

January 2025

The Echo

UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2122 University Avenue
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58203

One of my favorite things is to peek at the night sky. After many years of doing this, I still find it exciting to see the planet Venus so brightly shining as it has been recently. I am trying to spread my interest to my grandchildren, and at least so far with Addison, it is working. Just this evening, she said this to me, "Grandpa, where is Venus now?" So, I showed her Venus, Saturn, and Jupiter.

As Christians, we observe January 6th each year as the day the wise men found the newborn king, Jesus, in Bethlehem, by the guiding light of a star. These men were much wiser than me about the planets and stars in the sky. So, I've always wondered what was so special about the star they followed for weeks, maybe months, until it led them to offer gifts and worship the child we call Christ.

Of course, as much as I enjoy observing the night sky, I do not use the stars in the sky to guide my life. No, instead, the star who I follow, the star of my life, is Jesus. Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the star who guides me, my decisions, and my life. While I am definitely not a perfect follower of the Lord, it is my hope today and every day to be near him, and to have him lead me, love me, and save me.

Who is the star of your life? Since you are reading this, you very likely believe as I do, that there is only one star to follow, and there is only one star to guide you – that Jesus is also the star of your life. I pray as you enter this new year, 2025, that you will see Jesus so clearly, love Jesus so dearly, and follow Jesus so nearly, that he will be your guide and your rock through good and hard times.

As with any new year, we don't know exactly what 2025 will bring for us as individuals or as a congregation. So, in order for us to be prepared for anything, there are some ways we can ensure we are seeking Jesus with the same resolve as did those wise men so long ago. These are in not new, but rather tried and true ways to be close to Jesus, so that he may indeed be your guide through all things.



First, pray to Jesus. In fact, pray just to be close to Jesus. Sometimes when I am praying to Jesus, I feel there is no time or place where he is closer to me than when I am talking and listening to him. So, pray to Jesus. Get close and personal with him each day through your prayers. Get specific in your prayers too. Ask Jesus to guide you through specific circumstances, and then listen for direction.

Second, read your Bible. Of course, the Bible is God's Word. I believe there is a word from God in the Bible to guide you every day. So read it every day. You can read large portions, or perhaps just a verse or two. If you read four chapters a day, you can read the Bible in one year. But if it's hard for you to read it on your own, get a guide. Buy one or use the "Christ in Our Home" we have at ULC.

Third, come to worship. I don't say this because our worship is great and my sermons inspiring. I say this because Jesus promises to meet you at worship. He said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." This means we may meet Jesus at worship through Bible readings, sermons, prayers, songs, Holy Baptism and Communion, and fellowship with other Christian friends.

I do plan on spending a fair amount of time stargazing in 2025. However, nothing in the sky will be my guide. Whatever I face, I will face it with the Lord Jesus Christ as the star, guide, and rock of my life. I do invite you, wise men and wise women of ULC to do the same. Jesus wishes to be your guiding star, to lead you, love you, and save you no matter what lies ahead in the year to come.

The star of our lives is Jesus! You are in my prayers,



Worship in January The Season of Epiphany

The Christmas season ends with the Feast of Epiphany (January 6), which is the celebration of the coming of the wise men from the East to see, worship, and present gifts to the child Jesus. "The First Noel" and "We Three Kings of Orient Are" echo this story recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Not surprisingly, what follows is the season of Epiphany.

The season of Epiphany refers to our understanding that Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God in this world. In other words, when you see how Jesus acted in the world, it is the same as if you would see God act in the world. Another way to put it is that God is revealed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Still others more informally say that in Epiphany we celebrate that God did not stay away, but he "showed up" so we could see him.

The First Sunday of Epiphany is always, "The Baptism of Our Lord". On this Sunday (**January 12** this year), we look at the Baptism of Jesus to learn about our own understanding of what it means to be baptized. As part of the service, we will do a special Renewal of our Baptisms.

The last Sunday after Epiphany is always "The Transfiguration of Our Lord". On this Sunday (**March 2** this year), we learn the true identity of Jesus – that he is the Son of God, and we are given a glimpse of Jesus having a conversation with God, Moses, and Elijah on the mountain.

Boundless A Stewardship Program for 2025

Our stewardship emphasis this year is, "Boundless" Our series centers around Jesus feeding 4,000 and 5,000 people on just a little bread and fish. Jesus is not a Lord of scarcity but rather a Lord of abundant, even boundless blessings. Our challenge as Christian people is to serve God with this same vision.

- January 19 and 22 Boundless Love
- January 26 and 29 Boundless Gifts
- February 2 and 5 Boundless Cache

Our response days will be Sunday, February 2 and Wednesday, February 5. On these days we will have the opportunity to offer our financial resources to our shared ministry at ULC in 2025. Thank you for your generous support of this ministry.

Please note: We will have a Celebration Meal on February 2 and 5 to mark the ongoing generous support of the people of ULC toward this ministry.

ULC Annual Meeting

February 9, 2025

Please join us for the Annual Meeting of University Lutheran Church, Sunday, February 9, 2025, 11:30am. We will hear ministry reports, consider old and new business, have a few elections, and consider our 2025 budget.



The Church Council has voted to purchase a new digital sign for the corner of University Avenue and 21st Street. It would be the same size as our current sign with a resolution of 6mm, and of course, it would be mounted on our current brick edifice.

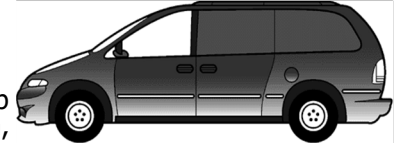
The cost of the new sign is \$29,263, and this includes the removal of the existing sign, the digital sign itself, installation, 5-year parts warranty, 2-year labor warranty, and software training. The only costs not covered are the cost of the sign permit from the city and the electrical connection. The council is asking you to approve a maximum of \$35,000 for the project.

Please join us for this important congregational meeting!

Wheels to Worship

Can We Give You a Lift?

We are now looking for people who would like rides to church in our Wheels to Worship van, plus about 4-5 volunteers to serve as drivers. In order to start this program, we are advertising Sundays, January 19 and 26 as days we will kick off this "Wheels to Worship" ministry. So, if you would like a ride to Sunday worship on either of these two dates or both, would you please call the church office at 775-4745 to make your reservation. We are asking that you call church by Friday, January 17 or Friday, January 24, by 4:00pm. We really hope this will be a huge success!



Feed My Starving Children Mission of the Month

During the months of January, February, and March, ULC will raise funds for our community's FMSC MobilePack event on April 10-12. Our Mission Endowment has already set aside \$2,000, and the coins and dollars given at our Noisy Offering during these three months will likely double that number. Please stay tuned for other FMSC fundraising opportunities.

It is our goal as a community to pack 400,000 meals, and we have already raised \$54,164 of the \$117,500 that we need to pay for the event. Each 29 cents raised provides a meal for a hungry child. That means a gift of \$30 pays for 103 meals, a gift of \$50 pays for 172 meals, and a gift of \$100 pays for 344 meals. What a wonderful way to serve hungry children!

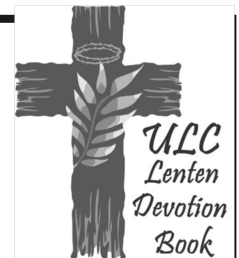
Fun fact: Did you know that Feed My Starving Children has prepared **4,428,925,866** meals for hungry and starving children in our world?

ULC Lenten Devotion Book

The Faithful Tradition Continues

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5. This January ECHO begins our invitation for people to write for our Lenten Devotion Book. We are looking for ULC members and friends with faith insights and experiences they'd like to share. It might be something which happened to you in the past, a reflection on a favorite hymn or Bible verse, an answered prayer, or a God sighting in your life. Whatever it is, we would love it if you would share it with us.

We are asking for around 250 words (including a Bible verse and a short prayer). After you write it, then you may email it to church, or drop it off at the church office. We need about 48 of these writings to complete Lent. If you need help with the writing, please call the church office, and we will connect you with someone who is willing to help you share your experience. We need all these devotions turned in by Wednesday, February 19.



Wednesday Meals:

January 8: Hot dogs
January 15: Meatball subs
January 22: Taquitos
January 29: BBQ pulled pork on bun



ULC Adult Education in January

Please join us in the month of January for adult education. There are really a variety of topics and Bible studies this month, so as 2025 begins, dig into your Bibles and your faith!

Sunday Morning Adult Class

"Jewish Journey Through the Ages"

During the months of January and February, the ULC Adult Class will take a journey through Jewish history. Here is an outline of the course:

January 5	The Jewish Diaspora (Adam and Eve to the Ukraine)
January 12	Yiddishkeit (Jewish way of life in Europe)
January 19	Fiddler on the Roof Excerpts (Traditions and Beliefs)
January 26	Fiddler on the Roof Excerpts
February 2	The ND Jewish Community and Agricultural Colonies
February 9	The Grand Forks Jewish Neighborhood
February 16	Rabbi Papermaster, Family and House
February 23	B'nai Israel Congregation and Montefiore Cemetery
March 2	Israel and Judaism Today



Please join Ken Dawes for this presentation and discussion. Ken was reared in the Jewish neighborhood and was the paper boy for the area in the 1940's. He also did a social work internship in a facility for emotionally disturbed children under the Jewish Board of Guardians in the Brooklyn and Williamsburg area. He has many stories to tell!



WELCA Bible Study

"Faithfulness"

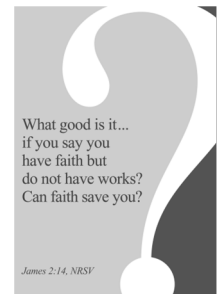
Our winter into spring Bible study this year written by Denise Rector is entitled, "**Faithfulness**". This study will look at six different biblical people to learn from their faithfulness to God in some of life's most trying circumstances. Each month will focus on one or two people: January is Ruth, February is David, March is Peter and Cornelius, and April is Jairus and the Woman Who Is Bleeding.

Please join us this month to see Ruth choose to remain with Naomi even after Naomi has lost everything, including her husband and sons. This intergenerational story of faithfulness during emptiness and sorrow helps us learn how to rely on God in bleak times. All ULC women and friends are invited to meet **Friday, January 10, at 10:00am** in the lounge.

Calling All Men

"The Letter of James"

Calling All Men is studying the Letter of James. This letter reminds us that life with God is not simply about having faith but also about doing faith in the world. We sometimes call these works. While we are never saved by our good works (only Jesus and his saving work on the cross save us), we are nevertheless called to love and serve the neighbor. Such works of love and service are critical to the world. **Our topic for January is: Taming the Tongue.** Please join us on **Saturday, January 18, at 8:30am** for breakfast pizza and our study.



Thursday Morning Study

Revelation and the End of All Things



You are invited to a 10-week Bible study on the Bible book Revelation. It is a controversial book to say the least. Some Christians would have had it removed from the list of New Testament books, and others simply ignore it. Others believe it holds timeless truths for Christians of every age, and others believe it holds the answers to the future of our world. Please join us for what might be considered a very Lutheran Christian approach to studying this important last book of the Bible. Together we will understand the heart of what the book proclaims, Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, will come again, to rid the world of all sin, evil, and death. **Please join us beginning January 16, 9:30am** in the fellowship hall.

Quilting Opportunities

Tuesday Night Quilters 5:30-8:30pm

This group focuses on quilts for fundraising, donations to benefits or local charities, and baptismal quilts.

Thursday Quilting Group 1:00-3:00pm

This group focuses on quilts, health kits, school kits, and layettes for Lutheran World Relief.

These items are shared with our sisters & brothers around the world.

All women are invited to attend. All skill levels are welcome. We are happy to teach you!



Youth News



Confirmation Classes Resume Grades 7-9

Christmas is behind us, schools are back in session, and confirmation classes are resuming as well. Sunday classes are set for January 5, 12, 19, and 26, and Wednesday classes for January 8, 15, 22, and 29. Our theme this year is "The Year of Jesus", and in a short period of time this month we will see Jesus grow from infant to adult. Please do not forget to be working on your worship notes. Everyone must do 10 regular worship notes.

Sundaes on Wednesday Grades 7-12

Sundaes on Wednesdays will return in January after a couple Wednesdays off. Please join us from 8:15-9:30am for ice cream sundaes, short game or program, and the ever-popular flashlight devotions. We will be scooping ice cream for sundaes on January 8, 15, 22, and 29.

Youth Ski Trip

We are striving to board a bus and go skiing as a congregation this year. ULC families and youth, please stay tuned for the announcement of a date to go skiing. Sign up and bring your families and friends. Stay tuned to the bulletins, and we may send out a postcard as well.

JANUARY WELCA NEWS

2024 was a very busy year. There were 5 major events sponsored by WELCA last year - Salad Luncheon in April, Mother-Daughter Event in May, Rhubarb Festival in June, Fall Festival in November and the Christmas Brunch in December.

The quilting group made quilts and assembled layettes, health kits and school kits for Lutheran World Relief. Also, baptismal quilts were made. Several quilts were sent to LWR for Hurricane Helene relief victims.

WELCA bible study met the second Friday of the month. Joy circle hosted several meetings on Sunday afternoon to play games and one to create flip-flop art.

In December, a general meeting was called to elect officers for the coming year and to vote on the benevolences selected. \$13,500 was shared between twenty-one different organizations.

New officers for 2025 are:
Debbie Watts, Pauline Lileng - Co-Presidents
Shelly Meyer - Secretary
Janet Kuhl - Treasurer
Council Representative - Unfilled

Debbie and I would like to thank all the women of the church who have so freely given their time and talent to make ULC a giving congregation. Thank you, also, for your patience and understanding as we were "learning the ropes", so to speak, in our leadership roles.

Pauline Lileng, Co-President



WOMEN OF THE ELCA Purpose Statement

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit,

We commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote

Joy Circle is hosting a movie day. Please join us on Sunday, January 26th from 1 to 3 pm to watch the movie "All Together Now". It is about a talented and optimistic teenager that clings to a huge secret: she's homeless and living on a bus. She must learn to accept help after tragedy strikes. We will provide snacks. See you there! Questions? Please contact Shelly Meyer, Patty Olsen, or Paula Cox.



**University Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
December 17, 2024**



Members Present: Kevin Meyer, Dan Melberg, Brad Gunderson, Pastor Tom Colenso, Katie Hess, Peggy Burlog, LeAnn Barendt, Matt Solberg, Curt Hanson

Devotions: the Christmas story from Luke 2

Minutes from November 19, 2024: Motioned. Seconded. Approved

Treasurer's Report: Motioned. Seconded. Approved.

Pastor's Report: Church School and confirmation attendance has dwindled this fall. In 2025 we will see a renewed emphasis on Church School, Confirmation, and Youth Ministries.

Old Business:

We did some repair work on the Wheels to Worship van. We will be looking for riders and drivers in January to kick off a more regular use of the van for its original intent. We might need to acquire an additional booster seat. We discussed the best way to publicize the van and how to encourage people to take advantage of rides.

New Business:

- Digital church sign: Several options with differing price points were discussed. There was a motion to set aside \$35,000 for the 6mm resolution (space between pixels) sign, to be forwarded to the congregation at the annual meeting for a vote. The motion was seconded and approved.
- Salaries for 2025 were discussed. There was agreement about the salaries and they will be forwarded to the congregation at the annual meeting as part of the 2025 budget.

Ministry reports:

- Education: Christmas program was successful. It was a smaller group of kids, but they were all heart and did an amazing job. Pastor Tom talked about a "re-rally" event for Church School after the holiday season.
- Property: Passed fire inspections. No problem areas were found.
- Worship: Year-end stipends for musicians were discussed. Motion made to give a \$250 gift to each person from Evenson funds. Seconded and approved.
- Youth: The youth selected and funded gifts and gloves for 10 children from Dakota Oyate Lutheran Church. We had a great Christmas party at Pizza Ranch. Sundaes on Wednesdays continues to go well.
- WELCA: This was Peggy Burlog's last meeting, but no replacement has been named. Thank you, Peggy, for your many years of service! Due to some amazing fundraising this year, the amount of benevolence disbursements will be increased from last year.
- Men's Group: Over 240 meals were served at the Love Feast in November.

Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer

Next council meeting will be at 7pm on January 21, 2025.



ULC is 75 in 2025

Here is something exciting – our congregation will observe its 75th anniversary in 2025! It was on December 24, 1950, that University Lutheran Church began its life as a congregation. Stay tuned for some fun activities and celebrations in the year ahead, even as we thank God and the many dedicated people who made our church family a vital ministry in Grand Forks.

January 2025

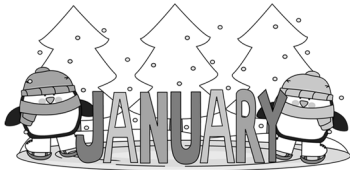


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day <i>Church Office Closed</i>	2 6:30 MOMCO	3 10:00 Prayer Group	4
5 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Sunday School Confirmation WORSHIP Holy Communion Fellowship 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	6 6:00 WELCA Board Meeting 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 Girl Scouts 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	7 10:00 Staff Meeting Pastors' Text Study 5:30 Quilters	8 11:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - Hot dogs 6:00 WORSHIP/WWJ 7:00 Choir Rehearsal 7:15 Confirmation 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	9 1:00 Quilting 1:30 Edgewood Worship	10 10:00 Prayer Group 10:00 WELCA Bible Study	11 10:00 MOMCO
12 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Sunday School Confirmation WORSHIP/Communion Fellowship 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	13 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	14 10:00 Staff Meeting Pastors' 1:30 Text Study 5:30 Quilters	15 11:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - meatball subs 6:00 Worship & WWJ 7:00 Choir Rehearsal 7:15 Confirmation 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	16 9:30 Bible Study 1:00 Quilting 7:00 Franklin Club	17 10:00 Prayer Group	18 8:30am Calling All Men
19 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Sunday School Confirmation WORSHIP/Communion Fellowship 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	20 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 Girl Scouts 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	21 10:00 Staff Meeting Pastors' 1:30 Text Study 5:30 Quilters 5:30 Worship Ministry 7:00 Church Council	22 11:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - Taquitos 6:00 WORSHIP/WWJ 7:00 Choir Rehearsal 7:15 Confirmation 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	23 9:30 Bible Study 1:00 Quilting	24 10:00 Prayer Group	25
26 8:45 Adult Class 9:00 Sunday School Confirmation WORSHIP/Communion Fellowship 11:00 Joy Circle Movie Day 1:00 Homeowners Assoc Mtg 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	27 6:30 Game Fellowship 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous	28 10:00 Staff Meeting Pastors' 1:30 Text Study 5:30 Quilters	29 11:00 TOPS 5:00 Supper - Pulled pork/bun 6:00 WORSHIP/WWJ 7:00 Choir Rehearsal 7:15 Confirmation 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous 8:15 Sundaes on Wednesday	30 9:30 Bible Study 1:00 Quilting	31 10:00 Prayer Group	

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WORSHIP & EVENT SCHEDULE

SUNDAY WORSHIP & EDUCATION

8:45am Adult Class
9:00am Church School
9:00am Confirmation
10:00am WORSHIP
11:00am Fellowship

WEDNESDAY WITH JESUS

5:00pm Supper
6:00pm WORSHIP & WWJ
7:00pm Chapel Choir
7:15pm Confirmation
8:15pm Sundaes on Wednesdays



Thursday Morning Bible Study
Beginning January 16, 9:30am

Calling All Men
Saturday, January 18 8:30am

WELCA Bible Study
Friday, January 10 10:00am

Sundaes on Wednesdays (Youth)
January 8, 15, 22, 29 8:15pm

Joy Circle Movie Day
Sunday, January 26 1:00pm
"All Together Now"

See inside for much more!

ULC STAFF

Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation
Missionaries: Willie and Anne Langdji
Pastor: Thomas W. Colenso
Education Coordinator: Jen Wolf Cummings
Administrative Assistant: Seanne Voracek
Custodian: Harold Stoller

Choir Director: Mary Splichal
Organists: Lauri Shimpa and Jane Traub
Stephen Ministry Leaders:
Evelyn Clark, Wayde Anderson,
Jane Traub

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