

Christ's Ambassador

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Preston, Minnesota



J U L Y
~2026~

Love God, Love People, Follow Jesus

Christ Lutheran Church - Preston, Minnesota

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Website: www.christlutheranpreston.org

Church council: Amanda Heibel, Dena Mathison, Andy Bunge,
Katie Marzolf-Harstad, Jennifer Pickett, Melissa Severson, Jon Wood

**From the Pastor's Desk: Care Team Brings Worship,
Compassion, and Care on the Road**



On any given week, the Care Team of Christ Lutheran can be found in places where the church's walls don't reach—but its heart certainly does. Sometimes that looks like a circle of residents gathered for worship. Sometimes it's a quiet conversation in a living room. Sometimes it's a car ride that eases someone's worry. In every case, it is the same ministry: Christ's love, shared person to person.

At Traditions, Park Lane, the Minnesota State Veterans Home, and the Harmony Care Center, residents and Care Team members look forward to our worship services. The format differs from a Sunday morning service, and I enjoy preparing each service with the residents in mind. Scripture, prayer, Holy Communion, and beloved hymns weave us together across traditions. With the help of Mary Glaser, Dawn Hellickson, Carol Solberg, and Vicki Kruegel, we bring worship to those who can no longer come to the sanctuary.

Care Team members also visit homes, assisted-living apartments, and long-term care facilities and maintain relationships with members who may feel the distance of illness, age, or isolation. These visits often include prayer, scripture, holy communion, and sharing memories. Volunteers Jim Keune, Steve Corson, Jon Ebner, Joyce Hellickson, Nancy Hengeveld, and Cheryl Schumacher carry this ministry with tenderness and faithfulness, reminding each person they visit: *You are not forgotten. You are part of us.*

In addition, the ministry has grown in a practical and compassionate direction through the Christ Lutheran Ride Program. For many, getting to a medical appointment can be stressful. A ride from a friendly face makes everything easier. Coordinated by Mike Erdman and supported by drivers Carol Collett, Teresa Hoff, Joyce Hellickson, and Vonnie Aug, the program offers more than transportation, it offers companionship and reassurance,

These ministries exemplify our faith as we go out into the world as God's hands and feet. With every visit, every prayer, every mile driven the Care Team embodies faith active in love. Their work strengthens our congregation by keeping us connected across generations and life circumstances.

We are grateful to the people who serve on the Care Team. If you discern you might have time, presence, or a listening ear to offer, there is always a need for more hands and hearts. Please reach out to Pastor Kris to learn how you might join in this ministry.

GREETINGS FROM THE NEWLY FORMED FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dear Members and Friends of Christ Lutheran Church,

We are writing to share an important update regarding our congregation’s financial situation. The Church Council has formed a Finance Committee to help us navigate the challenges we are currently facing. The committee includes Council President **Dena Mathison**, Council Treasurer **Andy Bunge**, and members **Gary Hellickson, Ron Schrier, and Chuck Aug**. The committee held its first meeting on **June 22, 2026**. This committee will be looking at both the immediate financial needs and possible long-term solutions. This letter addresses immediate needs.

At that meeting, we reviewed the financial statement through the end of May. At this point in the year, we are **\$17,634.61 behind** our 2026 budget. In past years, we were able to rely on reserve funds to cover shortfalls; however, those reserves have now been fully used.

Both the Council and the Finance Committee have carefully reviewed the current budget and were unable to identify significant cuts that would meaningfully address the deficit without impacting core ministries and services. One option discussed was establishing a line of credit to cover monthly shortfalls, but the committee did not support borrowing at this time.

Instead, we believe it is important to communicate openly with the congregation. We will be sharing this information by letter, email, and in the *Ambassador* so that all members are aware of the need.

Historically, December giving has helped us meet our annual budget. Last year reserve funds were used to cover the 2025 year-end shortage. These funds are no longer available for any shortage in 2026. However, we cannot wait until the end of the year to address this deficit. If we as a congregation wish to maintain our current level of programming, staffing, and ministry, we need to respond now.

We ask you to prayerfully consider this appeal and allow the Spirit to move your heart toward generosity, as God has generously blessed us all.

With gratitude,
The Finance Committee



JULY SERVICE GROUP

Member	E-mail	Phone #
Andy & Gail Bunge, <i>Chairpersons</i>	majabunge@hotmail.com	507-259-1444
Brad & Alison Leathers, <i>Chairpersons</i>	alisonbleathers@gmail.com	507-251-8049
Chuck & Vonnie Aug	vonnieaug@icloud.com	507-251-2179
Amanda Todd Blaney	amanda_686@yahoo.com	507-450-4315
Tami Christianson	tami.j.christianson@gmail.com	507-251-6496
Christy Gildner	cbakken@live.com	507-421-3199
Rich & Kris Kincaid	revkris.christlutheranprest on@gmail.com	507-330-1824
Linda Marzolf	ldmarzolf@gmail.com	507-765-2435
LaVerne & Denise Paulson	lcpaulson_7@hotmail.com	507-251-4952
Marvin & Brenda Ristau	brenda.ristau@isd2198.k12.mn.us	507-421-6724
Justin & Emilee Ristau	ejristau50@gmail.com	507-226-7580
Cheryl Severson		507-884-1702

Worship Assistants in July

Acolytes

- 5 Jezlyn Finseth
- 12 Easton Grabau
- 19 Reese Larson
- 26 Ava Severson

Computer

- 5 Charlie Every
- 12 Taylor Kerns
- 19 Hudson Larson
- 26 Camryn Severson

Lectors

- 5 Cari Ledin
- 12 Dena Mathison
- 19 Mary Glaser
- 26 Andy Bunge



Greeters

5 Mike & Janet Erdman
12 Nancy Hengeveld
19 LaVerne & Denise Paulson
26 Leather's family

Altar Guild.....Mary Irish/Vicki Kruegel/Gail Bunge

Ushers.....Dean & Carol Solberg/Michael Johnson/Jimmy Specht

Communion Assistants

July 5.....Melissa Severson/Darrel Olson/Carol Solberg

July 19.....Andy Bunge/Jen Pickett/Katie Marzolf-Harstad

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Women's Fellowship will not meet in July. The next Women's Fellowship will meet at the church on Wednesday, August 26, 6:30 p.m., at the church in the Heritage Room. Join us as we continue discussing Joan Chittister's *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully* (pages 153-172). All are welcome!

Ministerial Acts in June

Baptisms

June 28 Wrenley Roselyn Mary Walker, daughter of Logan & Lexie Walker



Summer Book Read – NEW DATE/TIME & LOCATION!!

“They Left Us Everything” by Plum Johnson

Join us at Janet Erdman’s home for conversation and fellowship on **Tuesday, July 14th at 9:30 a.m.**



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARYS



- 7/1 Ramona Moger, Mike Erdman
- 7/2 Jon Ebner
- 7/3 Joey Ristau; *Lynn & Kim Ristau – Anniv.*
- 7/5 Cheryl Schumacher
- 7/6 Jeanette Serfling, Mary Lou Hansen; *Walt & Mary Lou Hansen – Anniv.*
- 7/7 Theodore Parker
- 7/8 Travis Gatzke, Cassidy Broadwater; Kaylee Hernandez; *Andy & Gail Bunge – Anniv.; Jason & Amanda Sethre – Anniv.*
- 7/10 Marissa Topness, Jackson Serfoss; *Rick & Sue Grooters – Anniv.*
- 7/11 Keanna Weedman
- 7/13 Devan Schmidt; *Travis & Cara Ristau – Anniv.*
- 7/14 Trent Pikula, Logan Runtsch, Cyrus Deyo-Jackson; *Larry & Dawn Ristau – Anniv.*
- 7/17 Jade Grabau
- 7/18 Arlene Brekke, Griffin Holtegaard
- 7/20 Cal Larson
- 7/21 Lisa Baker
- 7/22 Darrel Olson
- 7/24 Ryan Schroeder
- 7/26 Adam Reicks, Carol Gosi
- 7/27 Jezlyn Finseth, Rich Kincaid
- 7/28 Christine Olson
- 7/29 Kamryn Pederson, Vivian Ristau
- 7/30 Sawyer Johnson, Ellen Schwartz, Palmer Root
- 7/31 Linda Trende

2026 Craft & Bake Sale

Saturday Dec. 5, 2026

9 am - 2 pm

Fellowship Hall (basement)

Save the date! Calling all crafters, bakers, sewers, woodworkers and more! Everyone's help is needed for our upcoming craft and bake sale so please put on your creative hats and start planning how you can help make our 2026 sale a huge success!

This event is our only fundraiser to support the church and our missions. Therefore we really need your help in crafting, creating, and baking. Top selling items include:

- All baked goods, especially Norwegian baked goods, cookies, and breads
- Jellies, granola, and soup mixes
- Cat and dog toys/items
- Small gift baskets and stocking stuffers

Back this year are the raffle and Gnome Cafe. Please think how you and your family can donate your time and talents to these efforts. Even if you are unable to craft or bake, please consider making a monetary donation for our event which we will use toward supplies, crafts, et al.

This event is a success because of the congregation's help! For questions/comments, please reach out to any of the co-chairs this year which are:

- Janet Erdman - (612) 756-1578
- Alison Leathers - (507) 251-8049
- Gail Bunge - (507) 259-1444
- Susan Pikula - (507) 993-2575
- Teresa Hoff - (507) 259-3206
- Kayla Peterson - (507) 259-1504
- Jonie Keune - (507) 272-4338
- Kari Mensink - (507) 259-1040
- Linda Trende - (507) 273-2696



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Fillmore County Relay for Life
 will be held in Fountain on Saturday August 29th,
 at the Community Center.
 Survivors Tea at 4; Dinner 5-7; Walk 7-9
 Luminaries can be purchased for \$1/10 or \$3/25.
 If you would like to purchase them please contact
 Marilyn Schreier at 480-202-3027.

JULY 2026 CALENDAR

July 2, THURS.

11:30 am -Exercise

JULY 5, SUN.

9 am -Worship/Communion - Deacon Cindy Eversole

10 am -Coffee/Fellowship

JULY 6, MON.

5 pm -Children, Youth, and Family Committee

JULY 7, TUES.

11:30 am -Exercise

2 pm -Harmony Care Center Worship

3:00 pm -Veteran's Home Worship

JULY 8, WED.

6 pm -WOW Night - 6-11th graders

JULY 9, THURS.

9 am -Men's Fellowship

11:30 am -Exercise

JULY 12, SUN.

9 am -Worship

JULY 14, TUES.

9:30 am -Summer Book Read at Janet Erdman's

11:30 am -Exercise

6:30 pm -Stewardship Committee

JULY 15, WED.

9:30 am -Traditions Worship/Park Lane Worship

6:30 pm -Sunday School Team meeting

JULY 16, THURS.

11:30 am -Exercise

JULY 19, SUN.

9 am -Worship/Communion

10 am -Coffee/Fellowship

JULY 21, TUES.

11:30 am -Exercise

JULY 23, THURS.

11:30 am -Exercise

JULY 26, SUN.

9 am -Worship

JULY 29, WED.

2 pm -Celebration of Life for Marilyn Bunge



Christ Lutheran Church Council Minutes

Date: June 11, 2026

Meeting Time: 6:30 pm

(X) Indicates Present for the Meeting

Member		Term Complete	Member		Term Complete
Rev. Kris Kincaid	X		Melissa Severson	X	2026
Jonathan Wood	X	2025	Katie Marzolf-Harstad		2026
Andy Bunge	X	2025	Dena Mathison	X	2027
Jennifer Pickett	X	2026	Amanda Heibel	X	2027

Devotion Reflection- Dena Mathison

Approval of previous Council Meeting Minutes: emailed out before the meeting and in the packet

- Motion to approve Jennifer Pickett with a second by Amanda Heibel.

All members approve.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: Andy to highlight any items of interest

-Andy will start scheduling meetings for the finance committee.

Motion to approve by Andy Bunge with a second by Jonathon Wood. All members approve.

Team Meeting Reports Submitted by: Approval of Reports (by consensus)

Stewardship: Andy Bunge

CYF: Katie Marzolf-Harstad and Melissa Severson

Social Outreach: Amanda Heibel

Property: Jonathan Wood

-Update from Pastor Kris on exercise class

Worship and Music: Jen Pickett

Pastor's Report: Motion to approve team meeting and Pastor's reports by Jennifer Pickett with a second by Jonathon Wood. All members approve.

New Business:

Old Business:

1. Format of Council Meetings

a. Reminder: Send committee reports to Amanda early so they can be sent out ahead of the meetings.

b. How will we handle the length of the discussion and staying on task

I. Reminder of Robert's Rules of Order and have concrete action items

2. Blue Grass & BBQs event on Thursday, August 6th, 5:30-7:30 pm

a. Paul has sent out the letters to farmers, and an advertising poster has been made.

3. First Communion Conversation

a. Motion for first communion to be offered in 5th grade, however parents have an opportunity to have a conversation with Pastor Kris for a younger child to have instruction with her to receive communion at an earlier age by Jennifer Pickett with a second by Jonathon Wood. All members approve.

4. Finance Committee

a. Update from Andy - he will plan a meeting.

I. Andy will look into credit card versus debit card and limits.

II. Tabled for next month.

5. Picture Directory-Summer project

a. Ideas of members to help with this:

b. Consider having a script for council members to discuss and to be placed in the bulletin and newsletter to aid in gathering individuals to help.

Discussion:

1. Counters

a. We need someone to take the lead on scheduling, finding subs, and recruiting

I. Worship committee? Find a lay person? If a lay person is responsible for scheduling, who is responsible for finding that lay person?

II. Pastor Kris will speak with Susan Hager about being a lead counter.

III. Tabled for next month.

2. Piano Subs

a. Is there a list, or can we create suggestions for Tami

b. Karen Miller is creating a list of subs.

3. Contemporary Worship Service

a. Set a consistent schedule (like the second Sunday of the month)

b. Cari and Duane Ledin would like to offer a monthly contemporary service.

I. Schedule is set for the summer.

4. Council Retreat with Rev. Emily Carson

a. Pastor Kris has reached out and is looking for some available dates

b. Pastor Kris will check on available fall dates.

c. Tabled for next month.

Next Council Meeting Scheduled: Wednesday, August 19th at 6:30 pm

Lighting Round of Celebrations/Prayer Requests

Adjourn - Close with the Lord's Prayer

Motion to adjourn by Amanda Heibel with a second by Jonathon Wood.

All members approve.

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Severson.

BLUEGRASS AND BBQ
COMMUNITY NIGHT
THURSDAY, AUGUST 6
5:30-7:30 PM

CLASSIC CAR CRUISE-IN
MOTORCYCLES WELCOME!

FREE PULLED PORK DINNER
LIVE MUSIC BY THE FARMERS MARKET RAMBLERS

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
PRESTON, MN

★ FAMILY FRIENDLY ★ EVERYONE INVITED ★ COME MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS!

FREE FOOD (PULLED PORK DINNER SERVED TIL IT'S GONE!)
LIVE MUSIC (FREE LIVE MUSIC FROM THE FARMERS MARKET RAMBLERS)
CLASSIC CARS (CRUISE-IN MOTORCYCLES WELCOME!)
FAMILY FUN (A GREAT NIGHT FOR ALL AGES!)

BRING A LAWN CHAIR ★ RAIN OR SHINE ★ SEATING AVAILABLE FOR BIKERS

PRAYER list

The family of Marilyn Bunge
 Barb Barrett, Park Lane Estates
 Ila Mae Olstad, Park Lane Estates
 Jim Fossum, Fillmore Place
 Arlen Kiehne, Chatfield Nursing Home
 Val Christensen, Chatfield Nursing Home
 Averlene Marzolf, Traditions
 Helen Haugerud, Traditions
 Linda Hahn Smith, Traditions
 Richard Behnke, Traditions
 Walt Hanson, Minnesota State Veterans Home
 Mary Lou Hansen, Harmony Care Center
 Arlene Bakalyar, Harmony Care Center
 Arnie Keene, Harmony Care Center
 Bridget Case
 Fred Nagle, Stewartville Care Center

SUMMER CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES



SUMMER WOW NIGHTS - FUN, FAITH, FRIENDS. COME FOR THE FUN - STAY FOR YOUR FAITH!

Wednesdays - July 8 | August 12 / 6-7:30 pm
 For youth entering 6th grade and older

Come hang out for games, treats, and fun in a place you belong. Bring a friend and spend the summer laughing, connecting, and growing in God's love. Our youth will be hosting each month—enjoy the awesome activities they have planned! Updates will be posted on www.christlutheranpreston.org as well as the Christ Lutheran Facebook and Instagram pages. See you this summer!

CONFIRMATION CAMP - Grades 6-9, (2025-2026). Attend Good Earth Village Camp with Confirmation Youth from other churches and Pastor Kris! It's a Good Earth Village Camp experience specifically for Confirmands! Must Register by July 29.



IMAGINE MORE - The 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering
 June 28 to July 2, 2027, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

IMPORTANT: Watch for an information meeting to be held in July. Date TBD.

The 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering is a triennial event that brings together high school youth and adult leaders for a week of faith formation, worship, service, and community activities. The theme for 2027 is "Imagine More" inspired by Ephesians 3:20, encouraging participants to explore love, grace, welcome, joy, and courage. Those attending will experience large-scale worship experiences, interactive learning with ministry partners, hands-on activities, small group discussions, and service opportunities that promote social justice and community engagement. Plus - activities we as a Christ Lutheran group choose.

Eligibility and Registration: Youth who are in grades 7-11 during the 2025-2026 school year are eligible to attend. For those who graduated from high school earlier than 2026, new in 2027 there is also a young adult track geared for individuals 18-25.

All young-adult participants will be part of an age-based small group with whom they can connect throughout the Young Adult Gathering. Find more information here, Gathering | 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering (elca.org/gathering) and follow the Gathering on TikTok @[@elcagathering](https://www.tiktok.com/@elcagathering) | Instagram @[@elcagathering](https://www.instagram.com/elcagathering) | Facebook @[@elcagathering](https://www.facebook.com/elcagathering).



Every night in every home



1	Psalms 121:8
2	Isaiah 6:8
3	Genesis 12:1-2
4	Genesis 41:46-57
5	Mark 6:1-6
6	Mark 6:7-13
7	Ezekiel 2:1-5
8	Proverbs 16:9
9	Luke 10:30-37
10	Exodus 13:21
11	Ezra 2:1-2
12	Isaiah 43:2
13	Psalms 85:8-13
14	Ruth 1:16
15	Psalms 119:105
16	Mark 1:39
17	Isaiah 55:12
18	Mark 6:30-34
19	Mark 6:53-56
20	Psalms 23:1-6
21	Mark 8:27
22	Luke 8:1
23	Matthew 10:16
24	Matthew 2:9-12
25	Matthew 2:13-15
26	Luke 2:41-52
27	Psalms 139:9-10
28	Luke 24:13-15
29	Acts 8:26-40
30	Deuteronomy 31:8
31	Mark 16:15

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Holy Communion and *The Use of the Means of Grace*

Pastor Kris Hertsgaard Kincaid

At Christ Lutheran Church, we understand Baptism and Holy Communion as “means of grace”—holy gifts through which God brings grace, forgiveness, and new life through ordinary elements joined with God’s Word.

In Holy Communion, ordinary bread and wine, or grape juice, carry Christ’s real presence to the gathered community. As Martin Luther taught, Jesus is present “in, with, and under” the bread and wine because Christ has promised it (Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20).

In worship each time Holy Communion is observed I note, “We believe this is God’s table and God makes a place for you.” While instruction has traditionally been offered to fifth-grade children and their parents, some families seek instruction earlier in light of the their child’s readiness and the ELCA’s teaching and statement *The Use of the Means of Grace* (1997). This statement on word and sacrament reminds us that Jesus sets no specific age for Baptism or First Communion. Our practice is shaped by Christ’s command and promise, good order in the church, and a faithful balance between trust in Christ and growing understanding.

After prayerful consideration, the church council has adapted Holy Communion instruction as follows:

- Fifth-grade children and their parents will continue to be offered annual instruction, traditionally during Lent.
- Pastor Kris will offer an all-ages Holy Communion class in the fall. Younger children who express interest may participate with their parents after family discernment and conversation with Pastor Kris.

We recognize that children grow in faith at different times. Some may be ready for this milestone earlier than fifth grade and others later than fifth grade. Pastor Kris is prepared to support families in this discernment and asks you to reach out to her before attending the class.

ELCA RESOURCES – *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament. Adopted for guidance and practice by the Fifth Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 19, 1997.* This document is an online resource made available by the ELCA.

2026 Synod Food Ministry Grants Available

Grant Applications are due July 16



Congregations are invited to apply for a **2026 Synod Food Ministry Grant** by **July 16**. Food insecurity has increased in recent years, leading to a record number of neighbors relying on community food shelves. Up to **five \$500 grants** will be awarded in 2026.

Last year, **Carol Solberg** received a \$500 grant to support the Preston-area

food shelf. What other needs might we address in our community? We are excited to offer a **community meal** as part of *Bluegrass and Barbecue* on **August 6**. Could this spark interest in future meal ministries? Possibilities include:

- An “Open Table” on a Saturday evening, featuring a meal informal hymn sing
- “Breakfast Church” with a shared meal and informal worship
- “Pizza and the Pew,” combining a pizza night with an invitation to worship afterward

Jesus modeled the importance of sharing meals in ministry, and there are many ways we can address hunger and foster community. If you are interested in participating in or helping lead this effort, please reach out to **Pastor Kris**. Remember—**grant applications are due July 16!** It would be wonderful to partner in serving our community in this meaningful way.

More information and an application are available on SEMN Synod website: RC Weekly: Synod Food Ministry Grants

Thrivent Action Team Grants

In the past, our congregation and community have been enriched in many ways by the generosity of the Thrivent organization with the resources they share in their offering of Thrivent Action Teams. Examples of past projects include purchasing items for our Hat and Mitten Tree, Christmas in Fillmore County, Fillmore County Women’s Shelter, Bundles of Love, Vacation Bible School, the Food Shelf, winter clothing/boots given to local school, and the Child Care Center (supplies, toys, books).

Thrivent members are eligible to apply for up to two “Action Team” cards worth up to \$250 each year. A Thrivent member submits an application to lead a project. Upon approval, Thrivent then goes on to support the project by providing in seed money, T-shirts, and other helpful items. Once the project is completed, the team leader completes a brief report and submits it to Thrivent to share the positive impact outcomes and celebrate the success of the project. **Even if you are not a Thrivent member, you can still easily get involved.** For just \$19.95 per year, you can become an “Associate Member”. Each Associate member is eligible to apply for one action team grant of \$250 per year.

There are many worthwhile projects in our community that would benefit from these grants. Please consider applying for one (or more) of these grants. It only takes a few minutes of your time to complete the application process.

If you have questions about how to apply for a grant (or have a suggestion on where funds are needed), contact Janet Erdman (612-756-1578), Joyce Hellickson (507-951-5700), or Diane Johnson (507-251-6922). Additional information and application forms can also be found on their website at <https://www.thrivent.com>