

EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

March 2025 NEWSLETTER



So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away;

see, everything has become new!

-2 Corinthians 5:17

Lent begins in ashes. Each year, as we gather on Ash Wednesday, we hear the ancient words: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." We mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross, a reminder of our mortality, our need for God, and the ways we fall short. It is a solemn beginning, but ashes are not the end of the story. Because Lent is not a season of despair—it is a season where God is shaping us for something new.

From the ashes, we set out on a journey. A journey that will lead us through wilderness, self-examination, and renewal—but ultimately, toward something greater. Because at the heart of Lent is the promise that God is not finished with us yet.

As we enter this season, we remember that transformation is rarely immediate. It is often slow, unfolding through small, intentional steps. When Jesus began His ministry, He didn't start by teaching in the synagogues or performing miracles. He began in the wilderness—a time of fasting, prayer, and preparation (Luke 4:1-13). It was there, in solitude and struggle, that He was formed for the work ahead. Lent invites us into that same space.

This is a season to pause, reflect, and listen for God's voice. It is an opportunity to step away from distractions and consider where God might be leading us. Some will use this time to let go of things that have become obstacles in their faith. Others will take on new practices that draw them closer to God—through prayer, generosity, or acts of love. However we approach it, Lent is not just about giving something up—it's about being open to what God is doing within us.

And yet, this journey is not just about personal reflection. It leads us somewhere. Lent inevitably carries us to the cross, where Jesus' love is fully revealed. The cross is not just a symbol of suffering—it is a place of surrender, where Jesus offers everything in love. It is a reminder that real growth often requires letting go—letting go of pride, fear, or anything that keeps us from seeing and loving others as Christ does. But the story does not end there. Lent does not leave us in the wilderness, and it does not leave us at the cross. It carries us forward to the empty tomb. To resurrection. To new life.

Even before Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem, He gave His disciples a glimpse of what was to come. On the mountain of Transfiguration, His glory was revealed, a foretaste of the resurrection (Luke 9:28-36). That moment was a reminder that this season of fasting, prayer, and reflection is leading us somewhere—that even in the struggle, God is preparing us for something greater.

And that is the promise of Lent. That God is not finished with us. That the ashes are just the beginning. That what we were is not all we are meant to be. So as we step into this season, may we embrace it fully. May we allow ourselves to be changed, renewed, and shaped by God's love. May we trust that even in the wilderness, even at the cross, God is leading us toward something greater.

Lent is not about what we give up—it is about who God is calling us to become.

From ashes to resurrection, may this be a season of renewal.

God Bless,

Pastor Josh





EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN

The ladies of our church that belong to the Pineview Quilters Group decided not to try to get together in February due to the cold snowy weather, but we are still planning to make a quilt for each of Emmanuel's graduating seniors this spring. Perhaps we will have to plan on a few extra days of quilting once the weather warms up and the roads are good again.

With the Lenten season beginning March 5th, there will be more activities at church, from Wednesday night services to the Passover Dinner (the Seder Meal) on April 17th. Watch for the posters and announcements for that dinner. We will be having the regular meal and ritual for that. We will have sign-up sheets posted in the building and also sent to the other churches in our area, inviting them to join us.

Another big event to look forward to is the Christikon Benefit Auction which will be held on April 27th at the Billings Depot. The Christikon Benefit Auction Committee is looking for items to be donated for sale and to be auctioned off. If anyone has items to be donated for the auction, a donation form should be filled out by March 15th, and the items can be delivered by March 31st to the Christikon office located in the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd at 1108 24th St. West in Billings, phone is 406-656-1969. Featured items in the auction are various handmade items, such as beautiful quilts, tickets to sporting events, vacation get-aways, hand crafted items, theme baskets, jewelry, original artwork, and other crafted items. Please consider a contribution to the Christikon Benefit Auction and look for more details and updates. There will be posters on display in area churches and public places. So...get busy with your craft ideas!

Dawn Petty

President WELCA

Christikon Clip

March, 2025

Information for our Congregations



Christikon is an extension of your congregation's ministry.

Come and meet our new Executive Director Heather Wigdahl on March 4th from 6:30-8:00pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We will have an ice cream social in her honor!

Annual Benefit Auction is on April 27th at the Billings Depot. We are looking for items for the auction such as: fishing trip, weekend getaway, dinner out, themed baskets, artisan items. Have an idea? Let us know! Watch for more details as they become available on our website.

Are you registered for camp, yet? Registration is online at www.christikon.org.

We are excited about our new registration process! We believe you will be, too!

Adults and families: Work Weekend is a great time to get to camp and help us prepare for the 2025 campers. Our Continuing Ed Retreat and Mountain Weekend speaker is Dr Dave Ellingsen and the program: Go Outside and Play. Come play at Christikon this summer!

Register for camping for adults and families online at www.christikon.org.

Bus Attendants needed for 2025 – Would you or someone you know be willing to ride with youth on their way to Christikon? Yes? Please call Kerry in the office at 406-656-1969 or email at secretary@christikon.org for details. It pays a daily rate as well!

It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ – exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.

CHRISTIKON • 1108 24th Street West • Billings, MT 59102

406 656-1969 • secretary@christikon.org • www.christikon.org

COMMENTARIES OF THE CHURCH MOUSE



Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

"Your left, your left, your left, right, left...Oh, I don't know, but I've been told.... corned beef and cabbage will never get old. Mama said to have no fear...they never run out of cold green beer! Sound off, one, two...sound off, three, four...sound off, one, two....three, four." T.C. Mouse here and I've been told that I march to the beat of a different drummer. Of course I hear this mostly from Mrs. T.C., so you have to take that with a grain of salt. As you can see, I'm thinking about St. Patrick's Day, which is on the 17th, and already drooling over the thought of that requisite meal.

We also get to dork with all our clocks this month, as Daylight Savings Time begins on the 9th, so be sure to spring forward and set all the clocks one hour ahead before you go to sleep Saturday night. At my age, I don't feel that I can afford to lose an hour of sleep, so a Sunday afternoon nap may be necessary to synch up the old internal clock. Nothing wrong with a mouse nap now and then.

Spring officially arrives on the 20th, so there is hope in sight. My cousin Samuel, in Boston, keeps telling me about all the snow on his door step. He's about worn out from shoveling the white stuff. I've been telling him to find his water wings in his spare time, as he may need them once the melting begins! I try to console him by saying it is just as bad out here in Big Sky Country, if not worse. We have had more snow and cold this year than I care to remember. At least it warmed up a bit this week and I was able to hit the ski slopes to test out my recently healed broken leg. I'm happy to report that everything feels good and the blur of fur is back!

Enjoy the big melt everybody. I hope to see you in church.

Your faithful friend in residence at Emmanuel.

T. C. Mouse

2/11/25

Shepherd Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council

Present: President Sam Murnin, Pastor Josh (via Zoom), Jill, Dawn, Carol, Jeanne, Jack, Kristianne, Lindsey, Devin, and Abbey.

Called to order at 7PM

Agenda presented by Sam and opening prayer led by Dawn Petty.

Our mission at Shepherd Emmanuel Lutheran Church is to be a welcoming church in a rural community, called by God to **joyful worship**, **caring relationships**, and **loving service**. Our vision is to follow God's plan for us and to grow in faith, family, and community. It is very important that we all strive to follow this! It is important that we all look to the future and continue to live and learn from the past!

Standing reports:

Secretary Report – No changes.

Treasurer Report – No changes. Discussion about propane fill schedule.

Pastoral Report – spoke of home visits, our upcoming Easter/Lent schedule, Waymakers schedule, and HS Bible study. Josh is preparing for a busy Spring! Josh spoke of Wednesday services and the weather cancelations. 2/12 will be on for church but not for Waymakers again. ***Loving Service**

Old business:

Emmanuel Wednesdays: Waymakers after school, JH, HS, and younger kids all having some time specific to spend with Pastor Josh. Dinner and church service to follow as well as confirmation. Wednesdays are gearing up to be a very busy day but one focused on family and faith! As of now, Wednesday times are: Waymakers after school, dinner at 5PM, church services at 6PM, with Confirmation to follow at 7PM.

Easter/Lent plans: Palms are ordered for Palm Sunday. Ashes have been ordered for Ash Wednesday. Soup Suppers during Lent will be brought by volunteers for dinner during those special Wednesday services. Lilies will be available again this year. Seder Meal will be on 4/17 and Dawn has agreed to organize this meal (volunteers for food will be necessary). Youth breakfast will be served before our regular church service on Easter (3/5) and then an Easter egg hunt to follow (weather dependent as to if that will be inside or outside). The council will ask the Waymaker families to donate candy for the hunt.

Building Committee: We have a building committee now! This group will lead/help with anything that the church members deem important for updates, repairs, and the exciting movement towards finally getting our ceiling replaced. The committee is Buckley Reynolds, Linda Oberg, Maryann Morgenstern, Rob Emmons, and chaired by Abbey Emmons. Abbey presented news about the initial meeting with the proposed builder for the ceiling upgrade, Eric Logan. She discussed her excitement and the importance of getting this repair done. Abbey plans to meet with the committee soon and then meet again with Eric once the decisions have been made so that he can move forward with a bid. ***Joyful Worship**

New Business: New council induction during church is tentatively set for the end of March. Our bookkeeper/tax accountant has asked to resign. Jill has a friend that has volunteered to assist with those duties at no cost to the church. She will work with payroll processing and quarterly tax preparation. The board agreed to Judy Shimek taking over that role and if you see her, please tell her thank you! ***Caring Relationships** Our cleaning company also approached Jill asking for a contract change. The board discussed the changes and voted to keep Mo-Time Cleaners on as our cleaning company with the requested change of contract. (This change was not a budgetary issue.) Sam provided the survey results to the council. We had a limited time left of our meeting so she asked that the council take the results home and then bring back any concerns or questions to our next meeting in March. Thank you to those that took time to fill those out. These serve as a good base for where YOU want to see our church go and what changes you want to see our church make.

Next meeting: March 11th at 7PM

Closed with the Lord's Prayer and meeting adjourned at 8:16PM

Counters: 2/16 Jack & Kristianne 2/23 Jill 3/2 Jeanne 3/9 Devin & Sam 3/16 Jeanne

Upcoming dates: Lent starts 3/5 with Soup suppers on Wednesdays at 5PM, church service to follow at 6PM. Seder Meal on 4/17. Good Friday 4/18 (not at our church but usually in Ballentine). Easter 4/20 starting with the youth breakfast at 10, service at 11:15, and an Easter egg hunt to follow.

Volunteer opportunities: we need soup for the Lent services. One crockpot per family will be plenty and we hope to have 2 or 3 families provide per week. We will need help with the food items for the Seder Meal. We need volunteers for ushers, communion bread, communion set up and clean up, prayer reader during service, and treats. If you can help with any of these needs, please reach out to a council member. God's work, our hands! It takes a team!

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

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a welcoming church in a rural community, called
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We have a vision . . .

“We will follow God’s plan for us
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and community.”

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EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

JOYFUL † CARING † LOVING