



Anacortes Lutheran Church

A message from Pastor Scott Peterson

DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." - Isaiah 40: 3-5

Dear Members and Friends of Anacortes Lutheran,

Advent, a season of hope, anticipation, and preparation. This has always been one of my favorite seasons in the church! I love the hymns, I love the decorations and paraments, I love the genuine excitement as we eagerly light a candle each Sunday as we watch for the Messiah. As the world around us tries to rush us into Christmas, I encourage us to not look at this season as just a countdown to Christmas, eagerly awaiting and praying for its end. Instead, let us hold this Advent season as a sacred time of waiting.

In this season we are invited to embrace waiting as an intentional and active practice as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. The word Advent itself literally means "coming" or "arrival" and in Christian tradition we have three different perspectives on the coming of Christ: the physical arrival of Christ's birth in Bethlehem, the reception of Christ in believers' hearts, and the eschatological Second Coming. This season is a time for us to prepare ourselves for the ways that God's presence breaks into our lives!

We are reminded that we are living in a time of "already but not yet"—Christ has already come into the world, but we are still waiting for the fullness of God's kingdom. This waiting can feel frustrating or uncomfortable in the fast-paced world around us. However, the wait is not meant to be passive! We are called to prepare the way of the Lord and in this season of prayer, reflection, and repentance we ask ourselves: How can we make space for Christ this year within our lives? The "wilderness" of our hearts—our anxieties, our sins, our distractions—can obscure the presence of God. Advent invites us to clear away the clutter, to smooth out the rough spots, and to make room for Christ: "making straight in the desert a highway for our God."

As we enter this season, let us embrace the invitation of Advent: to prepare our hearts, to wait with hope, and to rejoice in the love of God that is revealed to us in Christ. Let us, like the Israelites, be encouraged by the words of Isaiah, trusting in and knowing the comfort of God's promises. I pray that our preparation be filled with joy and anticipation as we look forward to the Lord's coming. May this season of Advent be a time of deep spiritual renewal, a time of waiting and watching with expectation, and a time of preparation for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Waiting and watching,

Pastor Scott



Church Council Minutes from November 13, 2025

Attendees: Pastor Scott, Steve Anderson, Don Devine, Julie Jacobson, Bill LeDuc, Lane Phelan, Bruce Rolfe, Pat Carrie Smith, Rosemary Walter

The meeting was called to order and Pastor opened with prayer.
October minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: A written report was submitted. Current offerings are below the projected amount for 2025. Lane will see if Profit/Loss reports could be retitled Income/Expense to be more accurate.

Pastor's Report: A written report was submitted.

Youth & Education: A written summary was submitted. Rosemary gave a report sent from Janice. Pumpkin caring was successful, Stacey will work on a Christmas card project with the kids, Pat-Carrie will talk to Worship committee about adding (or replacing) a song/hymn somewhere in the service that would be simple enough for kids to learn and sing along. Don will ask Amanda to create tags or a list of those members who are Thrivent members (each member can ask for 2 grants/year - these help with Christmas dinner, youth events etc.).

Worship: A written report was submitted.

Finance: A written report was submitted.

Properties: A written report was submitted. Indoor project season has begun.



Outreach: Dave White submitted a report - the annual All Saints Brunch was hosted by the Outreach committee - thanks in particular to Sue & Fred Wintermantel, Dianna Clause, Brian Walker, Kenny Holzemer and Pastor Scott. Thank you to all who have given food for the food bank.

Council Retreat Follow-up: The theme for 2026 will be ALC Year of the Family - with activities and programming that will emphasize families. Bill is working on a collection of related Bible Verses to encourage us through the year.

New Business:

- 2026 Budget- Finance committee has been working on the upcoming budget proposal. Current projections are that we will not make our \$400,000 projected income for 2025. A working goal of \$375,000 will be looked at while putting together the new budget. Salary increases (COLA) was discussed. Bruce made a motion to increase the pay for employees 2.7% (Federal COLA), this was seconded. It would cost about \$10,000 extra for the year. 4 voted for the motion and 2 against, motion passed. This will ultimately be voted on by the congregation.
- Discussion as to whether to ask Island Hospital to pay rent to use our parking lot. A letter will be sent.
- The Scouts (3 troops) will run the Christmas Store this year. The kids can earn merit badges by doing this. It is requested that the troops either haul away what is left at the end or tag it all so it's clear what can be given away at the end of the store season by a volunteer.
- Advent dinners (for a guesstimated 50) will happen Dec. 3 (Don/Jeanen to lead), and Dec. 10 & 17 (Khiles to lead).
- Bill made a motion to split the Thanksgiving Offerings between Salvation Army Food Bank, El Camino de Emaus, and Lutheran Disaster Relief. Motion passed.
- Bill made a motion to split the Christmas Offerings between the Friendship House in Mount Vernon, Anacortes Family Center and Camp Lutherwood. Motion passed.
- Christmas Dinner plans are under way. Anne Barry could use some extra help at this planning stage.
- Note - with the new Constitution, the annual Committee Reports are not due until the June meeting.
- The council approved the request by Joey Pestar to use church space for a young adults Bible Study group on Sunday evenings.
- Pat Carrie made a motion to ask for 18 Christmas gift tags from Josephine Care Center and to give some benevolence money towards the Rosario Assisted Living facility. Motion passed.
- Pat-Carrie made a motion to approve paying a Dedicated Lead Audio Technician, who is responsible for the new sound board, answering questions from trainees and troubleshooting issues with the sound board and sound system. 5 voted for the motion and 2 were opposed, 1 abstained.

council minutes cont...

Steve made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer. Our next regular council meeting will be held December 11 at 4:00 pm. Please have committee reports in to Julie no later than midnight on Tuesday, December 9.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Jacobson, Council Secretary

Properties – December

Preschool: The furnace filter already needed to be replaced. Very strange. Upon examining the intake vent screen, I found it very dusty. Saturday, I removed it to wash and up inside was a lot of dust. So with a 6 foot ladder and my shop vac, I removed all till the vac filter began to clog.

I found the furnace fan was set to “always on” which is not good. And the furnace thermostat did not have the AA back up batteries installed (in case of power fail).

Then, checking the preschool laundry room and looking behind the clothes dryer, it appears the dryer tube was either broken or disconnected from the wall. This would allow much of the dust and lint to escape into the room, near the ceiling furnace intake.

Steve Anderson – handyman

Friends and Family Pool Party

January 11, 2026 will be a pool party at Fidalgo Pool from 3:30-5:30 pm. This is a canned food drive so please bring a non-perishable food item.

WELCA NEWS

Please join us for the annual Christmas Potluck brunch, December 9th at 10:00 am. Bring a dish to share. All ALC ladies are welcome to join us.

WE ARE RETURNING TO 3 SERVICES ON CHRISTMAS EVE!

Worship Committee met in early November and we decided to return to three services on Christmas Eve: 3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.! We discussed our moving to two services last year, 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. and noticed that attendance numbers were close to the same as pervious years, however, one service was still packed with people. By having the 3 services, it takes enough attendance off of the over packed service and also gives people a later evening choice. We hope to see you all at one of the services on Christmas Eve!

Thank you,

ALC Worship Committee

PRAY FOR OUR 2025 CHURCH COUNCIL & COMMITTEES

President: Don Devine
Vice-President: Bill LeDuc
Secretary: Julie Jacobson
Treasurer: Lane Phelan
Stewardship: Bill LeDuc
Outreach: Julie Jacobson
Personnel: Jeaneen Brogan
Josephine Delegates: Pastor Peterson, Linda Millo
Finance: Lane Phelan, Bill LeDuc
 Linda Millo
Finance Secretary: Linda Millo
Camp Lutherwood Rep: Kenny Holzemer

Fellowship :
Education: Rosemary Walter
Youth: Rosemary Walter
Preschool: Lane Phelan
Properties: Steve Anderson
Worship: Pat Carrie Smith
WELCA : Lane Phelan
Legacy Endowment: Wayne Olsen, Rod Odegaard
 Julie Jacobson
Synod Assy Delegates: Pastor Peterson, Lois Cassidy
 Linda Millo



SEWING

We are in the Advent season The church is decorated and feels very festive. The coats have come out; the warm sweaters are being worn. I don't like to be cold. So I appreciate my warm coats and clothing and blankets. I also appreciate the women who come on Tuesdays and work from home to make quilts and assemble kits.

This ministry provided warmth and encouragement all over the world. We did our annual shipping the end of October. Here is what we sent.

- 176 quilts
- 188 baby care kits
- 174 personal care kits
- 22 fabric kits
- 193 school kits



This came to 2,190 pounds transported by the Kiwanis truck. Fred Wintermantel, Bob Higgins and their crew of church members and boy scouts brought boxes down from upstairs, loaded the truck and drove our donations to the Seattle area. The quilt raffle was a great success. Linda Walker and Rosemary Walters were the winners of the two beautiful quilts.

Because of the ticket sales and generous donations, we were able to send the full amount of 75 cents a pound (rounded up - \$1650.)

Thank you to everyone who mad a donation, worked on projects and prayed for this ministry. We are already working on next year's shipment. December 2, 16, 23 & 30 are December's sewing dates.

WHY DOES OUR CHURCH CHOIR SING FROM THE BACK OF THE SANCTUARY?

Did you know that there is a long-standing history in churches that choirs sing from the back of sanctuaries? Church choirs often sing from the back of a church, typically in a choir loft, to enhance acoustics and allow the congregation to focus on the liturgy without distraction. This arrangement also historically reflects the choir's role in supporting the worship experience while maintaining a sense of reverence. A church choir's job is not just to sing beautifully, but rather it is to minister to the congregation.

Choirs hold a multifaceted role in Christian worship, rooted deeply in biblical tradition. They enhance worship, teach and edify the congregation, foster community and fellowship, promote personal spiritual growth, and serve as cultural and evangelistic tools. It is the choir's job to help the congregation pray to and praise our Lord, we pray often that our music can be a vehicle of prayer and praise to the congregation. We are not singing as a performance, but as our own prayer to God and as a way to give thanks for the gifts that He has given to us. This is why we do not sing from the front of the sanctuary.

Pop Francis stated: "Your music and song are truly an instrument of evangelization to the extent that you bear witness to the depth of the Word of God, which touches people's hearts, and to the extent that you assist in the celebration of the Sacraments, in particular the Holy Eucharist, allowing us to perceive the beauty of Paradise."

Singing and Praising Jesus together!

Laurie

ALC CHOIR PARTY!!

All choir members and their families are invited to the choir's Christmas Party on Sunday, December 28th at 5:30 p.m. Now is the time to join choir as our parties are really fun! We will have a white elephant gift exchange as we have done in past years (you do not have to participate, you can just watch and have fun if you want!), and here are the details:

Date: Sunday, December 28, 2025

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Place: El Jinete Mexican Restaurant (subject to holiday schedules)

White Elephant Gift Exchange: Bring a white elephant type gift for each person who will be participating.

Self-hosted, fun for all! Mark your calendars and come to dinner!!!

RSVP to Laurie at: ljc@fidalgo.net Thanks!

Laurie





CHRISTMAS DINNER: We're already working on Christmas Dinner 2025. Sign ups begin the Sunday after Thanksgiving. We hope you'll join us! Anne Barry, Don Devine, Melanie Sanhow, Roger Peckman.



TABLE SERVICE &
DRIVE THRU MEALS TO-GO

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

Anacortes Lutheran Church
2100 "O" AVENUE

Thursday, December 25, 2025

Free

TABLE SERVICE
11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

DRIVE THRU MEALS TO-GO
12:30—2:30 pm

Enter parking lot from "O" Ave & proceed as directed

HOMEBOUND?
To schedule delivery, call the church office
no later than NOON - MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED
WANT TO HELP? QUESTIONS?

Anacortes Lutheran Church office 360-293-9586

**ALG SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY
PRIME TIMERS™**

— Retirees gathering together for Fun, Food, and Fellowship.

Joy Walter is hosting an "Out to Lunch" to *El Jinete Mexican Restaurant* on Friday, December 12. Please meet in Conference Room #1 at 11:00 p.m.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to the volunteers who graciously hosted the monthly get-togethers in 2025.

2026 will bring changes – events will be held quarterly on the 2nd Friday or Saturday. The schedule is as follows: March 13 – Bingo, June 12 – Out to Lunch, September 11 or 12 - Day Outing planned by Paul and Julie, and December 11 – Get Together in the Fellowship Hall.

If you have an idea for the day outing or if you are interested in hosting an event, please call, text, or email Julie.

Have a fun fall, stay safe, and be happy.

Paul - Julie Dusenbury




Please join us

ADVENT DINNER

December 3, 10 & 17
At 5:30 pm

Worship to follow

Dates to Celebrate in December



Birthdays

01	Nancy Loftis	15	Matthew Sullivan
04	Graham Ferkovich	17	Breauna Sullivan
06	Robert Claus	20	Jim Carver
06	Marvin Walter	20	Diane Gusa
08	Stacey Pestar	20	Gary Walter
08	Melanie Sahnaw	22	Colleen Legan
10	William Rasar	23	Anne Barry
10	Norm Vigre	24	Irene Parker
11	Cora Costenbader	28	Matthew Phelan
11	Matthew Lowrie	29	Erin Flanigan
11	Karen Whittier	29	Carol Oglesbee
11	Corbin Walter	30	Peggy White
12	Robert Eggleston	31	Joseph Fisher
15	Alice Dohve	31	Norma Knutsen
15	Stella Smith	31	Dana McCoy

Anniversaries

02	Donald & Rachel Devine
12	Robert & Rebecca Eggleston
18	Robert & DeAnna Claus
24	Kenny & Lacey Smith
26	Stan Berntson & Sharon Geldaker
27	Stan & Leone Zimmerman
28	Chad & Jennifer Hansen

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Worship Attendance

Date	Events	In-Person	Nursery	Live-Stream
Oct 26	Reformation Sunday	112	1	44
Nov 2	Reformation/ Quilt Blessing	98	2	40
Nov 9	22nd Sunday after Pentecost	88	5	31
Nov 16	23rd Sunday after Pentecost	106	2	87
Nov 23	Christ the King/ Pie Sunday	101	2	**
Nov 30	1st Sunday in Advent	**	**	**

** Not available at time of printing





From the Bishop:

December 2025

Have you ever paused to consider how the Christmas story includes the very sordid tale of an engaged young woman who, to all appearances, was unfaithful to her fiancé? While we often sing about the hope and joy of this child (we know who this child is after all!), those in the middle of it all, heartache abounded. Joseph wondered who the father of this child truly was. Mary's parents feared for her reputation and her future. And Mary? Mary did not walk through any of this untouched by pain. What a miserable, tangled mess. Poor Joseph. Poor Mary. And what a precarious, almost unthinkable situation for God to choose to be the way of coming into the world.

And perhaps this is why we love this story so deeply. Because God coming to the world as a baby, God becoming flesh – incarnate – becoming human, was never meant to only be miraculous and beautiful and amazing. It was never merely a night where angels sang and shepherds worshiped. It was never simply about a couple who accepted and embraced this new thing without thought or questions or fear.

No. In this story of incarnation we are given truth. The truth that life is sometimes difficult, sometimes hard. The truth that in this world there is confusion and fear and brokenness and messiness. Though no angel has come to interrupt our lives with such extraordinary news, every one of us knows frustration and grief and those heavy, unspoken things that keep us awake at night. And so, this story is not only something we know – it's a story that knows us.

If you have a Bible handy (or a Bible app), I invite you to open it up to Matthew 1 and read the genealogy listed there. At first glance, it reads like a list of heroes. But if we scratch the surface, there is a more complicated truth of who these people were. Abraham nearly sacrificed his son. Jacob cheated his brother out of his birthright. David arranged a man's murder to prevent a scandal. And then there's all those women listed – Bathsheba, Rahab, Ruth – whose stories, or at least the way they have been remembered, are filled with struggle, tragedy, or suspicion.

But here's the thing. We know that God was with every one of those men and women, as broken as they were, as much fear or anxiety they might have had, as messy as their lives were, as complicated as the world was. God worked through their lives in the midst of it all. We know that Abraham's son Isaac was not sacrificed, a ram was provided. Rahab saved God's people. Ruth became the ancestor of kings. And above all these stories, we have the Christmas story – truly the whole Jesus story.

We know, through all these stories, that God comes and is incarnate in the lives of messy, complicated people. We know that the Spirit is always moving through broken places to bring wholeness and new life. Always, always God comes – even when all seems hopeless or chaotic.

So, perhaps now, in this time, when so much seems to be fraught and unknown, so much seems to be uncertain or just plain bad, when we aren't sure what is next or what choice is best, we hear the Christmas story anew. And, in hearing it, may we trust that God is here, always, in our stories and in our lives.

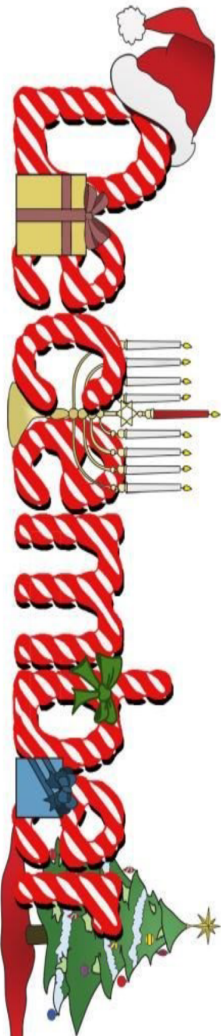
Today we live in expectation. Today, we hope and trust, even in our messiness, that God comes to us, holds us, and loves us. Today we hold onto the promises that God is with us – incarnate in Jesus – and together we have the promise of a world made new through Jesus Christ, bringing true peace to this world. And, until then, we pray, come, Lord Jesus, come!

Blessed Advent and Christmas,

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

bishop@lutheransnw.org





2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
7 FAMILY & PRAISE SUNDAY EDUCATION Time 9:00a WORSHIP 10:00a Fellowship Hour 11:00a	8 O.A 10:00a SCOUT B 7:00p	9 WELCA Xmas Brunch 10:00a SCOUT G 7:00p	10 Staff Meeting 9:30a Prek Chapel 10:45a A-Town Cigy Mtg 12:30p ADVENT DINNER 5:30p CHOIR Rehearsal 7:00p	11 Men's Bible Study 7:00a Prek Chapel 10:45a CHURCH COUNCIL 4:00p SCOUT B Leader 7:00p	12	13 Carol Kirby Memorial 2:00p
14 3rd Sunday in Advent EDUCATION Time 9:00a WORSHIP 10:00a Fellowship Hour 11:00a	15 O.A 10:00a LWR Knitting 1:00p SCOUT B 7:00p	16 Sewing 9:00a YOUTH Comm 6:30p SCOUT G 7:00p	17 Staff Meeting 9:30a Prek Chapel 10:45a ADVENT DINNER 5:30p CHOIR Rehearsal 7:00p	18 Men's Bible Study 7:00a Prek Chapel 10:45a	19	20
21 4th Sunday in Advent EDUCATION Time 9:00a WORSHIP 10:00a Fellowship Hour 11:00a Longest Night Service 5:00p	22 O.A 10:00a	23 Sewing 9:00a	24 Christmas Eve CANDLE-LIGHT SERVICES 3pm, 5pm & 10pm	25 Christmas Day CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE 10:00a FREE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER 11:00 am -2:30 pm	26 Office Closed	27
28 1st Sunday in Christmas EDUCATION Time 9:00a WORSHIP 10:00a Fellowship Hour 11:00a	29 O.A 10:00a ALTAR Guild 11:00a	30 Sewing 9:00a	31 New Year's Eve			
	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE					