

JANUARY 2025



# TheVisitor

Get Ready for  
Our Fundraising Auction:  
**"MARDI GRAS"**  
PAGE 7



EPIPHANY  
*After Christmas,  
nothing is  
the same.*

A Community in the Model of Christ

**“Same old story, same old song and dance, my friend.”** Aerosmith may not have been singing about the auspices of a new year, but maybe embedded within the refrain of this song is the observation that humans or even systems don’t change, and a reflection on how lamentable that is. And yet, though it points out the ridiculousness of the cycles not just of the justice system but also poverty, addiction, and profiling, the song insists to me a mood: **“it’s a cycle, it’s a shame, but whatcha gonna do about it?—Nothing. Oh well.”**

It exemplifies the common feeling of powerlessness against systems that refuse to change or don’t notice when they need change. Capitulation instead of agitation, ambivalence instead of activation, passiveness, not accountability, submission rather than rebuke—this to me, is what is encapsulated in “the same old song and dance.”

But for those of us that believe **renewal is not just possible, but is happening in our world**, we may see a challenge set out by this song—to rebuke those systems that keep our world dancing to old tunes. **“Sing to the LORD a new song”** we hear at Easter. Throughout the prophets we hear from a God who is tired of old habits and once again calling out the cycles in the relationship with the people, Israel. God cannot even bear to receive the religious rituals, because they have become stale, and because their intended purpose and meaning is being overlooked. God desires something new.

We begin this year as we often do, remembering Jesus’ baptism and his call through the Holy Spirit. We begin, considering how **Jesus becomes the Epiphany—Jesus becomes the marker of newness** in a cycle and the direction of change. His ministry draws out the purpose and meaning regarding the law. He calls together followers, who are so caught up with the status quo, so that he must explain the reality and notice the cycle of

sin, violence, poverty, and marginalization again, and again. Even so, there are some that don’t witness or notice the cycle and systems of which they are part and cannot imagine otherwise. The reality Jesus shines light on seems ridiculous to them—they remain in the darkness of advent and waiting. They dismiss the novelty of his ministry, as if to say what he teaches is simply ramblings of the unenlightened or even a drunk, “filled with new wine.” But they cannot dismiss it forever. And thus, epiphany becomes inspiration and a new way of living. Jesus works during Epiphany: **Jesus agitates, rebukes, activates, he brings life where there were dead ends, he interrupts cycles of life, and he does what is more than these—he renews.**

St. Paul speaks to renewal again and again, just as God promises in the words of the prophets. Paul speaks of **all things being made new, and the renewing of our minds over conformity.** The agent of change? Christ present to, in, and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit in the call through baptism. Baptism is a point of turning, when epiphany is embodied—repentance in Lent comes as a result of this Epiphany—we see and experience the world with fresh perspective and greater imagination and hope. This Epiphany takes us into a new year, but the ring of the past sounds in our ears, and we may feel less inspired by renewal and instead settle for novelty—old wine in new wineskins.

**To sing a new song to the LORD is to change our dance in this world.**

That we have such an Epiphany allows us to see, hear, and experience God’s world anew. So even the “same old story, same old song and dance” gets a reboot.

– Pastor Thomas





# What's Happening in January

## IN THIS NEWSLETTER

2 FROM THE PASTOR

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5 FAITH FORMATION

7 COMMUNITY

## OUR REDEEMER'S STAFF

- Thomas Voelp, Pastor  
pastorthomas@ourredeemers.net  
(206) 783-7900 ext. 2
- Gian Foddai, Informal Worship & Music Director  
gianfranco@ourredeemers.net
- Karen Lee, Traditional Worship & Music Director  
karen@ourredeemers.net
- Debbie Lematta, Communications Coordinator  
communications@ourredeemers.net
- Lake Neill, Service Coordinator  
neilllake13@gmail.com
- Karie Stearns, Parish Administrator  
administrator@ourredeemers.net

Office Phone: (206) 783-7900

Office Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 10am-3pm

**OUR VISION:** In the model of Christ and for the life of the world, we are an inclusive, devoted, caring, and spiritual community that accepts challenges, takes risks, and grows.



January 1, Wednesday	New Year's Eve - Office Closed
January 2, Thursday	7 PM - Informal Worship Band Rehearsal
January 4, Saturday	9 AM - Ungreening of the Church
<b>January 5, Sunday</b> <b>EPIPHANY</b>	<b>9 AM - Informal Worship</b> 9 AM - Sprouts In-Person   Downstairs 10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes   Downstairs 10 AM - Confirmation   Library <b>11 AM - Traditional Worship</b>
January 6, Monday	5 PM - Church Ladies Beer Night   Old Stove Gardens
January 7, Tuesday	7 PM - LiVE Synod-wide Bible Study   Zoom 7 PM - Executive Team Meeting
January 8, Wednesday	7 PM - Choir Rehearsal
January 9, Thursday	7 PM - Informal Worship Band Rehearsal
January 11, Saturday	9 AM-1 PM - Smörgåsbord for the Soul Day Retreat
<b>January 12, Sunday</b>	<b>9 AM - Informal Worship</b> 9 AM - Sprouts In-Person   Downstairs 10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes   Downstairs 10 AM - Confirmation   Library 10 AM - Adult Forum: "Called as One"   Fellowship Hall <b>11 AM - Traditional Worship</b>
January 14, Tuesday	7 PM - LiVE Synod-wide Bible Study   Zoom 7 PM - Church Council Meeting
January 15, Wednesday	11 AM - Staff Meeting 7 PM - Choir Rehearsal
January 16, Thursday	7 PM - Informal Worship Band Rehearsal
<b>January 19, Sunday</b> <b>ADVENT 4</b>	<b>9 AM - Informal Worship</b> 9 AM - Sprouts In-Person   Downstairs 10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes   Downstairs 10 AM - Confirmation   Library 10 AM - Adult Forum: "Called as One"   Fellowship Hall <b>11 AM - Traditional Worship</b> 2 PM - Ballard Sunday Dinner   Ballard First Lutheran 3 PM - Madonna's Book Group   Location TBD
January 21, Tuesday	7 PM - LiVE Synod-wide Bible Study   Zoom
January 22, Wednesday	7 PM - Choir Rehearsal
January 23, Thursday	7 PM - Informal Worship Band Rehearsal
<b>January 26, Sunday</b>	<b>9 AM - Informal Worship</b> 9 AM - Sprouts In-Person   Downstairs 10 AM - O-ROCK Youth Classes   Downstairs 10 AM - Confirmation   Library 10 AM - Adult Forum: "Called as One"   Fellowship Hall <b>11 AM - Traditional Worship</b>
January 27, Monday	10 AM - Monthly Volunteer Grounds Crew
January 28, Tuesday	7 PM - LiVE Synod-wide Bible Study   Zoom
January 29, Wednesday	11 AM - Staff Meeting 7 PM - Choir Rehearsal
January 30, Thursday	7 PM - Informal Worship Band Rehearsal



# Living Generously

## Our Redeemer's Mission Budget

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

July – November (41.67% thru FY)

Income	2024-2025 Approved Budget	Income Thru 11.30.24	% of Budget Year to Date	Over (Under) Budget Year to Date
Envelope & Loose Offerings	515,075	185,387	36%	(29,227)
Church Use	84,375	34,591	41.0%	(565)
Fundraising (Auction)*	26,000	70	0.3%	(10,763)
Interest	500	435	86.9%	226
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>625,950</b>	<b>220,483</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>(40,329)</b>

Expenses	2024-2025 Approved Budget	Expenses Thru 11.30.24	% of Budget	Over (Under) Budget Year to Date
Social Justice/Outreach	52,827	18,539	35.1%	(3,473)
Pastoral Staff	122,033	48,459	39.7%	(2,388)
Worship & Music	67,609	25,281	37.4%	(2,890)
Fellowship & Caring	20,727	3,683	17.8%	(4,953)
Faith Formation	25,904	4,418	17.1%	(6,375)
Stewardship	8,418	3,528	41.9%	21
Communications	49,985	19,129	38.3%	(1,698)
Facilities	168,944	89,182	52.8%	18,789
Administration	166,169	47,898	28.8%	(21,339)
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$682,616</b>	<b>260,118</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>(24,306)</b>
				-
<b>NET INCOME (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$56,666)</b>	<b>(39,634)</b>		<b>(16,024)</b>

Income comparison of actuals to budget (over/under budget year to date) is skewed for both auction and total income as the auction is set to occur later in the year. Expense comparison of actuals to budget (over/under budget year to date) for facilities is skewed as entirety of basement leak expenses for the year have been paid.

For questions/concerns, to set up giving, or to change your giving, please contact Administrator, Karie Stearns at [administrator@ourredeemers.net](mailto:administrator@ourredeemers.net). Thank you for your support!

This is Our Redeemer's current Mission Budget report. To view the Financial Snapshot spreadsheet thru November 2024, visit this [LINK \(https://bit.ly/422g9vH\)](https://bit.ly/422g9vH).

If you have questions or concerns about Our Redeemer's financial status, contact Karie Stearns, [administrator@ourredeemers.net](mailto:administrator@ourredeemers.net).

## Celebrating January Birthdays!

- |                            |                        |                      |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 Ryan Brady               | 12 Charlie See         | 25 Janice La Brash   |
| 2 Carleen See              | 13 Carole Trigstad     | 27 Jonah Hlastala    |
| 5 Erica Prentice           | 14 Joshua Liljenstolpe | 27 Lars Sveum-Hanson |
| 5 Miah Wander              | 14 Arlene Templin*     | 29 Elisabeth Parker  |
| 8 Annelise Glover          | 15 Oskar Somm          | 30 Mary Melvey       |
| 9 Paula Hlastala           | 21 Lynne McNeill       |                      |
| 12 Marie Nordquist-Lessard | 22 Paul Wallstrom      |                      |

\* Birthday blessings to Arlene Templin who is celebrating a 90 + Birthday this month.



# Faith Formation



## Called as One: Exploring Our Role in God's Mission

Sundays Beginning January 12, 10 AM | Fellowship Hall

During Epiphany, Adult Sunday forums will explore our church identity and call in relation to the needs of our church and community. Through Scripture study, embodied practices, reflection, and shared discussions, we'll examine our gifts, talents, and experiences, shaping our community's role and living our call to be good neighbors. Join us at 10:00 am on Sunday, January 12th, as we begin the year listening for the Holy Spirit in our midst. Sessions accommodate choir members, who can practice at 10:30 am. Embodied Church sessions are intergenerational. Email Pastor Thomas ([pastorthomas@ourredeemers.net](mailto:pastorthomas@ourredeemers.net)) or Mandy Niell ([neillmandy@gmail.com](mailto:neillmandy@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.



## Free Classes & Events: The LiVE Project

LiVE (rhymes with "give") is an acronym for *Living into Vocational Engagement*. **LiVE is a ministry of our synod that offers education opportunities for lay people, with the goal of forming Christian leaders able to make sense of God's world and our place in it.**

**CLASSES ARE FREE TO OUR REDEEMER'S CONGREGANTS.  
USE PROMO CODE "LIVEBUNDLE2024" WHEN REGISTERING.**

Learn more about the LiVE Project at <https://www.lutheransnw.org/ministries/the-live-project>.

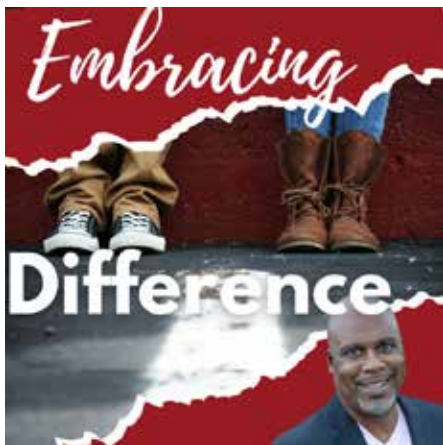


## Abide: Going Deeper

A FREE Synod-Wide Weekly Bible Study

Tuesdays at 7pm via Zoom

LiVE retreats and courses are not meant to be stand alone offerings. We invited you to go deeper into the Biblical grounding of course/retreat themes in this weekly Bible Study on Zoom. Gather with folks from across our synod, as we abide curiously in God's Word together. This is a FREE offering, zoom link [HERE](https://rebrand.ly/a77grvi) (<https://rebrand.ly/a77grvi>).



## LiVE Embracing Difference Retreat

Saturday, Feb 8th, 9am-3pm | location TBD

This retreat will practically help us to listen to ourselves and others, and to learn how to connect to one another across differences. Guest presenter, Fred Oduyoye from Reachable Reconciliation Ministries (who presented in our Fall Faith in Public Life course), will lead us. Registration is free [HERE](https://bit.ly/4fF3Mc4) (<https://bit.ly/4fF3Mc4>) using promo code: LIVEBUNDLE2024



# Faith Formation



## Smörgåsbord for the Soul Day Retreat

Saturday, January 11, 9 AM - 1 PM | Ballard [REGISTER](#)

As we step into 2025, we know it could bring its fair share of challenges—whether it’s the political climate, personal situations, or just keeping up with the fast pace of life. That’s why we’re inviting you to take a little time for yourself—a chance to step back, breathe, and reconnect with your soul and the Divine through some ancient spiritual practices.

Together, we’ll reflect on the past year, set meaningful intentions for the year ahead, and explore ways to ground ourselves through self-reflection, community sharing, and creative expression. All of this will happen in a cozy condominium lounge with comfy couches and a fireplace—perfect for a relaxed and reflective atmosphere.

**Why not gift yourself a little time to reset and start the new year with intention and connection?**

It’s just \$15 to cover lunch and supplies, and space is limited to 15 people, so don’t wait too long to register: <https://bit.ly/4iPt49V>.

A homemade, healthy lunch is included, and if you’d like, you can stick around for a soak in the condo hot tub afterward.



# Community



## Madonna’s Book Group

Sunday, January 19, 3 PM | Location TBD

This month the Madonna’s are meeting to discuss the book “The Collected Regrets of Clover” by Mikki Brammer. Contact Lynne at [buckomcneill@yahoo.com](mailto:buckomcneill@yahoo.com) with questions, or to get on the group’s mailing list.



## Council Member Spotlight: Ben Kalina

My name is Ben Kalina and I am a Junior at Bishop Blanchet High School. This is my second year on council. My parents are Maria and Paul Kalina and our family joined the church after the remodel in 2021. My main passion is football even though I only started playing 3 years ago, when I entered high school. This past season, I played center (the snapper) and loved being a part of the team. There is a brotherhood like no other that I am very proud to be a part of. Blanchet was a big change from my middle school in many ways. The main example is that I am now attending a Catholic school while being Lutheran and that has been an interesting contrast and has allowed me to open my eyes to various perspectives about religion, society, and life in general. Outside of school, I love to play golf and basketball with my friends whenever I get the chance. I am on St. Luke’s CYO basketball team for this upcoming winter season. I look forward to continuing to help out our community in whatever ways possible!





# Community

## Our Annual Auction: Beads, Bids & Blessings! Saturday, February 8th, 5-8pm | Our Redeemer's

Join us for a magical Mardi Gras evening filled with colorful beads, décor, and exciting bidding! Step into a world where every bid nurtures community and fosters growth.

Bring your friends and family to this fundraising extravaganza! Enjoy entertainment for all ages, music, a craft room for kids, and, of course, a lively auction to support the ministry and mission of our church. Bring a friend and earn extra beads for the raffle!



We are seeking donations for both our live and silent auctions. If you have a vacation home, gift baskets, gift cards, or other experiences, services, or items to contribute, please email us at [auction.ourredeemers@gmail.com](mailto:auction.ourredeemers@gmail.com). Forms are available at the church for those willing to approach businesses for donations. You can also download a procurement form using the QR Code below or at <https://rebrand.ly/sky5jq9>.

Thank you for your support! Please drop off donated items by January 23rd.

**Attire:** Festive hats, scarves, and outfits in green, purple, and gold are encouraged, along with, of course, lots of beads!

**Food:** We'll serve Southern Gumbo with rice, greens, and cornbread. Mac & cheese will be available for kids, and a vegetarian option of Gumbo will also be offered. Please register in advance to help us plan the number of servings needed. Food prices range from \$8 - \$15.

**Registration:** We encourage you to register in advance on the auction website. Preview items, RSVP for dinner, or donate directly to support our faith community if you're unable to attend. Paddle donations can also be completed online.

**Wine Grab:** Do you have a bottle of wine valued at \$15 or more (750 ml) to donate? Drop it off at the church office by February 6th to contribute to our Wine Grab.

**Desserts:** Consider baking or bringing a delectable dessert for our Dessert Dash. We need a total of 10 delicious desserts to entice our Mardi Gras bidders! Sign up in the Narthex or contact the dessert coordinator, Anne McGrew ([annemcgrew@msn.com](mailto:annemcgrew@msn.com)), or the church office.

**Silent Auction:** Browse our silent auction tables in the Narthex starting at 5:00 PM and place your bids! The silent auction tables will close at 6:30 PM.

**Live Auction:** The excitement continues in the Fellowship Hall with our live auction, hosted by auctioneer extraordinaire Tim Hunter!

**Bidding paddles** will be available at check-in with a suggested donation of \$25. You may also register on our website and donate for a paddle.

For more information or to get involved, email Diana Myers at [dm3myers@gmail.com](mailto:dm3myers@gmail.com) or reach out to [auction.ourredeemers@gmail.com](mailto:auction.ourredeemers@gmail.com).





2400 NW 85th Street  
Seattle, WA 98117

[www.ourredeemers.net](http://www.ourredeemers.net)  
(206)783-7900

**return service requested**

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 AM Informal Worship  
11 AM Traditional Worship

Stream Online on Sundays (11 AM)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/OurRedeemers](https://www.facebook.com/OurRedeemers)  
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/822691346>

**Church office hours:**  
Monday-Thursday  
10 AM - 3PM



## Youth & Family Involvement in December

*(Left)* This year marked the 60th anniversary of our cherished Luciafest tradition at Our Redeemer's. A heartfelt thank you to all the participants, musicians, cookie bakers, family, friends, and neighbors who made the celebration so special. Your generosity also raised \$734 for the Ballard Food Bank!

*(Above)* Our Christmas Pageant was a heartwarming success, thanks to the leadership of Lisa Thompson and the enthusiastic participation of our wonderful families. Thank you all for creating such meaningful memories together!



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