



LOVING GOD, ONE ANOTHER, AND THE COMMUNITY.



January 2026

7607 Garden Gate Drive
Citrus Heights, CA 95621
(916) 723-5223 luthchurch.org

Auld Lang Syne

The thing about traditions is that they are often passed down without an explanation or justification. You may have heard the story about the family that always trimmed the edges of a roast before placing it in the oven, because that is how the matriarchal grandmother prepared her roast for the oven. Years later it was revealed that their grandmother trimmed the ends off the roast so that it would fit in her small oven. So, it was not an essential part of the preparation that her family needed to keep, but they did because that is how their grandmother made her roast.

Every year on New Years we have a tradition of singing *Auld Lang Syne* (and kissing someone we love!). This year, I wondered where and why this tradition was established. So, I “Googled” it. The song is Scottish and began being sung in the late 1700s on Hogmanay/New Years Eve. (I had a classmate in Seminary from Scotland whom we affectionately referred to as “Hogmanay”). The song’s trial can be literally translated as “Old Long Since” or less literally as “Times Long Past.” Its lyrics encourage us to look back upon days past, as we move into the future. As we reign in the New Year, we reflect upon the last.

There is much that I am grateful for in this past year; my sabbatical tops that last. Thank you for the gift of time and resources, so that I could rest and be renewed for the years ahead. I am excited to see how the Spirit will guide our time of discernment next year, drawing us closer to God and God’s desires for the future ministry of Ascension, while also drawing us closer to each other. It is my prayer that we will be united in our time of discernment and energized by the vision and direction that we develop together.

Should old acquaintances be forgotten? I hope not, as we move together into this New Year and new season of ministry together.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Scott



Worship and Media

As I look back on 2025, I am amazed at what God has done in our midst! We have shared our personal stories, God's story, the good news of Jesus Christ in so many ways.

Sharing the good news through electronic means is something that many if not most of us would have even dreamed about in our younger years. But coming up on the 6 year anniversary of the world as we knew it shutting down due to the COVID pandemic, I'm sure that we all realize how great a role the internet and social media played in keeping us connected when we couldn't physically be together.

Some social media highlights over the past year:

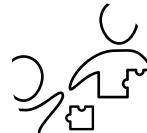
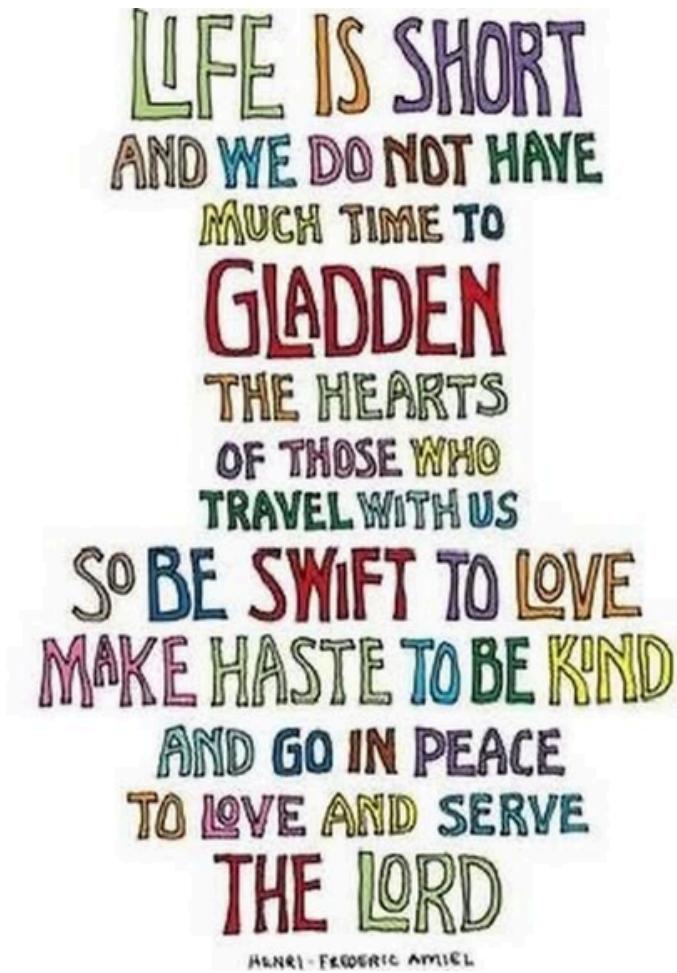
- I regularly post and share to Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Bluesky, TikTok, and YouTube.
- A typical day sees over 20 posts across all of Ascension's socials.
- Advent Wednesdays were the busiest, with 31 total posts scattered across our social media channels.
- Our biggest channel overall has been YouTube!
- The most viewed post this year was the July 30 Hump Day Hallelujah video on YouTube with almost 24 THOUSAND views. That looks like a statistical aberration, so the more accurate winner this year was the June 8 bite size sermon on YouTube, with over 1600 views.
- The most popular post type has been the short video, a clip less than 1 minute long.
- Ascension's YouTube shorts regularly reach views in the hundreds. Folks gravitate toward prayers and Bible verses.
- Our most popular Facebook posts have been the Throwback Thursday photos.
- The post that surprised me the most was the November 2 bite size sermon on YouTube, posted there on November 4. As of today, December 23, that short has had 758 views and 32 likes ... and not a single dislike!

I look forward to a great 2026 at Ascension – in worship, in media, in the arts, and in day-to-day ministry with you all and with all of God's creation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew", with a long, sweeping line extending from the end of the "n" towards the bottom right.

President's Pondering

This is my wish for all of us for 2026



Grace & Peace,
Terri Jellesed
Council President

Council Corner

As we wrap up 2025, we are looking forward to 2026. We are inspired by the growth our congregation experienced this year and look forward to what is cultivated next year.

We will continue to meet at 6:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month. The agenda is designed so the first order of business is “Open Discussion,” which is where questions and/or concerns may be brought to the Council. Visitors are welcome to stay for the entire meeting, but the way the agenda is structured does not require sitting through the entire meeting before getting the opportunity to speak. We continue to encourage members of the congregation to join us and, as we move into 2026, these meetings will be available via Zoom to those who request access.

We ask that you let Heidi know at office@luthchurch.org by Monday (the day before the meeting) so that appropriate invitations may be sent.

Wishing you a happy and fulfilling 2026.



Finance status through November 2025

Current Monthly Actual Income	Current Monthly Actual Expenses	YTD Actual Income	YTD Budget Income	YTD Actual Expenses	YTD Budget Expenses
\$34,143.90	\$38,291.75	\$461,935.50	\$451,916.66	\$451,344.63	\$507,176.12

Total Cash; All Accounts:	\$283,005.27
Obligated; Dedicated Accounts:	\$120,030.30



November did not produce an expected surge, but we are still on track for a year in the black.

Roger Linder
Treasurer

Properties Report

Properties Projects

We are currently managing a variety of property-related projects. If you see something, say something to Heidi...she is maintaining the log which allows us to keep track of the needs of the facility.

We greatly value the contributions of our volunteers. If you are working on the premises, please make sure to complete a Volunteer Waiver in the office. This step is important for everyone's safety and for maintaining accurate records.

Thank You to Our Volunteers

We continue to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who volunteer their time and skills. Your commitment is deeply appreciated and essential to the success of our property projects.

Happy New Year to everyone!



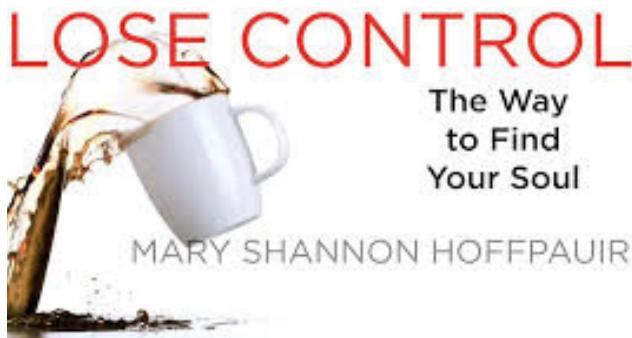
“Loving God, One Another, and the Community.”

Mary Jo Edmondson,
Vice President/Properties



Ascension Women You are Invited

To a 6-Week Women's Bible Study: Lose Control by Mary Shannon



When:

Thursday Mornings – 10am to 11:30am
January 8th through February 12th

Where:

Conference Room 1 (C-1)

Have you ever thought you had your life under control – until you didn’t. Perhaps you said things like “God is in control” or “God’s got this,” all the while living your life as if you’re in control. Then circumstances change and you realize you aren’t in control and never were. This 6-week study takes us through 1 Samuel where we will discover that we are totally dependent on God and God uses all circumstances to accomplish His purpose in our lives. By letting go of control and truly letting God be in control, only then, can we begin to see God’s purpose in our lives.

The book for the study, “Lose Control,” by Mary Shannon, can be purchased on Amazon or ChristianBooks.com.
If you have questions, please reach out to Cheri Hubbs.



Your words are either building something or burning something - there's no in-between.

Every sentence you speak carries weight: it can heal, help, and strengthen... or it can wound, divide, and destroy.

Let your words plant what you'd want to harvest later.

James warns us that “the tongue is a small thing... but a tiny spark can set a whole forest on fire.” (James 3:5-6)

What we say to people carries weight. It can heal or harm, build or break, bless or burn.

And Scripture is very clear - we will give an account for every careless word, whether whispered or shouted.,

So choose words that plant what you'd want to harvest later; words that reflect Jesus.



Women of the ELCA

WELCA continues with our mission to love God, one another, and the community.

Happy New Year and Thank you for all your support last year.

Your generosity during the months of November and December to help us bring joy to others is greatly appreciated.

The gifts to those at Acres of Hope were delivered on Wednesday, December 17th. The gifts to those at Taylor House were delivered on Sunday, December 14th.

Without your support we could not accomplish what we do.

Remember, any women at our church are welcome to our meetings.

If you have **paper grocery bags**, please bring them to the food closet. As of now we have plenty of plastic ones.

Just a reminder: Food Pantry Sunday is the 2nd Sunday of the month. Peanut butter seems to be in short supply. Please remember to pick up your bag on the 1st Sunday, fill it, and return it on the 2nd Sunday. We are handing out over 80 bags of food each month and your contribution helps tremendously.

Our next meeting is January 19th, please join us in C-1 at 4 PM.



Supporting One Another

Ascension Cancer Support Ministry

The goal of the Cancer Support ministry is to help those dealing with cancer to feel God's comforting presence each and every day, to feel, His presence giving them strength and hope while facing the many challenges that accompanies a cancer diagnosis.

We now have 3 types of care packages: **Cancer Care Packages**, **Caregiver Care Packages** and **Chemo Care Packages**. It's time to expand this ministry to serve the community around us. Approximately 1 in 5 people will develop cancer in their lifetime. This rate is significantly higher for adults over 50, with 88% of all cancer diagnoses occurring in this age group. As you can see, the need is in our midst and beyond.

The care packages provide an outreach opportunity for those in need, similar to how we distribute the Blessing Bags. The care packages are a tangible way in which we can let those facing cancer know we care about them.

The care packages are meant for our family and friends, but they also are meant for anyone who we come across who is facing cancer. My prayer is that God would place people in our lives who need our support. Won't you join me in being attentive to those who could benefit from a care package. The cancer journey can be tough but if we can show God's love and offer hope, I believe we can make a difference.

The care packages are located in the church office. If you hear of anyone facing cancer please stop by and pick one up, or see Heidi or myself on Sunday mornings. Please reach out if you have any questions or suggestions on how we can serve the community through this ministry.

Cheri Hubbs
Coordinator,
Ascension Cancer Support Ministry



Youth Group Schedule



William Barker - Youth Director
Justin Carballar - Asst. Youth Director
g1youth@luthchurch.org
carbiemagoo@yahoo.com



January 11th - Youth Group 12-2 pm

January 18th - Confirmation

January 25th - Movie & Popcorn night! 4:30-7pm



Opportunities to Serve in the Community



Ascension has an active group of volunteers who pack up food for hungry people on the third **Friday** of each month.

We are scheduled to serve on **January 16th**.

Contact Betty Alvord if you would like to help.

(916) 926-2067 or bettyalvord7@gmail.com.

Please consider making a donation to help the funding shortfall for Sunrise Christian Food Ministry, 5901 San Juan Avenue, Citrus Heights, CA 95610



Ascension has the opportunity to send 12 volunteers to Habitat for Humanity's "Build for Unity" on Saturday, 7 February. This will be held on Sayonara Drive in Citrus Heights, which makes it very convenient. This special event is designed for members of different faith groups to come together to build houses for low-income families. As of now, we have 7 openings so please contact Rich Peterson ASAP (916-773-5478) if you are able to help.



A New Year of Adventure

Loaves & Fishes



Ascension volunteers serve lunch in the dining room on the first Wednesday of each month. The next time we will be serving is on **January 7th**.

We need more volunteers for this community outreach to homeless people in the Sacramento area. Our group meets at the church at **10 am** for carpooling.

Contact Doreen Nichols for more information.



Save the Dates

January

- 1 Office closed - New Years
- 3 Lefse Baking Day
- 6 Epiphany Dinner & Worship
- 7 The Chosen - season 4
- 8 Lose Control - Women Bible Study

22 Pub Theology

February

- 18 Ash Wednesday
- 26 Pub Theology



2025 Church Council

Pastor - Scott Jones
President - Terri Jellesed
Vice President - Mary Jo Edmondson
Secretary - Mark Chapman
Treasurer - Roger Linder
Youth - Autumn Davis
Technology - Brian Shannon

Loving:

God - Greg Imlay
One Another - Brian Shannon
The Community - Doreen Nichols

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Need to contact the office?
office@luthchurch.org for Heidi

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Directory Updates
Susie Van Vliet - new phone number (279) 386-5723

Thank you!

On behalf of the staff, we would like to express our deepest appreciation and thanks for the kindness you have shown to us this Christmas season. Your cards, notes, and generous gifts have been truly heartwarming, and we feel so cared for by this congregation

Pub Theology

Jan 22nd 6-8 pm
R Vida Cantina
7040 Sunrise Blvd
Citrus Heights, CA 95610



Contact Mark Chapman
for details

Text Talk

All are welcome to attend Text Talk at 10 am on Tuesdays in Conference Room 1 to discuss the preaching text for the upcoming Sunday. In person or via Zoom.



January 2026

28	29	30	31	1	2	3
				New Year's Day	6:30pm - Romanian SDA	9am - Lefse Baking Day
				Office closed		9:30am - Romanian SDA
				2pm - Craig Brewick		4pm - Romanian SDA Church
				7pm - SLAA Meeting @ C-1		6pm - NA Meeting @
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:30am - Classic Worship @ 9:30am - Coffee Hour @ 9:30am - Women 9:45am - Band Rehearsal @ 9:45am - Kids Sunday School 9:45am - Mustard Seeds @ 9:45am - Screwtaape Letters	2pm - Craig Brewick 10am - Text Talk @ C-1 12pm - Piano tuning @ 2pm - Craig Counseling 4:30pm - Finance Committee 6pm - Epiphany dinner and	10am - Loaves & Fishes 6pm - AA Meeting @ 6:30pm - Band Rehearsal @ 6:30pm - The Chosen - season	10am - Lose Control ~ 2pm - Craig Brewick 7pm - SLAA Meeting @ C-1	6:30pm - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @	9:30am - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @	9:30am - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Food Pantry Sunday	2pm - Craig Brewick 8:30am - Classic Worship @ 9:30am - Coffee Hour @ 9:30am - Women 9:45am - Band Rehearsal @ 9:45am - Kids Sunday School 9:45am - Mustard Seeds @	10am - Text Talk @ C-1 2pm - Craig Counseling 6:15pm - Antelope Quilters @ 6:30pm - Council @ C-1	6pm - AA Meeting @ 6:30pm - Band Rehearsal @ 6:30pm - The Chosen - season	10am - Lose Control ~ 2pm - Craig Brewick 7pm - SLAA Meeting @ C-1	8:30am - Sunrise Christian 6:30pm - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @	9:30am - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:30am - Classic Worship @ 9:30am - Coffee Hour @ 9:30am - Women 9:45am - Band Rehearsal @ 9:45am - Kids Sunday School 9:45am - Mustard Seeds @ 9:45am - Screwtaape Letters	Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2pm - Craig Brewick 4pm - WELCA Meeting	10am - Text Talk @ C-1 2pm - Craig Counseling 6:30pm - Band Rehearsal @ 6:30pm - The Chosen - season	6pm - AA Meeting @ 6:30pm - Band Rehearsal @ 6:30pm - The Chosen - season	10am - Lose Control ~ 2pm - Craig Brewick 7pm - SLAA Meeting @ C-1	6:30pm - Romanian SDA 10am - Gold Country 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @	9:30am - Romanian SDA 10am - Gold Country 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Blessing Bags Healing Sunday	2pm - Craig Brewick 10am - Text Talk @ C-1 2pm - Craig Counseling	6pm - AA Meeting @ 6:30pm - Band Rehearsal @ 6:30pm - The Chosen - season	10am - Lose Control ~ 2pm - Craig Brewick 7pm - SLAA Meeting @ C-1	6:30pm - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @	9:30am - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @	9:30am - Romanian SDA 4pm - Romanian SDA Church 6pm - NA Meeting @