



LUTHER MEMORIAL
lutheran church

Quarterly Messenger 2025 Fall Edition



Rev. Sara Funkhouser, Lead Pastor
Donna Smith, Council President

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church
13047 Greenwood Ave. N
Seattle, WA 98133
206-364-2510

A Glimpse of Summer Activities





Blessing of Our Graduates



The New Shed Is Here!

FROM PASTOR SARA FUNKHOUSER

"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven..."
-Ecclesiastes 3:1



I know this reading from Ecclesiastes can at times feel like a cliché, something used at funerals and other points of transition to help us feel more comfortable with profound life changes. The reality is that we do live in a world of different seasons: seasons of weather, seasons of church liturgy, seasons of life. We have been in a season of heaviness and grief in this congregation, but also a season of growth and new life. They have existed together, just as so many of our life seasons overlap and run together. All of these seasons make our community even more special, as we are able to be a place to celebrate the joys of life and support one another through the challenges, as well.

As we enter into Fall, I can't help but see how we are entering a new season in the life of this church. It's why our Council wanted to go with a theme of **"A New Chapter Begins"** for our **Fall Kick-off on September 28th**. It's reminiscent of how we are entering into a new season in the life of our church, but that doesn't mean we forget everything that came before. We aren't starting a whole new story, but we are writing a new chapter as we decide together what it means to be this church and how we engage with the community in our building and in our neighborhood.

Fall signals to me this change in activity around us, as leaves turn, kids go back to school, and the church calendar fills up with more opportunities for fellowship and education. It's a beautiful time to try something new and to connect in different ways as the days start to get shorter and we prepare for the long, dark winter.

Please join us for a potluck following worship on the 28th, as we intentionally spend time getting to know the people who worship with us, and find out what is happening in the life of this congregation that will support us in this new season of life. I am excited to see how we enter into this new season and begin writing this new chapter together, as we continue to weave God's story with our story! May our story be a blessing as we continue to seek to share Christ's love in community!

Peace,

Pastor Sara Funkhouser

206-364-2510

pastorsara@luthermemorialsattle.com

FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

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Dear Luther Memorial Friends in Christ,

The cool fall season is here! This is my favorite season of the year with the changing color of the leaves and the cooler weather. It is also "A New Chapter Begins" for LMLC as we prepare for our Fall Kick-off on September 28. On that Sunday there will be a potluck after church, with the council providing the main course of ham and scalloped potatoes. You are invited to bring a side dish or dessert.



There are a number of opportunities and activities to serve the congregation at LMLC. The time commitment for these opportunities depends on the amount of time you have available to spend. Each opportunity will be presented before and after the church service on Sunday, September 28 as well as during the potluck.

We have seen many new people joining us each Sunday morning. The Fall Kick-off will also be a time to get to know one another. Each Sunday morning, please remember to wear a name tag so that we can easily learn everyone's name.

The fall season is also the time to begin thinking about the holidays which are just around the corner. Look for upcoming activities in the mid-week announcements and the weekly bulletin.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Happy fall y'all!

Peace,

Donna Smith

LMLC Council President

Cell: 425-971-9581

E-mail: council@luthermemoralseattle.com

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

In-Person & YouTube Live Stream Worship Sunday @ 10:30am

YouTube Live Stream Worship links and instructions:

For live stream events: <https://www.youtube.com/@luthermemoriamlutheranchur8764/streams>. You will see a list of scheduled (marked "UPCOMING") and past events. When the event goes live, you will be able to watch the event in real-time. When the event is complete, the event will be recorded and saved as a video for you to watch.

We suggest you subscribe to our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@luthermemoriamlutheranchur8764>, then click on the bell icon to turn on the notifications, it will send you email notifications for upcoming events.

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday 9:00am – 2:30pm (Pastor Sara Funkhouser)

Wednesday: 9:00am – 2:00pm (Pastor Sara Funkhouser)

Thursday: 9:30am – 3:00pm (Pastor Sara Funkhouser)

Friday: 9:00am – 2:00pm (Pastor Sara Funkhouser)

Monday - Friday: 8:00am – 12:00pm (Jian Zhang)

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Recent Worship Attendance

Sunday, 3, August 2025 - 38
Sunday, 10, August 2025 - 32
Sunday, 17, August 2025 - 35
Sunday, 24, August 2025 - 36
Sunday, 31, August 2025 - 53
Sunday, 7, September 2025 - 31
Sunday, 14, September 2025 - 35

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church Financial Results Through August 31 2025

Revenue	2025 Actual	2025 Budget
Pledges	\$ 86,977.22	\$ 70,725.86
Unpledged Offerings	813.00	400.00
Foss Pastor Share	2,500.00	0.00
Room Use	3,329.50	3,565.00
Gifts and Income Other than Offerings	1,400.75	333.36
Unrestricted Revenue	<u>\$ 95,020.47</u>	<u>\$ 75,024.22</u>
Feeding Ministry (A)	4,105.24	1,666.64
Restricted Revenue	<u>\$ 4,105.24</u>	<u>\$ 1,666.64</u>
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 99,125.71</u>	<u>\$ 76,690.86</u>
Expenses	Actual	Budget
Staff Compensation (Pastor, Office Admin, Musician, Bookkeeper, Custodian)	\$ 89,167.26	\$ 97,269.92
Administrative	8,336.38	9,058.36
Property	21,407.79	18,202.08
Worship & Music	917.12	1,328.00
Fellowship	208.39	500.00
Synod	5,560.00	4,668.00
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 125,596.94</u>	<u>\$ 131,026.36</u>
Outreach	602.93	1,000.00
Food Ministry (A)	1,530.99	5,333.36
Designated Funds Expenses	<u>\$ 2,133.92</u>	<u>\$ 6,333.36</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 127,730.86</u>	<u>\$ 137,359.72</u>
Operating Surplus/(Loss)	<u>\$ (28,605.15)</u>	<u>\$ (60,668.86)</u>
Withdrawal from Ministry Growth Fund	32,000.00	30,000.00
Net Surplus/(Loss)	<u>\$ 3,394.85</u>	<u>\$ (30,668.86)</u>

(A) - Does not include \$1,407.18 of Giving in Kind

The \$75,000 gift from Broadview UCC is not recorded as revenue; therefore, not recorded above. It is considered an investment in continuing the ministries in this area that the two churches have long performed. As a result, the amount has been added to Equity and the \$75,000 will be added to the Ministry Growth Fund (MGF) to generate future income. The future withdrawals from MGF and resulting expenditures will be reflected in future financial statements. The \$75,000 is currently in a money market account at BECU.

Feeding Ministry

January 1 2025	253.02
Donations	4105.24
Expenses	<u>-1530.99</u>
August 31 2025	<u><u>2827.27</u></u>

Does not include \$1,407.18 of Giving in Kind.

Roof Fund

Received Jan 1 2024 – August\ 31 2025	21905.69
Giving In Kind	<u>296.09</u>
	<u><u>22201.78</u></u>
Paid from Roof Fund direct to roofing company	-8447.09
Repayment to MGF (A)	-12000.00
Giving In Kind utilized	<u>-296.09</u>
	<u><u>-20743.18</u></u>
Balance in BECU	<u><u>1458.60</u></u>

(A) – Rather than actually transferring repayment of \$12,000 to MGF and, at the same time, requesting \$12,000 be transferred from MGF to LMLC as the 2nd quarter withdrawal, the same result was accomplished by a journal voucher entry. No money actually moved.

MGF Account	12000.00	
LMLC BECU Account (Roof Fund)		12000.00
Repayment to LMLC's MGF account for funds withdrawn for roof repair.		
LMLC BECU Account	12000.00	
MGF Account		12000.00
Quarterly withdrawal of funds		

**Luther Memorial Lutheran Church
Ministry Growth Fund as of
August 31 2025**

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2025	\$ 703,439.87
Addition	13,267.20
Withdrawals	(20,000.00)
"Wash" addition/withdrawal by LMLC journal entry:	
Addition to MGF from Roof Fund returning some of the funds borrowed for the roof project	12,000.00
Withdrawal for operations as budgeted	(12,000.00)
Change in market value	<u>52,721.42</u>
Ending Balance as of August 31 2025	<u><u>\$ 749,428.49</u></u>

Proceeds from the sale of Luther Memorial's parking area are invested in the above ELCA sponsored fund. The Fund is administered by 2 outside financial firms.

Additions are from income distributions for 2025. Distributions are paid quarterly and represent 4.0% of the average market value of the 5 previous year ends.

A \$40,000 total withdrawal is included in the 2025 Budget approved at the annual Meeting. \$32,000 in withdrawals have been made against the Budget.

The Fund's investment holdings are valued at market value (marked to market) each month. The total of these holdings plus cash held by the Fund determines the value of each Fund unit. That unit valuation times the number of units held in account for LMLC determines the ending balance with the change from January 1's balance being reflected in the 'Change in market value' amount.

Any holdings the Fund liquidated would result in a 'realized' gain or loss. However, for any holdings continuing to be held by the Fund, the changes to valuation are 'unrealized' (paper) gains or losses which may be reversed in the future.

Little Free Food Pantry

Our Little Panty continues to serve a need for our community. We are looking at ways to expand our offerings including some perishables, i.e. onions, oranges, apples, bread, potatoes, with an addition of a freezer/refrigerator in our pantry storage room. We are also looking into grants and partnerships that we hope will bring additional resources down the line. We are always asked what the pantry needs, so we have put together monthly themes that we hope will be helpful. Of course you are not limited to these items, but will perhaps give you some inspiration the next time you are at the store!

October Emphasis: Italian

Spaghetti	Spaghetti Seasonings
Penne	Spaghetti Sauce
Rigatoni	Diced Tomatoes
Lasagna	Canned Pasta (Chef Boyardee)
Ravioli	Mac and Cheese (Kraft)

Look for a new theme each month in the Midweek Updates.

Mary Hinderliter
Diane Chapman
Co Chairs

Property and Maintenance report from Laurie and Marilyn

Exit sign light bulbs checked and replaced, fire alarm was tested, a work party happened both inside and outside the building to address needs, blackberry vines removed from the south end of the property, wood chips spread throughout the entire raised bed giving garden area, graffiti removed from the stair railing. Merit Electric company was hired and made 4 trips to replace the light bulbs in the reader board, replace the 5 spot lights in the lawn area, clean out and replace the lightbulbs in the highest lighted area in the Sanctuary, replaced the 16 ceiling fixtures in the Narthex and replaced the timer for the reader board so that it will be lit from dusk to dawn. All the lightbulbs replaced are with LED bulbs. Gordon again fixed a toilet in the men's bathroom and replaced a broken board on the gate that leads to Broadview Center. The light fixture outside the Greenwood front door was cleaned out and bulbs were replaced with brighter LED bulbs. The cedar boughs were trimmed back so the kids/parents walking on the sidewalk wouldn't have to duck under them. More blackberry vines and lots of garbage removed from the south end of the property along the parking strip. Fire extinguishers were checked for their charge status. Carolyn cleaned out and organized the pantry closet and the kitchen drawers and cupboards.

The celebration hall lightbulbs were changed and a new storage shed was purchased and is now located on the north end of our parking lot.



From the Bishop:

October 2025

There are snakes all around us. It might not seem like it, but just like the snakes that surrounded the people of Israel, snakes are surrounding us. Let me remind you of that story found in Numbers 21. The people of Israel had been in the wilderness for almost 40 years and they are tired. They are worn out. They are angry. They are annoyed. There is no water and the manna which God has provided for them is, as the people say, "miserable." They complain about God and they complain about Moses. And suddenly, in the middle of their complaining, they are surrounded by snakes.

Snakes slithering around them. People running and screaming. People snatching their children up from the ground. Snakes biting and biting and biting. People dying. Finally, desperate, they ask Moses to pray to God on their behalf. And he does. And in response to Moses' prayer, God sends this message. God commands Moses to lift a rod into the air with a bronze serpent on it for the people to gaze upon. (You can read the full story in Numbers 21:4-9).

Do you see how strange it is for God to command this? To tell them to make a statue of the horrible thing that is killing them? My guess is that they wanted to shield their eyes from this monstrosity. No one wanted to look. Truly when they gazed upon that bronze serpent they saw a scary, horrifying, life-killing image of death. They saw poison and destruction.

But do you know what happens in the story? It is amazing. For when those who were bitten looked up and saw that which scared them the most, what brought the most destruction to them, they were saved. They lived. Out of death came new life.

There are snakes all around us, too. Do you feel them? These snakes take many forms: violence, hatred, greed, despair. Sometimes the snakes look like systems too big to fight. Sometimes they look like shadows in our own hearts. We may want to pretend they are not here. We may want to close our eyes and hope they slither away. But they don't. They linger, bite, and wound. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we are not spared from being surrounded by snakes.

And just like the Israelites, God calls us not to turn away but to look. To see the truth of what is around us. To name the injustice, the fear, the grief, the death-dealing realities in our midst. This is not easy. Looking at the snakes feels unbearable. But even more, we are called to look beyond the snakes to what is lifted up. For it is only when the people lifted their eyes and saw the bronzed snake could they find life again.

This Numbers story is quoted by Jesus in John 3. There, we hear, *"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."*

Jesus is using the Numbers story as an invitation for us as followers of Jesus. We are called to gaze upon something beyond the heartache and violence and all the snakes that are surrounding us. God calls us, just as Moses called the Israelites, to look up.

And what are we called to see? Not a bronzed snake but a cross. The cross. The cross of Christ is our bronzed serpent. On it, we see the ugliest things – violence, betrayal, injustice, sin, death itself. And yet, we are promised that this is exactly where God meets us. It is where Jesus bears what we cannot carry, where God does not hide from the world's brokenness and, instead, becomes broken for the world. Where God's promise that even death is transformed to the means of redemption, healing, and abundant life.

The snakes don't magically disappear. And we are called to confess, grieve, speak, listen, and act in community regarding the snakes. But ultimately, we lift our eyes, our voices, and our actions beyond the snakes towards the new life that is promised – where suffering is met with God's redeeming love. And in holy community is where we are strengthened again – discovering that healing and new life are possible, always, together, through Christ. Amen.

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee | bishop@lutheransnw.org



Am I a God near by, says the Lord, and not a God far off?...
Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord. (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

If God is indeed a God near by, why do we use so much language that imagines God as a God far off? If God fills heaven and earth, why do we persist in limiting God to the heavens? So much of our language in worship has imagery that implies a distance between us and God. We let our prayers rise up like incense. We look to the hills for help. We lift our hearts to the Lord. Although we proclaim an omnipresent God, we consistently imagine a God far off.

I find this language problematic in a couple of ways. First, it serves to separate me from God. I believe that God is with me always, knows me intimately and fully, and never abandons me. However, when surrounded by language that describes a God far off in the heavens or on hills and mountaintops, a God separated from and overseeing creation from a great distance, it is sometimes hard to feel that close connection. There is a scene in the movie *Apollo 13* where the astronauts are trying to stay warm and we learn that in the weightlessness of space, our body heat cocoons us if we stay still and in one place. Rather than continually lifting my prayers to God, I prefer to think of my prayers like that - radiating out from me in all directions, reaching a God whose presence surrounds me.

Second, this positional distance reinforces our unconscious cultural bias that up is good and down is bad. Heaven is high above us, while hell is down below. When we esteem and respect someone, we look up to them. When we dislike or disregard people, we look down on them. We consider merit on a vertical axis rather than a horizontal or even multidimensional one. We report to our higher ups and supervise those below us. This language has an impact on our worldview and our behavior. We tend, for example, to vote for the taller of two candidates, all other things being equal. This can put women at a disadvantage because on the whole women are shorter than men. We also may come to think less of those we physically look down upon and better of those we crane our necks to see. This can create an unconscious bias against those below our field of vision, such as wheelchair users. Because we literally overlook them, we also begin to disregard their worth. This up/down belief system even worms its way into our language incorrectly, as in referring to someone of poor status as "the low man on the totem pole," when in actuality totem poles are not typically carved in a vertical hierarchy. Sometimes the lowest figure is the most important, supporting the rest of the images. Sometimes the figures have no vertical meaning at all. Regardless of what our Indigenous siblings tell us, though, we persist in using the phrase in a demeaning fashion. When we use language this way, we place those who we feel are beneath us even farther from God than we ourselves are.

Please understand that I am not advocating for getting rid of all positionally distancing language in worship. Many of the verses and hymns that use these words are among my favorites. It is just that we need to be aware of our biases and how they show up in worship. We should be more attuned to how and when our language might be distancing us from God and one another. Our God is a God near by, not a God far off. Perhaps we should pray more often in words attributed to St. Patrick: "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise." This might help us remember that God fills heaven and earth and all the space between.

Here's what I and/or the Synod Council have been up to in September:

- August 31 (almost September): I attended Shepherd of the Valley's transitional service as they moved from Maple Valley to Black Diamond.
- September 10: The Policy Review Committee met to finalize the *NWWA Synod Process for Synod Calls* and review our *Mission in Washington Endowment Fund Policy*.
- September 13: The Synod Equity Listening Team held a training retreat at 7400 Woodlawn.
- September 20: Synod Council met. Among other agenda items we approved the minutes of the Synod Assembly, approved new compensation guidelines, and extended several synod calls.