

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER



New Website Page: www.ericksonlutheranchurch.com

New emails: Pastor Heather: hhowdle84@gmail.com

Office: office.ericksonlutheran@gmail.com –

Please note that there will be no one in the office as of January 1, 2026. Please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR HEATHER

Jesus is the light of the world against evil



The previous Advent season takes us from what was coming to what has arrived... to what is spreading into every corner, brings us to this central wonder: *the angelic announcement that love has come. God in Christ has been placed in creation's arms to worship, to adore, to ponder. Love is present,*

not in theory, but in an actual child, a human being born with a specific history.

The gorgeous consequence of such a birth is that we can see God's presence in real things. Dare we even announce the radical notion that God is fully present in all things, in all people, and in all of life?

In an ideal world, we would have lots of time to revel in these twelve days of Christmas. For most people, however, Christmas is over in the first three days. Our task is to help shift our focus back to the full extent of the season of Christmas, meaning we announce that this is precisely the time when Christ is born.

John's incarnational read of the Jesus story often serves as the primary lens for grasping Luke's beautiful, and more prominent, story. **Luke** places the story in the complex Roman occupation of Galilee and Judah. Luke pits

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God's presence against the autocrat and economies of empire, exploitation, and greed. *These are familiar themes in our own times!*

God's arrival and the tragic reality of the world come together on the first Sunday of Christmas as we hear the lament of Rachel and all mothers of murdered children, caught in the crossfire of power and violence.

In this season, we hear from three gospel writers, each with a different Christmas gift to unwrap for the sharing of our stories. For **Matthew**, the holy family are *refugees*. Joseph follows his *dreams*. The family comes home to Galilee. Matthew invokes another exodus, a liberating journey under the care of angelic guides, to another promised land.

Despite the gruesome and terrible power of Herod, *he is outwitted by dreamers, dedicated faithfulness, and God's fierce determination to bring home the lost*. We cannot avoid the harsh realities of life, but we can name them as forces that cannot win.

The power of the baby Jesus, whether in the manger or in the house that welcomes the mysterious magi, is the good news that ends one year and begins another.

How beautiful ... are the feet of the Messenger who announces peace, brings good news, and announces salvation! (Isa. 52:7). Amen

In Gratitude
Pastor Heather



Council met on Sunday December 14th, 2025.

We reviewed the upcoming 2026 budget, and it will be finalized at January council meeting.

Discussion continued with the duties that need to be fulfilled in 2026 since the position of office administrator has been eliminated. We are grateful to have had Sylvia-Linda K in this position for many years.

Beginning January 4th, Cathy H will be teaching Sunday School on the 1st Sunday of each month. The class will go to the Youth Room after the Children's Song and return prior to the Sending Hymn. As you are visiting with other people, let them know about Sunday School, as never know, who might be interested.

We continue to provide the lay services as required and anyone who would like to participate with assisting in one, let Cathy H know. The lay services are on the 4th and 5th Sunday of each month.

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There is a congregational meeting tentatively booked with Bishop Jason Zinko for Sunday February 15th, 2026. Following the service there will be a light lunch served.

Thank you to everyone as a congregation we work together in harmony, and everyone has a part in our Church. 2 Corinthians 5:17—***'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.'***

In God We Trust
Church Council

ELW NEWS

January Bible study will be on Thursday, January 8th at 7 pm at Dolores's.

Topic: Dodging Divisions

2 Timothy 2:22-26. Titus 3:3-10 1
Corinthians 3:1-9 and 11:17-22

Submitted by Dolores Hall



Worship and Music

The third season of the church year is Epiphany.

This season follows the 12 days of Christmas beginning on January 6th and ending the day before Ash Wednesday.

We remember the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, also Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist.

The January hymn of the month is ELW307, ***Light Shone in Darkness***, music written by Mark Sedio. Mark studied music at Augsburg College. The lyrics written by Sister Delores Dufner, a nationally renowned hymn writer.

Sue and Viola
Worship and Music

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