



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings of joy and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior as we bid farewell to 2025 and welcome in 2026.

Time is like the mighty Mississippi river flowing from Minnesota to New Orleans. It is constantly flowing South and nothing seems to stop its flow. It continues from one season to the next, one year to the next.

We look down the stream and can remember the good times, the challenging times, times of joy and sorrow, times when we have fallen short of our expectation and the expectations of those around us. We can recall God's blessings but also the times we have not following His commands or will in our lives.

We look up stream and see fresh water flowing toward us. We look forward to a new year with optimism and hope. We look forward to the opportunity change some of the things in our lives that hurt those around us and fall short of God's will for our lives. We look forward to the chance to enhance relationships and grow as God children.

New years is a time to make resolutions for the coming year. A wife came into the bathroom to see her husband on the scale with his stomach sucked in. She told him that sucking in his stomach would not make it better. He said that it would, because if he didn't he couldn't read the numbers. Or a Little boy asked his father what his new year's resolution was. "He was going to do everything possible in this new year to make his mother very happy." The little boy then asked his mother the same question. She said, "To do everything possible to make sure your father keeps his resolution."

Every year offers us a chance at a new beginning and offers us new hope. This is possible through our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Writing to the church at Corinth St. Paul wrote, "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17)." Remember who you are as we enter 2026. You are a new creation, not of yourself but through Christ.

You are new creation now forgiven in Christ. The past has been wiped out by the blood of Christ. The Psalmist wrote, "Thought your sins are as scarlet they shall be white as snow." With the justification and forgiveness found in Christ we can begin new and fresh as God's children.

Knowing that we are new creations in Christ we can look forward to 2026. Our hearts are filled with joy for life as we look to the presence and power of our Lord. We can look forward with peace knowing the we are forgiven and have the assurance of His presence. We can look forward with hope, the blessed assurance of God's presence and love to sustain us through the good times and the challenging times. We can look forward with hope, because through faith we know the end of our story. It is all based upon

God's upon God's wisdom and strength, that God will guide us through this journey with His promises and the ultimate victory.

As this year draws to a close and we prepare to welcome 2026, we leave you with God's "blessing":

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you HIS peace.

On behalf of Barb, Steve and Joy, Myka and Joslyn, we wish each of you a blessed and prosperous New Year. Surrounded by God's grace we can enjoy His blessing and face the challenges that come our way, and make this a good year to His glory.

In Christ,
Pastor J. K. Raether

Pastor Raether

Stewardship: Faith in Action

God has given His people the high honor and great privilege to be stewards of His wonderful creation. We care for His creation as well as the gifts that our gracious God has entrusted to each of us individually. Through faith, we understand that all we are and have are gifts from Him. What we do as stewards is governed by His Word, and we use the time, talents, and resources He entrusts to us according to His will and for His purposes. Stewardship is our response as believers to what God has done for us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He wants us to use the resources that He has provided us in such a way that people come to know and trust in Him.

In his book, *Stepping Stones of the Steward*, Ron Vallet wrote "Stewards are not simply born. We are created and molded as stewards by the Holy Spirit in a life-long process that includes conversion to the shape of the life we see in Jesus Christ and many experiences of losing and finding our way in the Lord." Despite our unworthiness, God has chosen us in Christ to become His stewards. By our own reason or strength, we are unable to be faithful in our stewardship, but, through the Holy Spirit working within us through Word and Sacrament, we can be faithful stewards. Our stewardship becomes a joy rather than an obligation. It is our connection to Christ which enables us to be stewards each and every day. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Him Who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). God equips us to do whatever He calls us to do.

Because of God's goodness, He thinks so highly of us that He trusts us to administer what belongs to Him. As God's stewards, we understand the privileges and responsibilities that we have in all the relationships of life. Our stewardship impacts our relationships with our families, neighbors, co-workers, and with all of creation. As His stewards, we receive His gifts thankfully, manage them responsibly, and give them generously

Christian stewardship puts our faith into action. It is our whole-hearted response to God's redeeming love. Faith gives us access to God's endless source of power, and faith produces the works of love that we do in Christ. May God help each of us become the stewards who tap into His strength, seek to do His will, and attempt to fulfill His purposes. Blessings on your stewardship journey!

FROM: Stewardship Advisors

Opportunities Abound in the New Year

Each new day brings promise of a fresh start. For many, the start of a new week is the time to begin that diet, get serious about exercising, or forego TV viewing. For a vast majority, though, there is something especially motivating and invigorating about seeing the JANUARY calendar on the wall. This is the year we will accomplish great things. God does not necessarily call us to do great things. However, He asks that we be trustworthy in small things. Jesus said, "One who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much" (Luke 16:10). To that end He gives us gifts, both small and big, to use to build up the Body of Christ and to reach out to the lost. Some of us have many gifts. People like Michelangelo – painter, sculptor, and poet – and Thomas Jefferson – architect, statesperson, and scientific farmer – come to mind. God, the Giver of gifts, knows that the number of gifts each of us has varies. Jesus told the Parable of the Talents pointing up this fact and teaching us that success lies in using what we have been given, not in having the greatest number. Our gifts also differ in degree. There are many sculptors but few, if any, compared to Michelangelo. Yet their art can bring satisfaction and inspiration to others. You may not be able to sing opera, but you can sing God's praises. You may not be a great orator, but you can witness to the love and grace of God in Christ. You may not be a mechanic, but you can provide transportation for someone needing to get to an appointment or to church. You may not be a wealthy corporate CEO, but you can use some of your funds to help those in need and to extend God's kingdom. That is why God gives us gifts and abilities so we may be equipped to serve others. "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10). The start of a new year offers us an opportune time to assess those gifts and see how we can use them for God's glory and the good of His people. The motivation to do this comes from the same One Who gave the gifts! Just as He was motivated by love for us to give us, not just our gifts, but His greatest gift, His Son, so we are motivated by love for Him.

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX PROJECT

The members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church contributed 11 Christmas Shoeboxes this year. The shoeboxes will be delivered to needy children in our country and different parts of the world. We thank the Lord of the Church for your generosity in supporting this special project.

EPIPHANY SERVICE January 6, 2026 – 7:00 PM

Epiphany celebrates the coming of the Wise Men to visit the Christ Child and present their special gifts to Him. Epiphany is the revelation that the Gospel is for all people. This year we will celebrate Epiphany with a special service on January 6, 2026, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Pastors from the Circuit will be participating in this service. We will also celebrate Holy Communion. Join us as we join the Wise Men in the worship of Christ the King of nations.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONDOLENCES

We wish to express our appreciation for your support and condolences on the death of pastor's sister last month. We received several memorials in her name, and they have been sent to Make-A-Wish Iowa in her memory. We thank you for your generosity.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MANY CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Barb and Pastor thank you for the many Christmas gifts this year. We thank the individuals for the gifts along with those from the congregation and various organizations in Prince of Peace Lutheran. The Lord has blessed us with the opportunity to serve the saints at POP, and it is an honor to serve you in His name. You are a generous and caring people who serve the Lord with gladness. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your pastor.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday Morning Bible Class will resume on Wednesday, January 7 at 10 AM. We will first complete the Max Lucado Study "Tame Your Thoughts". This is the lesson we missed due to weather. We will take up a study of Jesus Parables on January 14th. This is a nine week study of the following Parables the Jesus used as a teaching method (Cost of material will be \$10.)

Jan. 14	Session 1: Why Parables? - Matthew 13:34-35
Jan. 21	Session 2: Something Old, Something New - Matthew 9:15-17
Jan. 28	Session 3: A Most Radical Grace - John 10:11
Feb. 4	Session 4: Lost and Found - Luke 15:7
Feb. 11	Session 5: Keeping Faith - John 15
Feb. 18	(ASH WEDNESDAY) Session 6: Living Mercy - Luke 10:36-37
Feb. 25	Session 7: The Coming Judgment - Matthew 21:21-32
Mar. 4	Session 8: Looking for Judgment Day - Matthew 25:21
Mar. 11	Session 9: Watching for Eternity - Matthew 24:45-47

Board of Education

December 3, 2025

Members: Kari Johnson, Sue Macek and Pastor Raether

Meeting called to order at 5:15 pm. Pastor opened with prayer. November minutes were approved as written

Library: A new book titled, "The 100 Most Asked Questions About God and the Bible" by S. Michael Houdmann. This book answers 100 of the most frequently asked questions on the site in a compassionate, accessible, and straight forward manner, covering topics like: how we're supposed to live, heaven and the afterlife, the end times, and more.

St. Paul: Preschool field trip on 12/2, BB Saints vs Boone 12/2, Saints vs Jnity Ridge 12/4, Preschool 3 yr old Christmas program 12/8, Preschool 4 yr old Christmas program 12/11, Saints vs Mt. Olive 12/8, Saints vs Lattiner 12/16, K-8 Christmas programs 12/17. No school 12/22 - Jan 2nd.

Catechism and Sunday School report: Studying the first eight books of the Old Testament. Learning about the people included in each Bible section. We will not be participating in a Christmas Service this December. We will begin Unit 2 in the Enduring Faith Curriculum on December 4th.

Family Fellowship report: Continue discussion on meeting only two times a year instead of four times a year. The last time we met was in October 2025.

Wednesday Bible Study: The last lesson on "Tame Your Thoughts" will be December 10th.

Cradle Roll: Continuing sending cards to Baptized children.

Old Business: None

New business: Prince of Peace will hold the Advent Hymn sing on Wednesday, December 17th. Ron Brown family will continue giving Christmas sacks at the Sunday morning service on December 21st.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm. Next meeting is January 7, 2026 at 5:15 pm.

Sue Macek
Chairman

Lutheran Women's Fellowship

December 4, 2025

The Lutheran Women's Fellowship met on December 4 for a potluck and meeting at 12:00 p.m. Nine members and two visitors attended the potluck/meeting. Sally Zuspahn had prayer and table prayer. After potluck, Sally Zuspahn presented a short meeting and upcoming events.

Committee reports:

Treasurer, Card Counter, and Funeral Fund reports were all approved.

Old Business

Advent coffee: December 3; Nancy Herzberg, Vicky Escobedo. December 10; Sue Macek, LaVonne Peters. December 17; Jean Martinson, Nancy Herzberg.

St. Paul's Potluck: December 9, 5:30 pm. Need count of our member attending this event.

New Business

Shut-ins Birthdays: None

Birthdays: Jean Martinson

January Funeral Committee: Vicky Escobedo, Nancy Herzberg

Winkle Conference: December 9, Will need set up for coffee 8:30 am. Pastor will furnish rolls.

December 17th Hymn Sing: Prince of Peace at 7 pm. Will serve coffee and desserts after hymn sing. Estimated 50 people may attend.

Zone LWML Donation: Donations of \$25 in memorial for Carol Locke and Florence Sandgren.

December Mission: Lord's Cupboard.

Next Meeting: January 2. Hostess: Officers.

Julie Hughes volunteered to do the Fellowship Hall seasonal Bulletin boards replacing Judy Dorothy.

A motion was made and seconded to appoint Vicki Escobedo as Chairman and Co-signer for the Prince of Peace Funeral Fund. She replaces Carol Locke. Motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to appoint LaVonne Peters as the replacement co-signer to the Lutheran Extension Fund. She replaces Carol Locke. Motion carried.

Our LWML members presented Pastor Raether a Christmas gift of \$100.

Will be working on yearbook for next year.

Sue Macek presented bibles and "Bible Character" look up sheets to fill in names. Ended the meeting with Christmas songs.

LaVonne Peters
Secretary

ORGAN FUND UPDATE

Received in 2024	\$28,453.15
2025 YTD Received	\$ 6,505.00
Reimbursed to Foundation	\$31,000.00
Organ Fund	\$ 3,958.15

Gerald and Kathy Gehring Church Worker Scholarship

The Gehring Family has established the *Gerald and Kathy Gehring Church Worker Scholarship* to support students preparing for careers in church work, including Pastor, Teacher, Deaconess, Director of Christian Education, Director of Parish Music, Director of Christian Outreach, Director of Family Life Ministries, or Director of Church Ministry. Scholarships of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to one or more applicants to assist with tuition, fees, and books. Eligible applicants must be baptized and confirmed members of a Lutheran congregation, high school graduates enrolled full-time at a Christian college/university, and maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA. A faith statement, official transcript, and a letter of recommendation from the pastor of the applicant's home congregation are required, and recipients may apply a maximum of four times. Preference will be given to students enrolling in a Missouri Synod Lutheran college or university. Applications must be submitted by March 31, 2026, with award notifications made by April 30, 2026. For more information about the scholarship, including the application, please email gkgcws@gmail.com.

ATTENDANCE

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Communion</u>
12/7	Canceled due to weather	
12/14	32	28
12/21	24	
12/28	23	22
<u>Thanksgiving</u>		
11/27	29	
<u>Advent</u>		
12/3	24	
12/10	25	
12/17	24	
<u>Christmas Eve</u>	40	
<u>Christmas Day</u>	25	23

Membership Report for December 2025

GAIN

Confirmed + Baptized +

LOSS

Confirmed - Baptized -
 Faye Hansen
 -moved to Missouri

Communicant =153-1=152
Baptized (not confirmed) =48
Total baptized souls =201-1=200

Financial Report December 2025

Income (Offerings)
 Home/Current \$6,325.10, Missions Budget \$117.50, Loose Offerings \$313.00, Memorial Fund \$50.00, New Year's Offering \$28.00, Thanksgiving \$216.00, Advent \$493.00, Christmas Offering \$395.00, Special Offering \$210.00, Miscellaneous \$769.35, Organ Fund \$947.40.

Total Offerings \$9,864.35

Expenses
 Pastor \$2,000.00, Payroll \$1,237.34, Organist \$540.00, Pastoral Expenses \$672.00, Ministry Expense \$10.04, Portals of Prayer \$224.15, Worship Supplies \$382.97, Office Supplies \$578.70, Computer/Internet \$190.72, Water \$113.75, Pest Control \$41.00, Gas & Electric \$552.00, Sanitation \$42.80, Property Repairs \$, Miscellaneous \$500.00, W/H Tax \$169.32, Missions \$117.50, Charities \$ 836.00, Advertising \$300.00.

Total Expenses \$ 9,163.29
Net Income \$ 701.06

 **JANUARY**
 Birthdays Anniversaries

Meadow Peterson -(1/1), Tillie Barber -(1/4), Connie Tyrrell -(1/5), Nancy Herzerg -(1/12), Latrayah Dungy -(1/15), Leander Terrell Jr. -(1/15), Tauni Sundermeyer -(1/16), Evelyn Waddell -(1/16), Jameson Trushcheff -(1/17), Attachai Thanupakorn -(1/18), Lori Read -(1/19), Leslie Castor -(1/21), Kevin Dencklau -(1/21), William Busse -(1/25), James Trost -(1/26), Tom Brown -(1/28), and Gene Schoon -(1/31).

No Anniversaries.