



THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE
(206) 935-6530 www.flcws.org December 2025

Pastor's Page — Advent Waiting

It is no mistake that Advent begins in the dark. This is the time of the year when we segue into winter when all of nature seems asleep. It is colder, the days are shorter, and nighttime is longer. We are waiting for the return of the sun.

Long before Christianity, people who lived in the far north had no option but to give into the winter. Their labors and daily actions came to a halt. They had to stop and wait for the light to come. They put away their tools to give way to a waiting that was in tune with the natural change of seasons.

In her wonderful book, *To Dance with God*, Gertrude Mueller Nelson reminds us that the people removed their wheels from their carts and wagons, festooned them with greens and lights, and brought them indoors. This helped them stop and turn inward. Instead of fighting against winter, they could engage their real feelings around cold, fear, and loss. With the aid of the decorated wheels they slowly “wooed the sun-god back, and light followed darkness.”

Christians took on the practice and reframed it into a faithful waiting for the light of Jesus Christ. With the twelve days of Christmas and later a preparatory season called Advent, our Christian forebears identified Christ as the light of the world. We wait for the light slowly until the light on the Advent wreath shines in all its fullness.

Like any ritual gesture, lighting the candles during Advent can be misplaced or misunderstood. We may imagine the Advent wreath to be nothing more than a nice decoration, or we may tilt in the direction of making such a ritual an end in itself. How might any symbol of growing light accompany our period of Advent waiting?

I'm pretty sure we will not replicate pre-Christian customs, but I wonder how we might give into winter and embrace the darkness, taking the time to express to God and one another our deepest longings, fears, hopes, and dreams. The candles on the Advent wheel bid us to slow down and wait.

What is the light for which we wait? Late in Advent the waiting points to the coming of Jesus as a child. Early in Advent we contemplate the promise of Christ coming again. Throughout the season we listen to prophets like Isaiah and John the Baptist who point us to God's presence both now and in the future.

Waiting doesn't count as favorite activity for many of us but in the next weeks I encourage you to wait not passively but fully alert to the coming of Christ and the promises of God.

Peace,
Pastor Hansen

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope that everyone's Thanksgiving was spent in quality time with family and friends. Beginning at the end of November, you will notice a display set up in the lobby. The Church Council's Extended Ministry Committee is putting on an Advent giving campaign. The beneficiary will be Hospitality House, a women's shelter at Lake Burien. We encourage the congregation to consider giving during Advent. Advent ends on December 21st.

The Growing in Giving campaign, which began on September 14th and concluded on October 5th earlier this year, was our first stewardship campaign in some time. I am happy to report that it was a success. We increased both the total number of pledges and the monthly pledged giving amount. The campaign committee would like to thank all congregation members who provided a testimonial along with their pledges. I hope everyone has had a chance to read those testimonies. We look forward to continuing the campaign next year.

I would also like to share a few updates on Church Council decisions. The wooden school desk chairs that were being stored in Classrooms C and D were donated to Habitat for Humanity. Nearly 40 of these chairs were picked up by Habitat for Humanity, and we hope they find a good future home. Beginning in January 2026, the Westside Third Tradition group of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) will begin holding weekly meetings hosted by FLCWS. We are excited to be hosting the group and fully support its mission. They will meet every Thursday from 6:30-7:30pm in Rooms C and D. All are welcome.

On Saturday, November 22nd, members of the Church Council participated in the 2nd annual retreat, hosted at the Admiral HUB. The Council spent half the day with Pastor Ivar Hillesland once again serving as facilitator. Council members were given great ideas to consider and even better items to follow up on. These retreats continue to be a wonderful way to connect while looking ahead and planning for our congregation's needs and future.

Part of that future includes filling crucial Council positions that will set up the next four years of leadership. My term as President of the congregation will come to an end in January 2026. Currently, our Vice President role is vacant. We will be looking to fill both positions at the next annual meeting, along with several general Council member positions. The Nominating Committee will soon begin the process of identifying potential candidates for these leadership roles. I encourage anyone interested to reach out to me. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss what the roles entail.

I would still like to encourage everyone, if possible, to consider an additional contribution. Many thanks for our relationships, generous gifts, and the blessings upon our church. I wish everyone a joyous Advent and Christmas season.

Steve Liang
-President, Church Council

Council Meeting Calendar Dates and links:

Tuesday, December 9, 2025: In-Person/Hybrid
Tuesday, January 13, 2026: In-Person/Hybrid

Video link: <https://meet.google.com/ffb-rdss-xqm>
Or dial: (US) +1 502-622-8042 PIN: 222 331 072#

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: Join us in the lounge every Sunday after the service.

DINNER TEAMS NEEDED! Churches in West Seattle are being asked to prepare meals for our homeless friends, in partnership with Westside Neighbors Shelter. FLCWS is invited to participate in this ministry by helping to provide meals at least monthly as a dinner team. If you are interested in this ministry, please check the appropriate box on the *Count Me In* form.

ADVENT GIVING TREE: There is an Advent Giving Tree in the lounge. The recipient will be Hospitality House, a women's shelter at Lake Burien Presbyterian Church. They house nine women at a time in a 'dorm like' setting. On the tree are ornaments with items that the women at the shelter need. Take an ornament, purchase the item, and bring it to the church. Items will be taken to Hospitality House every week. This is a wonderful way for us to help our neighbors in need. For more information go to <https://hospitalityhousesouthking.org>, or contact Kathrine Young.

THE CHAPEL SERVICE IS BACK. Every Sunday at 8:00 a.m. in the Chapel there is a spoken Holy Communion service. On festival Sundays the chapel service does not occur and those who attend are encouraged to join the rest of the congregation at the 10:30 service.

ADULT FORMATION resumes in January. This fall we had wonderful conversations around the book of Ecclesiastes and the Nicene Creed. Stay tuned for what's coming in the New Year.

WEST SEATTLE THRIFTWAY gives back 1% of sales from receipts turned in to the WS Food Bank! Drop your receipts in the envelope on the Extended Ministry bulletin board outside Room C. Every receipt makes a difference to those in need.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the *Feast of Epiphany, January 6th*. We will again worship with our sisters and brothers at St. John the Baptist Episcopal church. This year we meet at St. John's for a service held in the evening at 7:00 pm, with a fellowship get together following the service.

FOOD BANK COLLECTION: The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in room C. Suggestions for December are non-perishable holiday foods: potatoes, gravy, vegetables, baking ingredients, etc. Any non-perishable foods, personal products, or grocery gift cards are welcome. Your much needed donations go to the West Seattle Food Bank, Compass Housing Alliance, Mary's Place, and Westside Neighbors (American Legion Hall Shelter).

CHOIR REHEARSAL Thursday, 7:00 pm. All are welcome. If you are interested in joining *Deo Gloria Cantores*, contact Dana Robinson: dmrobsn@gmail.com. Also, contact Dana if you are interested in joining the choir just for the Christmas season.

YOU CAN HELP WITH SUNDAY WORSHIP: Please mark roles you are interested in on the *Count Me In* form. These include Lector, Assisting Minister, Choir, Usher, Acolyte, and Verger.

FLCWS YOUNG ADULTS met in November, and would like to meet again! Stay tuned for January plans!

WEEKLY FLCWS EMAIL: FLCWS will begin sending out a weekly email December 5. All members and friends of First with email addresses on file will receive the weekly news on Fridays. In addition to news, the email will include scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday, and Pastor's reflections. If you're not sure if we have your current email, or you would like a friend or family member to be included, send it in, or write it down on the *Count Me In* form.

STEWARDSHIP

I am reminded of Pastor Hansen's October 13th, 2024 sermon, *Give it Up!*, preaching on Mark 10:17-27. In this text, a man asks Jesus, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

I admit it. I have difficulty letting go of possessions, and that includes not only material possessions, i.e., "stuff", but money as well. I'm a saver and collector of things, whether it be for sentimental reasons, a sense of identity, or for feelings of safety, security, and control. I get attached to things for utilitarian, emotional, and aesthetic reasons. These things even cut me off from God and others. As I reach my late sixties, I know I need to downsize and let go, for I cannot take these possessions with me. In 1 Timothy 6:7-8, St. Paul writes, "for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these."

I would rather keep these possessions than give them up, but do I need them? I have "sticky fingers", whether it be with "stuff" or money. However, I am called to let go of worry and anxiety about letting go, to offer up freely with joy and thanksgiving, and be content with what I have. To decrease what I have and increase what is God's. To be generous. As Jesus says in Matthew 6:19-21, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do

not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Jesus is our true and priceless treasure. We are not to store up treasures, but instead to be rich toward God, for the gifts we have belong to God, and we are to steward and share them. We are called to do good works and to tithe for the work of our church and extended ministries.

Difficulty in giving and letting go pertains not only to possessions, but time as well. With time, too, I have "sticky fingers" and wish to keep for myself and my own personal responsibilities what seems like my limited time. With giving of time and possessions, I worry, "Will I have enough left over?" In addition, regarding talents and skills, mine are modest at best, and sometimes I feel I don't have a lot to offer what the church needs. I often question what I feel is my lack of commitment and sacrifice. However, I must press on and do what I can. I ask God for mercy, to forgive my sin and shortcomings, and to help and guide me in giving and serving. Where I come up short, God makes up the difference. He gives full capacity to my incapacity. While I am limited, God is limitless.

Lord, help us all in our giving and serving. Aid us in our letting go, and help us to offer up what we have with joy and thanksgiving.

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." - Hebrews 13:16.

David Juhl,
-Church council

The Thrivent logo, featuring the word "thrivent" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The "t" is stylized with a red dot above it. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the upper right of the "t". The logo is centered within a white rectangular box.

First Lutheran Church of West Seattle is grateful to be a recipient of Thrivent Choice Dollars Grant Funds. If you are a Thrivent member, you can designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to First Lutheran Church of West Seattle.

This chart gives us a good picture of the income so far in 2025 contrasted to the budgeted amount.
Please be generous so that ministry expenses will the goals we set for ourselves this year.
Thank you!

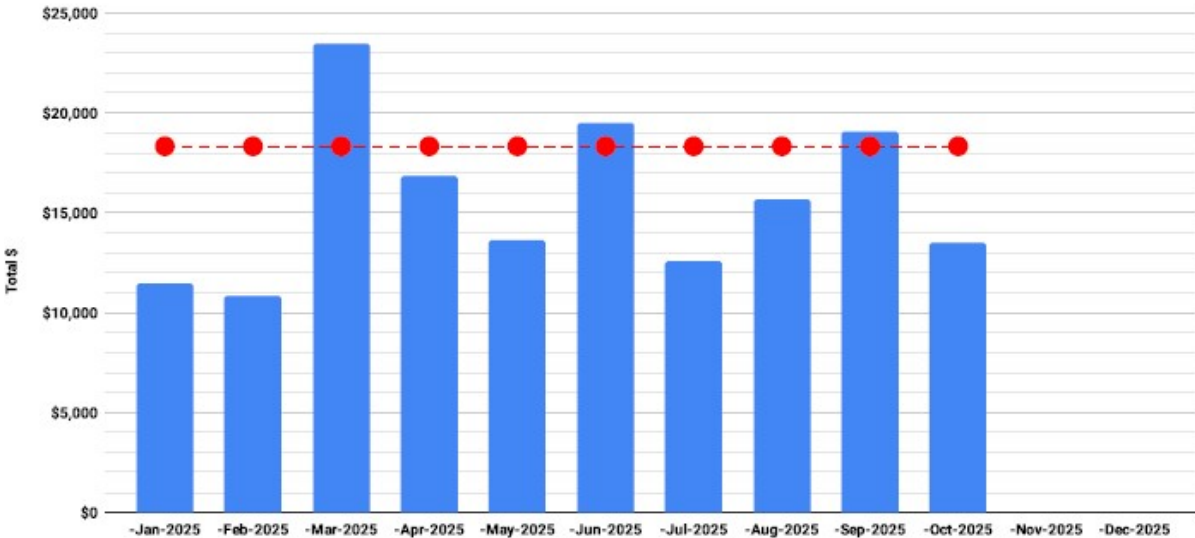
Congregational Monthly Giving - Budgeted vs Actual

(Actual Includes Offering envelopes, cash, EFTs)

YTD Actual = \$163120

YTD Budget = \$183333

■ Actual ● 2025 Budgeted Income (avg needed per month to meet budget)



Feb and Sept contain lump sum giving from givers covering one half or a whole year giving



✠ 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: Shirley Graham, Don Minter and children, Michael Thompson and Jeanine Lingle.

Pray for the homebound that the light of Christ may give them joy: Joan Olson, Jeanine Lingle, Robert Schorn, CJ Christian, Melanie Johnson, Peter Morrison and Nora Vanhala.

Pray for newly elected Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry our pastor Bryon Hansen, our sacristan Dean Hard, our organist and choir-master Dana Robinson, 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: Steve Liang, Peter Douglass, Kathrine Young, Gina Allen, Dale Korsmo, Marianne Petersen, Tyler Schorn, David Juhl, and Steve Jeske, 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 in gratitude for the lives of those who have passed, and pray for those who grieve.

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, that our collective actions may honor God and be a blessing in the world.

Pray for our leaders, that they may govern with wisdom, justice, and mercy.

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, all immigrants and asylum seekers, and all who live in fear.

Pray that God will bless us through the lives of the saints: Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, Maura Clarke and Jean Donovan, martyrs of El Salvador, 1980; Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, 1552; Nicholas, bishop of Myra, c. 342; John of the Cross, renewer of the church, 1591; Teresa of Avila renewer of the church, 1582; Thomas, Apostle; Stephen, Deacon and Martyr; John, Apostle and Evangelist; The Holy Innocents, Martyrs.

*Lord God, we adore you because you have
come to us in the past.*

*You have spoken to us through your commands
and through the prophets.*

*You have shown us in Jesus what you are
really like.*

*Lord God, we adore you because you come to
us now.*

*You come to us in other people who show love
and through neighbors who need our help.*

*You come to us in worship around your word
and table.*

*Lord God, we adore you because you will come
again.*

*You will reign supreme when all human
institutions fall*

*You will be with us at the hour of death and our
history has run its course.*

We welcome you when you come.

Come to us now Lord Jesus.

Amen



A Christmas Tradition At First Lutheran Church of West Seattle

Christmas Eve, December 24th at 11:00 pm

A celebration of Christmas Eve with A Candle Light Service of Lessons and Carols, and Holy Communion.

The service will feature the singing of traditional carols; a candlelight procession of choir, acolytes, vergers, clergy and handbells; anthems sung by the Deo Gloria Cantores; and organ music played on the magnificent Noack Organ, one of the finest organs in the Pacific Northwest.

Christmas Day, December 25th at 10:30 am

A celebration of the Birth of Christ with a Festival Liturgy and Holy Communion. These services will be celebrated within the old-world beauty of this historic West Seattle church with its massive pillars, arches, vaulted beamed ceiling and awe-inspiring stained glass windows.

Join us for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day As part of your Christmas Tradition.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men.

Color, cut, attach to foam core or cardboard to stiffen.



printable

★ nativity ★

playset



OUR COFFEE FELLOWSHIP PROUDLY SERVES

LWR FAIR TRADE COFFEE



STRETCH YOUR DOLLAR: TIPS FROM EXTENDED MINISTRIES:

1. Workplace Giving & Employer Match ProgramS – Payroll deductions are one of the easiest ways to support the Food Bank and other charities. Many companies will double or triple charitable donations.
2. Use code WSFB when you sign up for **Smith Brothers Farms** grocery delivery. Get \$15 off your order and the food bank receives \$50.
3. The 12th annual winter clothing drive has begun at Dave Newman State Farm Insurance Agency! All donations received benefit The Clothesline, WSFB's free clothing bank here in West Seattle. Dave Newman's office will be collecting donations of clothes, coats, and shoes from November 5th until January 1st. Please drop off your donations at 3435 California Ave Southwest. The office is open for donations Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. For undergarments and socks, please donate only new and unopened packages.

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December 2025



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4105 California Avenue S.W.
Seattle, WA 98116-4101

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