

EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2025



Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.

-Luke 5:10

The start of a new year is often a time of reflection and renewal, a chance to think about where we've been and where we are heading. For many of us, it's a time to ask big questions: Who am I becoming? What am I meant to do? Where do I belong? These aren't just questions for January—they are questions that God invites us to consider throughout our lives as we seek to follow Him.

In the Gospel readings this month, we see a thread of calling woven through each story. From Jesus' profound sense of identity in the temple to His invitation to Simon Peter and the first disciples, these texts remind us that God calls each of us into His work. But they also show us something even more important: God's call is never about going it alone. It's always about stepping into something greater than ourselves, something that connects us to others and to the ongoing work of Christ in the world.

In Luke 2, we find the young Jesus in the temple, sitting among the teachers and astonishing them with His understanding. When His parents finally locate Him, His words must have been both puzzling and awe-inspiring: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Even at this young age, Jesus knows who He is and what He's meant to do. But His sense of identity doesn't separate Him from others—it draws Him into deeper engagement with the community around Him, even as He grows in wisdom and stature.

A similar dynamic unfolds in Luke 3, as John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus. John's call is one of preparation, inviting people to repent and be baptized so that they might be ready to receive the Messiah. His message is not about individual transformation alone—it's about people coming together, preparing their hearts and lives for something bigger than themselves. In this, we see how calling is often tied to participation. It's not about sitting on the sidelines but about stepping into the flow of God's work, shoulder to shoulder with others.

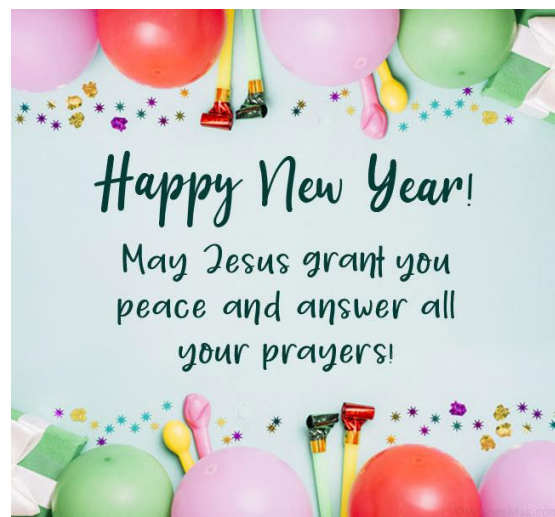
Then, in Luke 4, Jesus stands in the synagogue in His hometown and reads from the scroll of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.” He announces that this scripture is fulfilled in their hearing, declaring that His mission is to bring healing, freedom, and restoration. It’s a bold proclamation, but it’s also a reminder that the call to follow God is not about comfort—it’s about stepping into the hard and holy work of bringing light into dark places.

Finally, in Luke 5, we see Simon Peter’s reluctant yet transformative encounter with Jesus. After a long, fruitless night of fishing, Peter is ready to give up, but at Jesus’ word, he casts his nets one more time. The result is an overwhelming abundance, a catch so great that he has to call for help to bring it in. In this moment, Jesus doesn’t just reveal His power—He calls Peter into a new kind of work: “From now on, you will be catching people.” Peter’s response is immediate. He leaves everything to follow Jesus, stepping into a life of purpose and participation that is rooted in community.

As we reflect on these stories, we are reminded that God’s call is always about more than ourselves. It’s about opening our hearts to His work and finding ways to engage with the people and world around us. Whether it’s through small acts of kindness, words of encouragement, or deeper involvement in the life of the church, we are invited to step into the calling that God places on each of our lives. And the beauty of this calling is that it doesn’t depend on our qualifications or our readiness—it depends on God’s grace and our willingness to say yes.

This new year, I encourage you to reflect on the ways God might be calling you to participate in His work. Where might He be inviting you to cast your nets again, even if you feel tired or uncertain? Where might He be asking you to step out in faith, trusting that He will equip you for the journey ahead? As we step into 2024 together, may we do so with open hearts and willing hands, ready to answer the call and participate in the work of Christ’s kingdom.

God Bless,





January 2025 Newsletter – EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN

December has been a busy month, but it is always good to be working on projects together. The Pineview Quilters, many of the ladies are also church members, had their annual Christmas gathering at the home of Dawn Petty, where several women from Riverstone joined us for the dinner. We always give them items for children, quilts, diapers, clothing, for the homeless people there. After joining in a delicious meal, we presented the Riverstone people with numerous items for kids, plus 24 afghans made by Naomi Boley, and donated by her family. They were overjoyed and delighted to take them.

Our Women's Group also made a monetary donation to St. John's Foundation. We made 21 Christmas wreaths the first part of December, which were purchased by church folk, and all of those funds are going to the Youth Group for a special project for them. About \$425.00 was raised with the wreath sales.

People again requested poinsettias be bought to decorate the church for the holidays. We found some beautiful large plants and purchased the 16 that were requested. They are now decorating the church and can be taken to people's homes after the holidays.

As you can see, it was a busy month, and a special "Thanks" to the ladies for their efforts. We look forward to this coming year and certainly enjoy getting together to work on various projects.

A special "thank you" to all of you ladies, and God bless all you.

Respectfully,

Dawn Petty, ELCW Pres.

New Church Council Members Needed

We are looking for a couple new church council members starting in 2025. Council meets once per month and guides the church in our mission and vision. Call Jill or Pastor Josh if interested.





January 26th Annual meeting to follow worship

- Send requests for agenda items to Jill Hoffman by January 12th
- January 12th – Annual report articles are due, send to Jill Hoffman

Worship Time

In December, the Church Council voted to alternate our service times with the American Lutheran Church of Hardin on a 6-month rotational basis. We are currently collaborating with American Lutheran to finalize the exact date for this change. As of now, Emmanuel's service begins at 8:45 AM, while American Lutheran's service starts at 11:15 AM. Stay tuned for updates!



COMMENTARIES OF THE CHURCH MOUSE

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and that you are ready to embrace the New Year. Yes, 2025 is upon us and I'm sure great things are in store. Did you make any New Year's resolutions for yourself? Once again, I'm going to try and eat less cheese, which really is a struggle for me. I also resolved to do more for the community and church. I figure for the free room and board that my family receives at the church, I can at least donate my time in helping wherever I'm needed. Let me know if there is something that you think I need to be involved in. I really am a Mouse of all trades.

On the 20th we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, so I think we all should read his famous "I have a dream" speech again. It seems more important now than ever to come together as a community, as a country, put aside our differences and try to live in harmony. Everyone is special and unique. Together we can accomplish so much more than we can by ourselves.

Well so far, I haven't had to break out the snow shovel very much, which is nice. I plan to take advantage of one of these nice days to take down all of the Christmas decorations and get them packed away. I really don't want to be like my cousin, who just leaves his lights up all year long. He always says that it saves him so much time, just leaving them up, but that is not how I like to roll. Hopefully January will bring us some good snowstorms, so the ski hills will be ready for me. I really enjoy hitting the slopes with my kids and feel the wind in my fur, as I race down the hill. Perhaps I will see you on the slopes this year. Look for me on the intermediate ski runs or perhaps in the lodge around lunch time, hanging out by the fireplace.

Well, that is all for now. There is much to do. I need to go through my closet and pull out the clothes that no longer fit or that I don't wear and donate them. I received some nice new shirts for Christmas and I can hardly find the space to hang them up, so it is time to purge the old to make room for the new. Perhaps I should also check out my ski gear and make sure it is ready to go when the big snow storm finally arrives.

See you in Church.

Your faithful friend in residence at Emmanuel.

T. C. Mouse



Christikon Clips



January, 2025

Information for our Congregations

2025 Camp registration will open January 2nd.

Go to our website www.christikon.org in January and check it out!

Search for new Executive Director: As you read this, we hope to be in the final process of hiring a new director. We are excited and hopeful! Please continue to pray for this process, our call committee and our candidates as they discern this calling.

2025 Summer Staff Application is live on our website. Our Assistant Director will be out recruiting through February. If you or someone you know is interested in applying, go to <https://christikon.org/employment/> and complete the form.

Save the date: Christikon Benefit Auction is scheduled for April 27th. We are looking for items. Do you or someone you know provide a service, have a cabin, vacation condo, sky miles, sports tickets, event tickets that would be willing to donate? We would love to speak with them. Call or email the office.

Too few of our nation's young people (not to mention adults) have significant outdoor experience. Christikon combines spirited outdoor experience within intentional Christian community that helps open people to the life of faith. Think about joining the Christikon life this coming summer. It can do a world of good...

It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ—

exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.

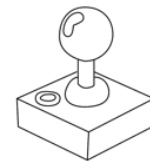
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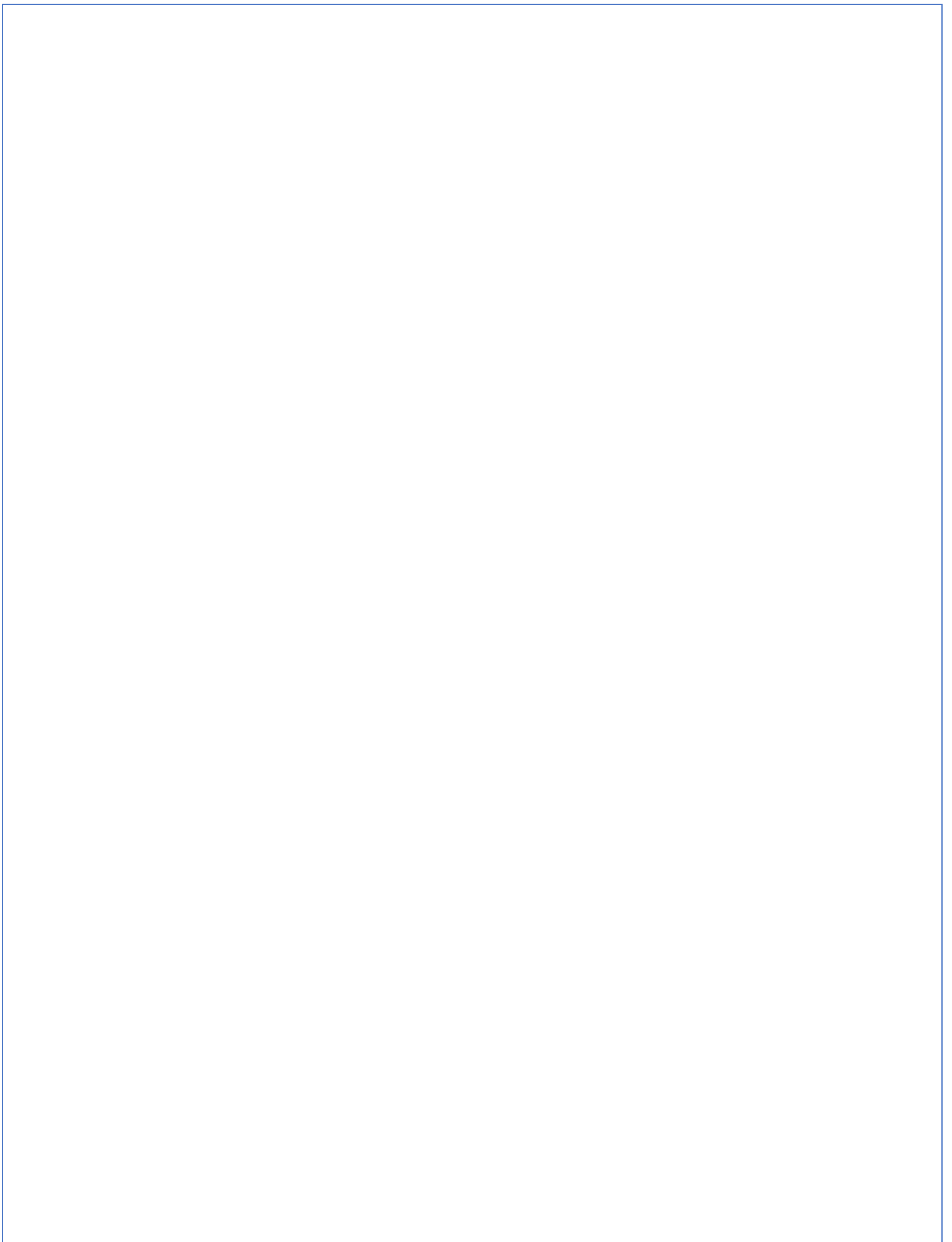
director@christikon.org • assistantdir@christikon.org

www.christikon.org

Like Technology?



We are looking for additional resources to run our worship streaming. Please contact Jill Hoffman if interested.



12/10/24

Shepherd Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council

Present: Pastor Josh Wyman, Jill, Dawn, Lindsey, Carol, Sam, Buckley, and Abbey.

Called to order at 7PM

Agenda presented by Jill. Opening devotion. Josh reminded us to all take a breath, Christmas is not about the gifts and the cleaning and stress but about the birth of our Savior. Take a breath

Standing reports:

Secretary Report – No discussion. (Carol/Sam)

Treasurer Report – No discussion. (Dawn/Carol)

Pastoral Report – Waymakers ended in November. Confirmation is going strong, said that the kids participating are asking deep questions and staying very engaged. High School Bible study is going well. 3 home visits done. This weekend we are switching back to the New Testament for lessons during church service.

Youth Committee – Children’s program will be 12/22 during service (during that service there will not be communion). Coffee and cookies will be served upstairs.

Music Committee – Music is scheduled through January. Laura will be able to play for Christmas Eve Service and Theresa is playing for the sing-a-long.

Old business: Christmas schedule: 12/22 Children’s service at 8:45, 12/23 Sing-A-Long potluck at 6:00 pm, 12/24 Christmas Eve Service at 4:00.

New Business: Annual Meeting preparation. Meeting is January 26th. Discussed possibly adding a Youth position. Budget concerns? **Annual reports are due January 12th**. Motion made to cancel advertising in the YCN. (Sam/Lindsey) Need to have a budget discussion about cost vs income. Pastoral Committee created (Jill, Sam, and Carol) to assist the pastor and the goals of the church, first meeting January 14th at 6:00. Survey to be put out to discuss the anonymous answers at the Annual Meeting. Time of service: discussion around 6 months of 8:45 and the following 6 months we change to an 11:00 service. Motion made to change our starting time for church on a 6-month rotation. Motion passed. All present in favor.

Next meeting: January 14th at 7pm

Mission Cornerstone: What have we talked about today that raises itself to: Joyful worship, Caring relationships, and/or Loving service.

Closed with the Lord’s Prayer and meeting adjourned at 8:30

Counters: Dec 15th Carol // Dec 22 Sam // Dec 24 Dawn & Buckley // Dec 29 Carol // Jan 5 Dawn // Jan 12 Jill

Emmanuel Lutheran
Church
P.O. Box 66
Shepherd, MT 59079

We have a mission . . .

Emmanuel Lutheran is
a welcoming church in a rural community, called
by God
to joyful worship
caring relationships and
loving service.

We have a vision . . .

“We will follow God’s plan for us
to grow in faith, family,
and community.”
elcshepherd.org — elcshepherd@gmail.com
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EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
JOYFUL † CARING † LOVING