Elizabeth Eaton & Shelley Bryan Wee, our pastor Bryon Hansen, our choirmaster Dean Hard, and all who faithfully assist with worship. May they be strengthened in faith, love and the holy office to which they have been called. Pray for our church council, that God will guide and strengthen them in their work.

Pray that God would give us hearts to find joy in service and faithful stewardship. Pray that God would work within us to become a good steward of our time, talents, and finances. Pray to strengthen our commitment to stewardship in our congregation.

Pray for the hungry, ignored, abused, unemployed, addicted, homeless, and unbelievers. Pray God will show mercy to these people, and for all in Christ's church to see and help those who are in distress. Pray for our country and those who lead us, that our collective actions may honor God and be a blessing in the world.

Pray for people around the world who suffer from the effects of war, terrorism, natural disasters, disease, poverty, and abuse, especially the people of Ukraine, Israel, the Palestinian people, Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, and all who live in fear.

Pray that God will bless us through the lives of the saints: Peter & Paul, Timothy, Titus, & Silas; Lydia, Dorcas & Phoebe; and Martin Luther King, Jr., martyr.



THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

The season of Christmas comes to a close on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th. We remember the Magi who follow the star to find and discover the Christ child. They offer their treasures to Christ, a new ruler born amidst the fear and corruption of conventional kings and kingdoms. The Magi representing the Gentile world signals the revelation of God to all people throughout the world. **We will celebrate Epiphany in a shared Eucharist with our sisters and brothers from St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in West Seattle and their rector, The Reverend Elise Johnson. The service takes place at FLCWS at 7:00 p.m.**

ADULT FORMATION Life in Christ

The Sunday Formation class resumes on January 12th. We will meet following coffee hour. The class is for anyone and everyone, with a special emphasis for those expressing interest in baptism or becoming part of the FLCWS congregation. This series of sessions on **Life in Christ** will follow the pattern of the baptismal promises we make and routinely affirm. Here is the schedule:

- January 12 - Baptism: Gift and Journey
- January 19 - Living Among God's Faithful People
- January 26 – Annual Congregational Meeting (No class this day)
- February 2 – Gathering Around God's Word and Meal
- February 9 – Proclaiming Good News
- February 16 – Serving All People & Striving for Justice and Peace
- February 23 – The Bible: The Cradle in Which Christ Lays
- March 2 – Welcome to First Lutheran of West Seattle

Those who desire to continue toward becoming a part of FLCWS will meet in Lent for preparation of their baptism or renewal of baptism at Easter.

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JANUARY 2025



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