

Annual Congregational Meeting

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Shepherd, Montana

January 25, 2026



We have a mission...

Emmanuel Lutheran is called to joyful worship, caring relationships, and loving service.

We have a vision...

To “follow God’s plan for us to grow in faith, family, building and community.”



Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Annual Meeting
January 25th, 2026

Agenda

Member Sign-in, Establishment of Quorum

- Opening Prayer – Dawn Petty
- Call to Order – President, Samantha Murnin
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes from Annual Meeting - January 2025
- Reports:
 - ELCW – Dawn Petty / Tari Larson
 - Endowment Committee – Linda Oberg
 - Christikon – Sari Stahl
 - Food Pantry – Liz White / Laurel Noland
 - Joyful Worship Committee – Jill Hoffman
 - Caring Relationships – Kristianne Wilson
- Treasurer's Report – Budget 2026 Approval
- Old Business
 -
- New Business
 - Building
 - Call Status
- Election of Officers and other positions/representatives
- Recognition of “retiring” Officers
 - Lindsey Reynolds, Carol Kramer
- Closing Prayer

Shepherd Emmanuel Lutheran Church 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes

1/26/25

Opening Prayer by Pastor Josh Wyman at 09:55

Approval of the Agenda. (Devin/Tari)

Approval of the 2024 Minutes. (Kristianne/Jack)

Highlights of the year from the Bishop Laurie Jungling (read by Tanner Emmons)

Youth report presented by Sam Murnin. 2024 was a highlight year and spoke of Waymakers, Vacation Bible School, Homecoming Parade, Christmas Program. Plead for volunteers! 2025 Waymakers will be on Wednesday again following school. After Waymakers there will be a Wednesday dinner served and then we are going to try Wednesday night church services. Message from President Jill – thank you to the volunteers that help/helped keep the Waymakers thriving.

Pastor report presented by Pastor Josh Wyman. 2024 was about engaging in Joyful Worship. New lectionary, First Communion Class, Waymakers, Harvest Dinner, Bible Study for both kids and adults, Book club, Loving Service via the angel tree at Christmas and the Food Pantry. Josh wants more community time through all of the above programs. We are a part of this body and we are all needing to lend our voices to the Lord. Sincere thank you to all of the volunteers to keep these programs working. Josh said he is honored and blessed to prepare for 2025.

Food Pantry report presented by Jill Hoffman. The full report can be read in the agenda. Huge thank you to Louis & Rachell Garcia!

Women's Group report presented by Tari Larson. Spring Sedar Dinner, Christikon Camp donations, Summer BBQ's, and Harvest Dinner. The Women's group helped pay party of the Mt Synod benevolent fund with our church to be able to make our budgeted donation.

Old business:

Building Committee: Abbey Emmons presented an idea of a building committee and she has volunteered to chair the Committee. Maryann M and Rob E both volunteered to be on the committee. She talked about getting a bid in place from a family member. We have over \$13K in the account from the hail storm funds and the Raise the Roof donations. Conversation: Carol K passed along information that Buckley R thought we needed to focus on insulation in the ceiling. Jill further spoke of moneys saved and previous bids. Previous bids were in the area of \$20K-\$50K. The best bid came in at \$20K for tongue and groove wood and panels, labor, etc.

New business:

Worship time: 11:15 starting 2/2/25 and this will stay this way for 6 months with more fellowship time after service. Wednesday service – “Community Worship Service night”. Waymakers, JR Bible study, HS Bible study, 5:15 dinner open to anyone, then following dinner we will have a Wednesday Service starting at 6:00.

- During Lent, Pastor Josh will gear the lesson towards the Lent Service liturgy. The first service will be 2/5. Dinners will be volunteer from anyone that wants to help. First Lent Service is 3/5 with Ash Wednesday and we will aim for a soup dinner that day and soup to follow during Lent.

Treasures Report: discussed the 2025 Annual Meeting report included with the agenda. Memorial and Youth Account are holding strong. Building Account Insurance is money still in savings from the storm. Building Account – Ceiling is mostly the Raise the Roof and Noisy Offering. General Checking was DOWN almost \$6k as the bills were larger than our offering. Savings account shows a decent amount but it is the councils thought that the balance in the savings account needs to be able to cover a year of bills. Spoke of the budgeted line items listed on the agenda. No discussion. Motion to approve the 2025 suggested budget. (Devin/Tari)

- Vanco: if you are interested in this program for making a consistent offering, please reach out to any of the board members.

2025 ELC Officers & Committee members: New members: Samantha Murnin, president. Jeanne Larsen, Kristianne Wilson, Jack Martin, and Jill Hoffman will be our representatives. Jennie Ingram is now on the Endowment Board. The Synod Assembly position is still open. Nominating committee by default will be Sam M, Lindsey R, Abbey E, and Dawn P. Motion made to accept the incoming 2025 Council Members. (Kristianne/Tari) Welcome and thank you for joining the team!

- St Johns Representative is Tari Larson and Jennie Ingram. Jennie talked about the reason that we have this position. Aries is one of the new St Johns apartments opening up soon. Spoke about the long waiting list now for some of the St Johns things that that they support.



Letter from the Bishop: Montana Synod - January 2026

Acts 4:31 ³¹ When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thank you for the ministry, service, and love you embody in your congregations and communities. The work we do together as a church is vitally important in the world today. Daily, I pray that God continues to shake and awaken faith in you; that your congregation would be filled with the Holy Spirit as you worship God, teach the faith, serve with love, and tend to the suffering in your midst. May you speak the word of God with boldness to each other and to a world in need of grace and hope.

In my first months serving as Bishop of the Montana Synod, I have learned about the joys and challenges of ministry in this moment from clergy, LMAs, and congregational leaders. As I travel around the synod, I have been encouraged by your deep devotion to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, your care and concern for neighbors, and your resilience in the face of significant challenges. This is not an easy time to be the church, and some congregations acknowledge that transitions and changes have deeply shaken them. Could this be the Holy Spirit leading us into a new future? I wonder whether God might be using some of these uncomfortable experiences to awaken our faith and callings as disciples of Jesus Christ?

I am excited to announce that The Rev. Dr. Dwight Zscheile from Luther Seminary will be the keynote speaker at the 2026 Synod Assembly in Billings on May 29th and 30th. I encourage you to send delegates and other leaders to explore how God is calling us into a new future.

I am also glad to share that we are working on a new Montana Synod website. We aim to increase accessibility, provide new resources for our synod, and create a more welcoming experience for those checking out our synod online for the first time. Look for this website to launch soon.

As a synod, let us continue to pray and look for the Holy Spirit to lead us into this future together. Your participation in your congregation and the ministries of the Montana Synod makes a difference. More than ever, the church and the world need Lutherans to share the hope that we have by extending grace, mercy, and love to our neighbors.

Thank you for your partnership in boldly sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Ben Quanbeck

2025 President's Report

2025 was a whirlwind of a year! I want to start by thanking each person that volunteers their time and skills for our church. Your dedication is what makes this church a staple in the Shepherd community. All the hours spent serving on a committee, cleaning, shoveling, playing and planning music, service preparations, serving others in the community and more, do not go unnoticed.

The past year has tested our congregation through extreme weather and pastoral changes that weren't in "our plan". While these things have been a challenge, I want us to remember that God has a plan for that! Often, God uses these trials to do his work, even bigger and better than we imagined. Sometimes that means we must change our ways or get uncomfortable in the process, but we can trust that God is working through our church and our congregation.

In a recent council coaching meeting, we were reminded to pray on it. I ask that each of you consider that as we move into this new year as Emmanuel Lutheran Church. I know there are opportunities ahead for us to boldly carry out our mission through joyful worship, caring relationships and loving service.

Respectfully,
Samantha Murnin

ELCW Group 2025 Annual Report

The Pineview Quilters, consisting of some church members and community members, met monthly at the church through May. After taking a break for the summer, the club met at several member homes for the remaining months of 2025 as the church basement was not available. Donations of quilts, blankets and children's clothing were given to Riverstone Health both in May and in December. Numerous quilts were donated throughout the year to nursing homes in Billings. The club also made lap quilts for the church's 3 graduating seniors in May.

Auction items were donated by several of the church women to the annual Christikon April auction and fund raiser. This annual fund raiser is held at the Billings Depot and is a great event. You need to consider coming to the 2026 Auction in April.

The Seder (Passover) Dinner on April 17 was well attended, with about 50 church and community members gathering for the dinner. Numerous women helped set up the dining room tables and helped to prepare the meal and serve the dinner. The traditional Passover readings took place during the meal. You may remember that Shepherd had an ice storm the previous evening, and the town, including the church, was without power for over 18 hours. Luckily, the power came back on about noon on the 17th, so we were still able to hold our Seder dinner. Unfortunately, after dinner, it was discovered that the kitchen water supply and pipes had frozen during the ice storm and backed up during the cleanup. The church women were just amazing – everyone pitched in by taking home the dirty dishes, pots and pans, and brought back the clean items on the following Sunday. It was such a great outpouring of friendship and service. Thank you to all of those who helped.

In May, the ELCW group purchased Bibles for the 3 confirmands.

In the spring, a group of church members started the annual planting for the community garden. The ELCW group helped by providing funds for new soil and other garden supplies. A special thank you to Meagan Malchow and Liz White who spearheaded the garden project. Unfortunately, the June hailstorm devastated the garden plants that were growing. Several garden centers in the area, including Gainan's and Nana's Bloomers, helped the replanting by donating plants and seeds. Throughout the summer, various women helped to maintain and water the community garden. Even though the garden had to be restarted, there was a great supply of tomatoes and other vegetables that were harvested in the fall.

The June hailstorm also prevented the church from holding the community BBQs last summer. Many community and church members told us how much they missed those weekly dinner events. We look forward to starting up the BBQs in the summer of 2026.

Several of the ELCW members, along with members of the Hardin church, volunteered at one of the concerts out at St. John's campus in mid-July. The volunteers help pass out water bottles, brochures, and help concert goers as needed.

In September, several of the church women donated baked goods for the Shepherd Jamboree run by the Lions Club.

The June hailstorm also prevented the ELCW's annual fundraiser, the Harvest Dinner and Auction, from being held. We look forward to November 2026 and holding the dinner and auction once again.

We wanted to give a special thank you to Connie Halvorsen for her special contributions and wonderful food. On July 19, Connie provided a taco bar lunch for all the church helpers and student volunteers who helped clear the church basement of furniture, dishes, books and other supplies on that Workday. What a treat that was. On Sunday, November 9, a potluck meal was held after services to celebrate Pastor Josh's several years of service to Emmanuel & the community prior to his departure to Wisconsin. Connie made 4 different kinds of soups as well as several loaves of home-made bread for the potluck. A very special thank you again to Connie for her cooking, as well as the other women of the church who donated desserts and fruit for the potluck.

In November, the Shepherd's Lions Club and Emmanuel Church provided Thanksgiving baskets to local families who requested help through the Food Pantry. The church members were so generous helping to provide the side dishes and pies.

In December, the Shepherd's Lions Club and Emmanuel Church provided Christmas presents for the Angel Tree names. The Lions Club provided Christmas food baskets for the families as well.

Also in December, we decorated wreaths to sell at the church, and all the funds received from that project were donated to the Youth Group. ELCW donations throughout the year included St John's Foundation, Waymaker's/Youth Group, Women of the Montana ELCA, and the Montana Synod.

As you can see, our Women's Group is "alive and well". We continue to pray for Emmanuel, our church families, and our community. With God's help, we will stay healthy and capable of making our church the example of His love and concern for others.

Dawn Petty
President of the ELCW

ELC Endowment Fund Annual Report for 2025

The Endowment Fund committee welcomed Jennifer Ingram to the group in January 2025. Our officers remained the same with Laura Vanberg as Secretary and Linda Oberg as President.

The Endowment Board received a generous \$30,000.00 donation in 2025 from a faithful member of our congregation. The Board was deeply moved and excited that we are able to uphold our involvement with the programs and mission of Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

The committee had in depth discussion regarding the coordination of the Mary Cossitt music scholarship and the annual ELC scholarship offered by the fund. Due to an error, this coordinated effort was delayed until 2026. New application forms will be drawn up for the 2026 scholarship to ensure the Mary Cossitt funds will be considered for applicants with music interests. For 2025, we received five applications and awarded four of the recipients \$500.00 each. This was due to one application postmarked after the deadline of April 30, 2025.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance 1/01/2025	\$23,371.12
Scholarships	\$ 2,000.00
Gain/Loss	\$ 2,586.63
Donation	\$30,000.00
Ending Balance 12/31/2025	\$53,957.75

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Oberg, President

2025 Christikon

Registration for the 2026 season is open and viewable at the website christikon.org. If anyone is interested, I would love to provide information.

We continue to be thankful for the support of the congregation members and WELCA in the scholarships for youth to attend and donations for the Benefit Auction! Please don't let the attendance fee hold you back from this amazing opportunity. There are also adult and family groups!

There is a new Executive Director, Pastor Heather Wigdahl, as Mark Donald received a new calling.

The Annual Benefit Auction is at The Depot downtown on Sunday, April 26, 2026. There will also be an online auction if you can't make it in person (christikon.betterworld.org). If you have a donation (basket of goodies, trip to a condo/cabin, quilt, service, etc), please fill out the donation form by and drop off items to Church of the Good Shepherd at 1108 24th St West in Billings. Let me know if you need any help getting items to the office. I don't yet have a due date, but it is typically about a month before the auction.

Work Weekend to help prepare the camp for the 2026 season is on May 22-25th (you can be there any or all of the days). If you can help clean up the camp or have any skills such as plumbing, electrical, carpentry, engineering, etc, we could really use your help! Sign up on the website and enjoy a weekend in the mountains being well fed while you contribute.

Sari Stahl, ELC Christikon Rep

2025 Food Pantry Report

In 2025, the Food Pantry continued to be solvent. We have had numerous donations from area businesses as well as surrounding schools. This along with monetary donations and grants from the Town Pump Charitable Foundation, have kept our pantry thriving. I would like to list all the individuals and families who have also contributed, but are too numerous to mention. Thank you all for your continued support! Louie and Rachell Garcia continue to work behind the scenes, volunteering their time stocking and shopping for the pantry as well as making sure it is open during the week.

The community garden was a success this past summer despite the hailstorm in June due to large donations from Gainans Heights Garden Center and Nana's Bloomers in Laurel. Many hands make light work. This garden could not have been successful without the help and dedication of so many generous supporters who not only donated supplies, but their knowledge and time. Several of the old pallets were replaced with raised metal beds, making harvesting easier.

During the fall, the Shepherd Area Food Pantry once again participated in raising awareness of hunger in Montana with the Town Pump Charitable Foundation. Along with many other generous monetary donations, and the matching funds from the Town Pump Charitable Foundation, we raised enough money to support the pantry in 2026.

The Shepherd Area Food Pantry will continue to have a bright future serving our community. Praise be to God!

Respectfully submitted,
Liz White
Secretary
Shepherd Area Food Pantry

Joyful Worship Committee Report - 2025

The Joyful Worship Committee was created by the ELC Council as a standing committee to align efforts with the ELC mission.

I am delighted to share our latest updates from the Joyful Worship Committee with you. Our primary focus has been ensuring weekly pastoral leadership, and I am pleased to report that we have successfully filled our pastoral supply through April 2026. A heartfelt thank you to John Goodheart and Pastor Maryann Morgenstern for their passionate support in this endeavor. A special day to look forward to is February 8th, when Bishop Ben Quanbeck will lead our worship.

Laura Vanberg has been outstanding in arranging our music supply. She has scheduled musicians weekly through April 2026 and has done an incredible job selecting our music. The melodies have enriched our worship experience.

Pastor Maryann Morgenstern has been instrumental in putting together our liturgy for weekly worship. She organized an amazing Christmas Eve service, Christmas Carols, and has updated our liturgy for the post-Christmas period leading up to Lent.

A big shoutout goes to Tanner Emmons, who has taken over the task of creating our weekly worship slideshow. We absolutely love the new graphics he has introduced.

We have started discussions with local area churches about our Ash Wednesday, Passover Meal, and Good Friday services. We will share the schedule as soon as it is finalized.

Soon we will be introducing “Home Communion Kits”. Maryann will present this concept on January 18th, inviting attendees to take communion kits for family or friends who are not able to attend the service in person.

Looking ahead, we are contemplating having weekly themes for our services, such as youth, country western, service projects, and more potlucks. If you have any ideas to make our worship even more joyful, please share them with us. Additionally, if you are interested in joining the committee, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and enthusiastic support. Together, we are fulfilling our mission in creating a joyous worship experience.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Hoffman, Joyful Worship Committee Chair

Caring Relationships Committee - 2025

The Caring Relationships Committee was created by the ELC Council as a standing committee to align efforts with the ELC mission.

At the December Council meeting we decided to incorporate the efforts of the Connections task group under the umbrella of a Caring Relationship Committee, linking this effort and others to our mission. This task group gathered information from selected members/friends of ELC in April to understand comments made in the congregational survey gathered for our January 2025 Annual meeting. Our purpose was to better understand the factors and reasons for declining attendance. That feedback was summarized and discussed at the May Council meeting. Additional research of what other churches have found successful in engaging absent church members and welcoming /integrating new visitors and repeat guests was brought forward for June Council discussion.

Initial priorities were agreed to and since that time we've developed Connect Cards for the pews in order to gather information from new visitors as well as any prayer requests for members /friends. Welcome gift bags have been created and linked to this effort of welcoming new visitors. The committee has agreed to a process of follow up with new visitors and regular outreach to those members/friends who have been absent. We plan to begin a home visit/communion outreach to those members/friends who are homebound or prefer to join us online Sundays.

The committee will review over this upcoming year other ministries and communications tools that Emmanuel has used to fulfill our Caring Relationships mission.

Kristianne Wilson, Caring Relationships Committee Chair

2026 ELC Officers & Committee Members

	2025	2026
PRESIDENT	Samantha Murnin	Samantha Murnin
VICE PRESIDENT	Carol Kramer	Rob Emmons
SECRETARY	Abbey Emmons	Abbey Emmons
TREASURER	Lindsey Reynolds	Linda Oberg
REPRESENTATIVES		
	2026 Jeanne Larsen	2028 Linda Hinkle
	2026 Devin Murnin	2026 Devin Murnin
	2025 Dawn Petty	2028 Dawn Petty
	2025 Jill Hoffman	2028 Jill Hoffman
	2027 Kristianne Wilson	2027 Kristianne Wilson
	2027 Jack Martin	2027 Jack Martin
ENDOWMENT BOARD		
	2028 Linda Hinkle	2028 Carol Kramer
	2029 Jennie Ingram	2029 Beth Kincheloe
	2025 Laura Vanberg	2030 Kathy Bertrand
	2026 Sue Hawthorn	2026 Sue Hawthorn
	2027 Linda Oberg	2027 Robin McCaffree
CHRISTIKON REP	Sari Stahl	Sari Stahl
SYNOD ASSEMBLY (May in Billings)	Abbey Emmons	Abbey Emmons
ST JOHNS REPS	Tari Larson, Jennie Ingram	Tari Larson, Jennie Ingram
NOMINATING COMMITTEE	Murnin, Kramer, A. Emmons, Dawn P.	S, Murnin, D, Murnin, Wilson, Martin

2026 Council Appointed Positions

FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Barb Judisch
YOUTH MINISTRY LEAD	Greg Plath
JOYFUL WORSHIP COMMITTEE	Jill Hoffman - Chair
	Laura Vanberg
	Maryann Morgenstern
CARING RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE	Kristianne Wilson - Chari
	Dawn Petty
	Maryann Morgenstern
LOVING SERVICE COMMITTEE	