



The Seeker

Our Saviour Lutheran Church Newsletter

January 2026

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The Word of the Year

By Rev Dr Justin Johnson

Happy New Year! I hope the year is a blessing to all!

For the last several years, I have practiced picking a word to guide me for the year. At times, I've randomly selected the word to see what might pop up. For the last few years though, I have meditated on what word was suitable for the places I hoped to grow.

A few years ago, the word was savor because I found I was rushing through things, like reading books or eating. I slowed down and took moments to take things in. I found that by slowing I appreciated what I had more and the moments stayed with me.

The word for 2020 was *hygge*, which is a Swedish word about enjoyment, especially with friends. It is a word of comfort and a word of coziness. As you could tell from the date, it turned out to be needed more than I thought it would be.

This year, the word "creativity" has come to the forefront. Recently, I became a reflective pastoral supervisor and this year is my certification process. Within this practice, time is taken to draw or imagine or play with a difficult situation affecting the pastor. It was this notion that sparked the word.

Some of the practices I've been doing have been using retro tech in new ways. I'm a gamer, yet sitting in my house is not only a Switch, but an Atari 2600 and a Nintendo GameCube. Retro gaming is new again in the gaming community as prices increase with current games.

I've gone back to using a physical notebook, after using a digital one for the last few years to compose my sermons. The tangible feel of paper and pen cannot be recreated as much as technology wants to. I also find I am more creative as I doodle in the margins, while praying about a text.

Scripture is filled with moments of creativity as well. The Psalms have God creating the Leviathan just for the sport of it. Jesus plays in the sand before helping a woman who is condemned by stoning. All of the parables are instances of storytelling that teach deeper lessons about God.

As we enter this new year, I hope you are finding something that guides you. Maybe it is a word or a promise you are making to yourself. I hope one of those promises will deepen your relationship to the holy too.

Blessings this New Year!

The Joy of Volunteering

By John Magerlein

This past fall we talked about financial support for the work of the congregation. As you can see elsewhere in this newsletter, our members and friends have increased their support and our deficit for 2025 is far below what was anticipated in the budget. I'd like to see us set a stretch goal of ending the year 2026 in the black.

This month I want to write about the essential role of volunteers in the work of the church. There are many opportunities for service, depending on your interests and skills. Every Sunday we depend on lectors, greeters, altar guild members, and coffee hour hosts to play their important roles. Our Christmas Fair was again a joyful event, thanks to the enormous effort of so many volunteers. Other programs including making quilts and kits for Lutheran World Relief also offer opportunities. Similarly, it would not be possible to maintain and improve our church property without a dedicated group of volunteers.

I have always found volunteering at the church to be personally rewarding and an opportunity to work with others to help bring about some small positive change in our community and world. When I first joined the congregation, I recall telling a former pastor that I liked to do projects at the parsonage since it gave me a chance to practice before working on my own house. While I was joking, I have in fact learned much by volunteering in so many ways over the years.

I ask you to identify at least one new area of service and to volunteer in that way for the next year. If you need help in finding the right opportunity or in getting started, speak to Pastor Johnson, me, or any other Council member. I look forward to working with you to support the mission of the congregation.

John Magerlein

Council President



A Note From the Treasurer

By Bryan Montgomery

Happy New Year!

As we look forward to what 2026 will bring, I just wanted to look back a little on 2025 from Our Saviour's perspective. I'm glad to say November and December were generous to the Church's accounts. We had some very generous gifts, including a successful Christmas Fair. Thank you!

At the time of writing this update, the records have not been completed yet for 2025. But it looks like our deficit will be just under \$5,000 in the main account, which is significantly less than we expected a year ago and is great news. We do also have a shortage in the property maintenance due to our earlier roof repairs of about \$2,250. We will soon have snow removal charges as well to cover. Hopefully a little extra can be sent our way for property maintenance.

Looking forward to the new year, we are striving to improve our financial picture and continue to grow the church as we continue with our mission. We are still looking to add to the use of the parish hall. If you have any ideas or contacts that might be interested in using our facilities, please let someone on Council know.

Lastly, I thank you for your support in this role. I hope we all have a happy and prosperous New Year.



Happy New Year!

By the Christian Crafters



The 2025 Christmas Fair is over. We are putting away our glue guns, paint, corks, spools and Christmas fabric until September. A new year has begun with new plans for the year. We are already back to making quilts and book bags for Lutheran World Relief (LWR). I just received a nice thank you from Mr. Speckhard, president and CEO of LWR for our past work in 2025. The needs are still great and there is more work to be done in 2026.

Please join us Tuesday mornings between 9-noon to help support those around the world and locally. No sewing skills are necessary; we need those that can tie knots, iron, and cut fabric. Sewers are always welcome, of course.

If anyone has cotton material, cotton sheets, cotton table clothes or cotton curtain, we could use the fabric to repurpose into quilts and book bags. Financial support is always appreciated as it helps get us materials and covers shipping costs.

Our next event will be in March when we will welcome all of you and our larger community to participate in National Quilting Day. Mark your calendar: Saturday, March 21, between 1-4:00, in the LWR room downstairs. More info to follow in the next newsletter.

Thank you so very much for your support to continue this ministry in 2025 and look forward to your support in 2026.

Lois Leonard coordinator of the Christian Crafters

Stewardship Happenings

By Marilyn Grantner



As the new year began, I decided to take an inventory of things in 2026. While my daughter was visiting from Chicago she helped me with my first task. We decided to tackle the junk drawers in my apartment. I had 3. I bet some of you have many more than that. We pulled everything out, put items together, tossed out what was no longer needed and relocated items to a better resting place. Many of the items we found initiated conversations about why these items

were important, why they were kept, and a renewed evaluation of the items ongoing purpose. I have continued with my magazines and books. I decided I did not need 4 different quilting magazine subscriptions. Next will be my china hutch and special items that bring back memories. I'm really looking forward to going through my pictures, Oh the memories that will bring.

In taking this on, I have also decided to review my financial situation. What am I spending money on that no longer brings me joy? Where are some of the dollars trickling away and I don't even realize the money is gone. Can I make some smarter choices than I have been making? I did this last year and found I was able to increase my monthly donation to the church by \$25 a month. It didn't seem like much but once I thought about it over a year, it was \$300. If a few more families can do this, it really adds up. People ask "how do you eat an elephant?" The answer is "One bite at a time." Our Saviour can benefit from small increases like this.

We also look for ways to use our time in a better manner to meet the physical needs of the building and grounds. I'm hoping we can start a monthly property/garden care group this spring. Please let me know if you are interested in joining something like that. I would also love to hear more ideas you may have. Be creative. We have so much talent and can do many things.



We Did It!

by Lois Leonard

The final step is happening!

Beneficiaries: Padres Hispanos, and Croton/Cortland Food Pantry have both been contacted. They will be receiving \$780 each from all your efforts. The congregation will also receive \$3640.24 to support the mission of our congregation.

This has only been possible because of ***you!*** Many of you stepped forward to take leadership roles to ensure the fair was a success. Dianne worked on spreading the news for vendors last Sept. and then worked with John M. to create a registration for vendors on our church web site. Heinz put up the banner and the sign out front. Melanie passed along calls about the fair to me. Kristen J. secured 10 vendor tables. Volunteers organized specific areas of the fair: Eleanor the bake table, Inga the café, Marilyn D. the raffle, Frank the decorations, Karen M. the money boxes, LeeAnn the boutique, Larry the music, Lois the vendors, Christmas tree and craft table. Then there were table movers before and after the fair. Many of you put in many hours baking cookies, breads and goodies, making soups and chilis, creating crafts, and putting up publicity posters. The day of the fair many of you tended tables, greeted our visitors and helped clean up after the fair to prepare the hall for AA that evening.

Then there are those that attended the planning meetings Oct.16, Nov.16 and the follow up meeting, Dec. 21, making decisions about this fair and the next fair. Yes, they want to do it again! **Dec. 5, 2026**, 10am-3:00- mark your calendars!

Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU !!! It is amazing what we can do when we work together. Yes, We did it!





Thank you from Croton Caring

Our Saviour received a thank you note from the crew at Croton Caring for the continued partnership between our church and the Croton Caring organization. The picture was taken on the day that holiday boxes were collected from the church building. Each box represents a family who had a need during the holiday in Croton.



Our Saviour Lutheran Church
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January 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<div>28</div> <div>First Sunday of Christm</div> <div>The Holy Innocents, Mai</div> <div>10am Worship and Cc</div>	<div>29</div> <div>The Holy Innocents, Mai</div> <div>3pm Afterschool Prog</div>	<div>30</div> <div>9:30am Christian Cra</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>	<div>31</div> <div>New Year's Eve</div> <div>6:30pm NA</div>	<div>Jan 1</div> <div>Name of Jesus</div> <div>New Year's Day</div> <div>1pm Al Anon</div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div> <div>9am Yoga</div> <div>1pm Quilting</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>
<div>4</div> <div>Second Sunday of Chris</div> <div>10am Worship and Cc</div>	<div>5</div> <div>3pm Afterschool Prog</div>	<div>6</div> <div>Epiphany of Our Lord</div> <div>9:30am Christian Cra</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div> <div>7pm Epiphany Servic</div>	<div>7</div> <div>6:30pm NA</div> <div>7pm Weekly Bible Stu</div>	<div>8</div> <div>1pm Al Anon</div>	<div>9</div>	<div>10</div> <div>9am Yoga</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>
<div>11</div> <div>Baptism of Our Lord / Lc</div> <div>10am Worship and Cc</div>	<div>12</div> <div>Pastor Johnson's Birthd</div> <div>3pm Afterschool Prog</div>	<div>13</div> <div>9:30am Christian Cra</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>	<div>14</div> <div>6:30pm NA</div> <div>7pm Weekly Bible Stu</div>	<div>15</div> <div>1pm Al Anon</div>	<div>16</div>	<div>17</div> <div>9am Yoga</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>
<div>18</div> <div>Second Sunday after Ep</div> <div>10am Worship and Cc</div>	<div>19</div> <div>Martin Luther King Jr's</div> <div>3pm Afterschool Prog</div>	<div>20</div> <div>9:30am Christian Cra</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>	<div>21</div> <div>6:30pm NA</div> <div>7pm Weekly Bible Stu</div>	<div>22</div> <div>1pm Al Anon</div> <div>7pm Library Meeting</div>	<div>23</div>	<div>24</div> <div>9am Yoga</div> <div>12:30pm Yoga extend</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>
<div>25</div> <div>Third Sunday after Epip</div> <div>10am Worship and Cc</div>	<div>26</div> <div>3pm Afterschool Prog</div>	<div>27</div> <div>9:30am Christian Cra</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>	<div>28</div> <div>6:30pm NA</div> <div>7pm Weekly Bible Stu</div>	<div>29</div> <div>1pm Al Anon</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>31</div> <div>9am Yoga</div> <div>6:30pm AA</div>