



THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE
(206) 935-6530 www.flcws.org January 2026

Pastor's Page — A New Year

New Year's Day always takes place in the middle of Christmas, pretty much halfway through the twelve days. I find this to be so appropriate because Christmas is really about God doing a new thing.

In the ancient church, the Feast of the Epiphany originally celebrated three events: the birth of Christ, the Baptism of Christ, and the miracle of Christ turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. All three were celebrated in one feast and, over time, they were separated. Now, Jesus' baptism is the first Sunday following Epiphany and the miracle at Cana shows up in the lectionary once every three years on the Sunday following the celebration of Jesus' baptism.

Whether they are celebrated in one fell swoop or not, all of these events are epiphanies. They reveal the actions of God who brings about newness.

The Kingdom of God has broken into our troubled, sinful, broken world in the person of Jesus. God comes to us deeply in the flesh in Jesus' birth, his baptism where Jesus is anointed by the Spirit to begin his ministry, and at the wedding in Cana where the transformation of water into wine is nothing less than a sign of God's ability to transform our lives.

God did a new thing.

God is doing a new thing.

It is common to assume that since all of these epiphanies took place in the past that they reside there, but the newness God brings is ever present and leads us into a future filled with hope.

Sometimes a brand new idea or an event that alters one's life will find a person saying, "I had an epiphany!" Just so, epiphanies are fresh revelations that often enlighten us or lead us to change our lives in ways consonant with the love of God.

This is what we pray for when we ask "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This is our prayer at the Eucharistic table when we pray for the Holy Spirit to transform the community who shares bread and cup that we might be the body of Christ for the world. This is our prayer in so many ways – that God will continue to bring newness to a worn out world.

This is the good news we need to hear as we release the past and embark upon a new year with Jesus, one another, and our neighbors.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Hansen

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy New Year!

As we say farewell to 2025, I find myself reflecting on the growth our congregation experienced over the past year. My hope was that we would settle into our processes and continue building on the momentum from the previous year, and I believe we did just that. We welcomed and confirmed new members at our Mid-Year Meeting, increased pledges and planned giving through the Growing in Giving campaign, and saw congregation members actively involved in teaching a series of Adult Formation classes. Our coffee fellowship time following worship has also become a meaningful space for connection, conversation, and refreshment. Thank you to everyone who faithfully supports and hosts coffee fellowship each week.

Looking ahead, our Annual Meeting 2026 is scheduled for Sunday, January 25, 2026, immediately following the 10:30 a.m. liturgy. Additional details will be shared in the weekly bulletins in the coming weeks. The Annual Report for the year 2025 is expected to be published the week before the meeting so that members may review it in advance.

An overdue but exciting item for distribution will be printed copies of our revised FLCWS Constitution, whose final changes were ratified by a second vote in special session prior to last year's Annual Meeting 2025. We hope to provide paper copies at this year's meeting, and digital versions will be available upon request.

As a reminder, we are also in the process of filling several important Church Council positions that will help guide our leadership over the next four years. My term as President will conclude the day after the Annual Meeting, and the Vice President position

remains vacant. At the Annual Meeting, we will be electing candidates for both of these roles, along with multiple general Council member positions. There is still time to meet with me if you are interested in learning more about what these roles involve.

As a next step, following the Church Council retreat held on November 22nd, the Council will be focusing on one particular exercise: conducting interviews with congregation members. Council members will be reaching out in the coming weeks to schedule and hold these conversations. The purpose of these interviews is to get to know one another on a deeper level and to help the Council better understand how to serve the needs of our congregation.

Thank you to all who generously contributed to the Advent Giving Campaign, which concluded at the end of Advent on December 21st. This year's beneficiary was Hospitality House, a women's shelter at Lake Burien. I also extend my gratitude to those who made additional year-end contributions.

I hope everyone had a joyous Christmas season. Thank you for the relationships we share, the generosity shown, and the many blessings within our church community. May we continue to grow in steadfast faith and strengthen our financial support for the church's future.

Steve Liang
-President, Church Council

Council Meeting and links:

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

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD will be celebrated on January 11 at the 10:30 Eucharist. Since it is a festival, the 8:00 a.m. Chapel service will not take place on this day. On this festive occasion we welcome **Emily Deng** into the Body of Christ through the gift of baptism. Pray for Emily as she prepares for this wonderful day.

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

DINNER TEAMS NEEDED! Churches in West Seattle are preparing 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. Our first dinner will be January 14. If you are interested in this ministry, please check the appropriate box on the Count Me In form.

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. Details are forthcoming in the Sunday Bulletin Announcements and the Friday email

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.

FEAST OF EPIPHANY, JANUARY 6TH. Like last year we will celebrate the Feast of Epiphany on January 6th with our friends in Christ at St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church. This year the celebration is at St. John's at 6:30 p.m., with a fellowship get together following the service.. Reverend Elise Johnstone will preside and Pastor Hansen will preach.

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.

FOOD BANK COLLECTION: The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in room C. Suggestions for January are pastas, noodles and sauces. 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: dmrobnson@gmail.com

THE YOUNG ADULT group is meeting again on Sunday, January 18th at 12:15 p.m. at *Meeples*, 3727 California Avenue SW, #2B. FLCWS members and friends in their 20's and 30's (and ?) are welcome to attend. Meeples is a gaming place where there are a variety of board games and other games available. They also serve food. Questions? Contact Pastor Hansen.

WEEKLY FLCWS EMAIL: FLCWS began sending out a weekly email in December. All members and friends of First with email addresses on file will receive the weekly news on Fridays. In addition to news, the email included 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.

We have seen record flooding and evacuations in NW Washington. Your gifts of time, resources and dollars are appreciated. **THANK YOU** for caring for your neighbors!

Checks may be made out to: "NWWA Synod" and on the memo line, please write NWWA Synod Floods.

Drop in the collection basket, or mail to ELCA Region 1; PO Box 94432; Seattle, WA 98124-6732



Thank you for your support of people & places impacted by the recent floods. Financial donations can be shared by check or online giving. More info here: lutheran.org/nwwafloods/disaster-response

STEWARDSHIP

New Year stewardship involves intentionally using your God-given gifts (time, talents, treasure) for His glory, often through New Year's resolutions focused on prayer, family, health, finances, and service, viewing life as a sacred trust to be managed wisely for faith, purpose, and helping others, rather than just personal improvement. It's a holistic commitment to a life of gratitude and service, integrating faith into everyday choices.

Key Areas for New Year Stewardship

1. Prayer: Strengthen your relationship with God through daily, intentional prayer.
2. Time: Be present with family, volunteer, and balance work, rest, and service.
3. Talents: Use your unique abilities to serve others and glorify God.
4. Treasure: Manage finances responsibly, budget wisely, save, and give generously (tithing).
5. Health: Care for your body with healthy eating, exercise, and checkups.
6. Possessions: Practice mindful consumption, owning less and sharing more.

How to Apply Stewardship in the New Year

1. Reflect & Assess: Look back at the past year to see how you used your gifts, identifying areas for growth.
2. Set Intentional Goals: Create resolutions that align with your faith and God's purposes, not just personal desires.
3. Commit to a Lifestyle: See stewardship as an ongoing way of life, not a one-time fix, making consistent, purposeful choices.
4. Pray for Guidance: Ask for humility, courage, and wisdom to live faithfully and serve others.
5. Seek Accountability: Find a mentor, priest, or fellow believer to help you stay on track.

By applying a stewardship lens, your New Year's resolutions become sacred commitments, transforming personal goals into acts of worship and deeper faith.

Mariann Petersen
-Church council



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.

Year-End Update:

Many thanks to those who donated their **Thrivent Choice Dollars** to First Lutheran Church in 2025:
Kathy Ayer, Sonja Clemente, and Dale Korsmo.

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 Camille McGee.

Pray for the homebound that the light of Christ may give them joy: Joan Olson, Jean-nine 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, Palestine, Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan and Nigeria. All immigrants and asylum seekers, and all who live in fear.

Pray that God will bless us through the lives of the saints: Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, 1872; Martin Luther King, Jr., renewer of society, martyr, 1968; Saints Peter & Paul; Timothy, Titus & Silas, missionaries; Lydia, Dorcas & Phoebe, witnesses to the faith; Thomas Aquinas, teacher, 1274.

*O God, you have called
your servants to ventures
of which we cannot see
the ending, by paths as yet
untrodden, through perils
unknown. Give us faith to
go out with good courage,
not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is
leading us and your love
supporting us through
Jesus Christ our Lord.*
Amen.

**THE MESSENGER ONLINE
AND
THE FIRST LUTHERAN
WEEKLY EMAIL**

By now, you should have been receiving a weekly email to keep us all posted on the news and events of FLCWS and more. Casey sends the weekly email out on Friday afternoon. Beginning in February, the Messenger will come to you as the weekly email on the first week of the month. The email each week will be more extensive on the first Friday of the month.

So, this is the last official hard copy of the Messenger. However, if members do not have access to email, a hardcopy will be sent to them. Please let us know if that is your preference or if you have any questions, by contacting Casey in the church office.



THE MESSENGER

January 2026

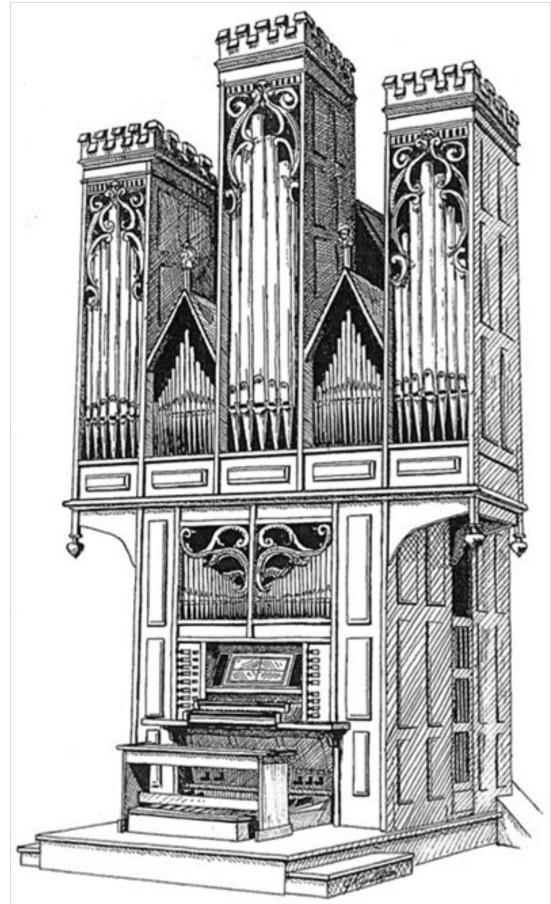


First Lutheran Church of West Seattle
4105 California Avenue S.W.
Seattle, WA 98116-4101

50th Anniversary Noack Organ Concert Series

September 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the gallery Noack organ. To mark this important event, 4 concerts are planned from April 2026 to February 2027. It will also honor Andrew King's work at FLCWS.

Back in 1970 the existing organ was not repairable. In October of 1970 an Organ Committee was formed to determine what type of organ would be financially and artistically practical for the congregation to invest in. Andy was hired in August of 1970, and was immediately in the middle of the process of researching a new organ. Nearly 20 organ builders had been contacted by the Committee. After studying many proposals, the Organ Committee unanimously recommended the Noack Organ Company of Georgetown, Massachusetts. The company owner, Fritz Noack, had apprenticed with some of Europe's finest organ builders before coming to the United States to start his own organ building career. The Gallery organ, Noack #83 takes inspiration from the great 17th and 18th century organs of Germany and France, but in the words of the late builder, the instrument "admires old organs" rather than copies them.



The first program will be on Sunday, **April 19, 2026** at 7 pm. Nathan Laube, Associate Professor of Organ at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester New York and International Consultant in Organ Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in the United Kingdom, is one of the world's elite organ performers. His extensive international recital career takes him continually to major concert venues and festivals around the world. We are delighted that he will play the first recital of our series.

On Sunday, **September 27, 2026**, the second concert in the series, will include a Concerto for Keyboard in d minor, BWV 1052, by J. S. Bach performed by our organist/choirmaster Dana Robinson and joined by a chamber group of period instruments led by Tekla Cunningham of the Seattle Bach Festival. Also on that program will be selections for two organs. Paul Tegels, organist/choirmaster at Christ Church, Tacoma, and Associate Professor Emeritus of Organ at Pacific Lutheran University.

The third concert in the series will be played by Michael Kleinschmidt, who is Canon for Cathedral Music at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral here in Seattle. Before coming to St. Mark's, he served as Canon for Cathedral Music at Trinity Cathedral in Portland, Oregon. He holds degrees from Eastman School of Music and Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. He has played recitals across the world, has a keen appreciation for the ministry of music for children, and serves on the faculty of the Royal School of Church Music summer courses. This concert will be on All Saints' Sunday, **November 1, 2026**.

Our fourth and final concert will be on Sunday **February 8, 2027**. The recitalist is Anne Laver, Associate Professor of Organ and University Organist at Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music. She has performed in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and in the United States. Anne is often a featured artist at conventions of the American Guild of Organists, the Organ Historical Society, the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies, and the Goteborg International Organ Academy in Sweden. In 2010 she was awarded 2nd prize in the AGO National Young Artist Competition in Organ Performance.

Mark your calendar. These are going to be outstanding programs. All extremely talented artists, yet all very different. This will give us all a marvelous experience of the diversity of the gallery Noack organ.

The 50th Anniversary Organ Committee