

EMMANUAL LUTHERN CHURCH

JANUARY 2026

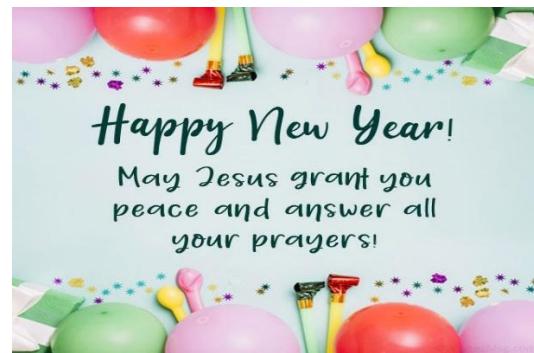


ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 25, 2026

Immediately following the church service. All congregation members are encouraged to attend. Due January 11th to Samantha Murnin (smurnin@live.com):

- Request for agenda items
- Annual Report Articles





January 2026 newsletter – ELCW

December has been the usual hectic month. So much going on in all our homes, lives, and our community, to get ready for the holidays and the year's end. The usual decorating, gift buying and wrapping, and family get-togethers to celebrate. Our church was given a beautiful Christmas tree, donated by Jacquie Schleder, a long time Shepherd resident, and it is displayed in the sanctuary. It is a pre-lighted artificial one and looks great. Thank you to all the congregation people who put up the other decorations. Gorgeous poinsettias have been purchased by some of the members, also. After the holidays are over, the poinsettias will be taken to their homes.

Twelve families from the area had signed up to receive a Christmas food basket, and the Shepherd Lions' Club purchased the majority of the Christmas dinner items for those baskets, with some of the pies being contributed from our ladies. Those food baskets were distributed to the needy families on December 21st, as were the donated items from the gifts from the angel tree. All this took place at the Community Center this year, as we didn't have the room to do so, at our sanctuary. Thank you to all the church members who provided gifts from the Angel Tree wishes. Thank you to the Lions' members for their support, and for joining us in this annual project of our church.

We again had Christmas wreaths for sale, and all 16 of those wreaths were purchased and taken by congregation members to decorate their outside doors. The total of the donations came to \$308.00, and those funds go to the Youth group as usual. Our ELCW takes care of this each year.

Some of our ladies are members of the Pineview Quilting Group, and this year at our annual Christmas dinner, we again invited several members of the Riverstone Health Center to join us for the meal, and to receive our gifts (donations of all kinds) to take back to Riverstone for the needy people at various nursing homes. We filled their car to overflowing with children's clothing, diapers and quilts. In January, the Quilt group will start new quilting projects for the next donation lunch in May.

As you can see. This has been a busy time for the women of the church but we enjoy helping others! May God continue to bless everyone who needs help.

Thank you,

Dawn Petty, ELCW President

Do You Feel Called to Serve?

Three committees have been formed to support Emmanuel Lutheran's mission - Joyful Worship, Caring Relationships, and Loving Service. Any congregation member who feels called to serve is encouraged to join a committee. Please contact Samantha Murnin (970-318-6551) or any council member if you are willing to share your gifts on a committee.



Building Update

The Building Committee has been working on options for moving forward with repairing or rebuilding a fellowship space. Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting on January 25th for a full discussion. Questions for the Building Committee can be directed to Abbey Emmons, Jack Martin, or Jeanne Larsen.



COMMENTARIES OF THE CHURCH MOUSE

Greetings Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Happy New Year! Happy, happy, happy New Year to one and all. I trust that everyone enjoyed greeting the new year, while saying goodbye to the old year, in a safe fashion surrounded by family and friends. Speaking for myself, I must tell you that I jump the gun on the whole new year celebration, as I really can't make it to midnight anymore. Mrs. T. C. and I wish each other Happy New Year at about 10:00 pm and then are fast asleep, waking briefly at midnight because of all the fireworks that seem to go off, then right back to sleep. Yep, I haven't seen the ball drop live for the past fifteen years or better. My motto is that if I really need to see the ball drop to start the New Year, then I better set up the old record function, so I can watch it the next morning! Now you know a little bit more about old T. C. Mouse than you probably ever cared to, but that is the price of admission.

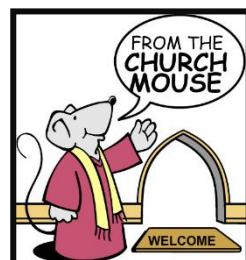
This month we also get to celebrate the great Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday on the 19th. I think of his "I have a dream" speech often, as I too have dreams, many of which probably shouldn't be shared. I think of how powerful his speech really was and the great turn of events that it inspired, how brave he really was to speak up and speak out at that time. A lot can be learned from history as long as it is never forgotten. I keep telling my kids just that, trying to help them avoid the pitfalls that I ran into growing up, hoping to help them avoid making the same mistakes, but sometimes the best lessons are those that we learn on our own.

I probably should start up some sort of exercise routine other than the back-and-forth couch to fridge, which I enjoyed around the holidays. I love to snack and I'm quite good at it. Now my union suit long underwear is fitting a little tighter and I feel I may bust a button. Perhaps that should have been my New Years resolution instead of eating different kinds of cheese. Perhaps I should just travel the world to see what kind of cheese is out there that I might be missing out on. Perhaps I should let you go about your day while I sit here and dream out loud on paper. I can't help but dream, as the Mrs. is always telling me "dream on T.C." and I guess I take her quite literally.

Happy New Year everyone. Keep the Lord in your life! I hope to see you in Church.

Your faithful friend in residence at Emmanuel.

T. C. Mouse



Christikon Clips



Christikon Clips

January 2026

Information for our Congregations

2026 Camp registration opens January 6th

Visit our website at www.christikon.org in January to explore next summer's programs and register. We look forward to welcoming you to Christikon during our 75th year!

2026 Summer Staff Applications are Now Open

The application is live on our website, and our Executive Director is out recruiting through February. If you—or someone you know—might be interested in serving on staff, visit <https://christikon.org/employment/> to learn more and apply.

Save the date: Christikon Benefit Auction – April 26, 2026

We are currently seeking donated items. Do you or someone you know offer a service, have a cabin or vacation condo, extra airline miles, sports tickets, or event tickets you'd be willing to contribute? We would love to hear from you—please call or email the office.

Why Christikon?

Too few young people (and adults!) have meaningful outdoor experiences. Christikon offers spirited adventure within an intentional Christian community that opens hearts to the life of faith. Consider joining the Christikon life this summer—it might just be the gift your spirit needs!

**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

director@christikon.org • www.christikon.org

Emmanual Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

Date: December 9, 2025, 7pm at the Petty Residence

The meeting was called to order by President Samantha Murnin.

Standing Reports:

- Secretary's report: Carol made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, Jill seconded the motion. November meeting minutes we approved.
- Treasurer's report: There was no treasurer's report. Samantha will request a report be sent to council by email.
- Pastoral report: Jill reported the Joyful Worship Committee has filled supply pastors through January and will start working to fill February through April. We appreciate the generosity of both John Goodheart and Maryann Morgenstern helping so far. The [Joyful Worship](#) committee (Laura, Maryann, and Jill) will be meeting after church on 12/14 to review the worship services on 12/24 and 12/28. Anyone is welcome to join. A [Caring Relationship](#) committee was established with Dawn, Jeanne, Jack, with Kristianne leading. Discussion was held on forming a [Loving Service](#) committee to focus on outreach, but it was decided to wait until the new council forms next year. It was also discussed the need for designated council or members to help with routine building maintenance. It was encouraged that committees should include non-council members to involve the congregation as much as possible. Jill will be monitoring the church phone for the next few weeks.

Old Business

- Samantha updated the council on the insurance dealings with Guide One. The church has received most of the coverage of damage from the roof, siding, and windows. Guide One is still reviewing the settlement on the steeple damage. Sam is working to escalate the disputed items.
- The building committee is still working on getting bids back for the proposed building ideas. Jack and Jeanne volunteered to join the committee. Discussion centered around bringing forward a recommendation at the annual meeting. Quotes have been difficult to obtain, but want to make sure and have discussion on the costs to repair our existing buildings in comparison to new facilities.
- A coaching discussion was held before the council meeting to update Chad on the church events since May including the storm damage to the church as well as the resignation of Paster Josh. Priorities were discussed to focus on included options to consider re-starting Waymakers in the future. The focus question was "Why does God have this Church in this community?" The council learned that Shepherd High School has started a "We Love" youth group and will help get the church connected for opportunities.
- A discussion was held on starting a call committee. It was decided to defer the call committee formation this month but continue to hold the Bishop's words in prayer about seeking new and non-traditional ways to support our pastoral leadership and worship.

New Business

- 2026 Budget: Samantha and Jill will work to develop a draft 2026 budget for council's review. Budget will include giving to the Montana Synod.

- Annual Meeting: The annual meeting will be held on January 25th after worship service. The meeting will be streamed on Facebook and comments will be monitored for those that cannot attend. Reports are due to Samantha by January 11th.

Sunday Service Attendants (Counter/Communion Assistant/Treats):

December 14th – Jill H.

December 21st – Carol K.

December 28th – Jill H.

January – Kristianne W

January 11th – Jeanne

Next council meeting will be held at Jeanne's hours January 7th at 6:30pm

The meeting closed by reciting the Lord's Prayer.



Coaching

The council has started a coaching journey with Pastor Chad Landrum. The focus question for the first meeting was "Why does God have this Church in this community?" Priorities and immediate action items were considered during the discussion. If you are interested in learning more about the coaching process for our church, please contact Samantha Murnin at 970-318-6551.

ELC Selected as *Partners in Ministry* Grant Recipient

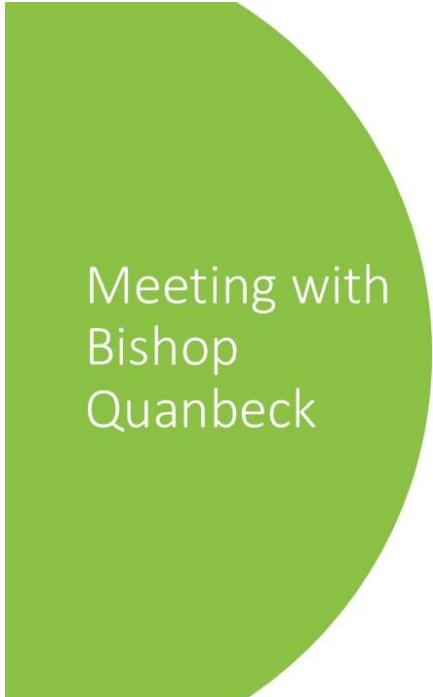
Dear Emmanuel Lutheran Church,

In 2020, King of Glory Lutheran Church (Billings, MT) felt a call to share financial resources with other saints in ministry for the sake of God's larger mission in the world. In recognition that small and rural congregations sometimes face challenges that make ministry in these settings increasingly difficult, KOG established a "Partners in Ministry Grant." Each year, KOG is honored to share benevolence dollars from the congregation as a way to encourage and build up ministry in settings like yours. We are pleased to inform you that at our recent Board of Directors meeting, ELC was chosen to receive this \$5,000 grant!

We have seen and heard of the good and faithful ministry you are embracing in your community. Thank you! We were so saddened to hear of the impact that the summer hailstorm and subsequent flooding had on your building. We understand how important it is to have space where people can gather for fellowship and support, especially in trying times. Your commitment to building relationships in and beyond your church community is exactly the kind of work that we believe Jesus is calling us to support.

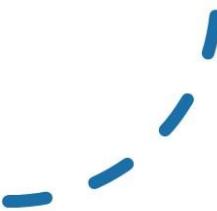
Though this \$5,000 "Partners in Ministry Grant" won't be able to cover all of the costs of restoring or replacing your gathering space, we pray that it will be a blessing to encourage you as you engage in this important work together. A member of our Board of Directors, Mrs. Linda Schinnow, will be in contact with you to arrange a time to personally greet you with this gift. Thank you for continuing to be Christ's church even during difficult circumstances!

King of Glory Lutheran Church Board of Directors, Pastor Jennifer Quanbeck



Meeting with
Bishop
Quanbeck

Bishop Ben Quanbeck met with the council on November 17 to discuss next steps now that Pastor Josh has departed. The Synod is in the process of organizing a monthly call for congregations in a transitional period and will send more information when it is available. It was a great meeting and the conversation will continue with Bishop Quanbeck and the Synod.



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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JOYFUL + CARING + LOVING