

# The Church Mouse

VASHON LUTHERAN CHURCH

DECEMBER  
2025

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this issue

Message from John Michael Barich **P.1**

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“Freely you have received, freely give.” Jesus’ words speak to me of gratitude. We “freely give” as we recognize that everything we have is a gift from God. The end of the year is an opportune time to reflect in a special way on the gift of our church in our lives.

Vashon Lutheran Church isn’t just a place we go on Sundays. During these challenging days, we’ve learned that we are a resilient family of faith, and in spite of developing or ongoing health issues and political divisiveness around the world, we continue to find a home together where we are nourished by the Eucharist, comforted, and challenged – where we are surrounded and supported by a wonderfully caring community.

Giving freely is all about our support of this family. It’s about giving back to God what God has first given to us. Through our gift to the church, we reach out – together – in the name of Christ to the poor, the elderly, and our neighbors in need. We celebrate in a powerful way the mysteries of our faith, and we provide a refuge to folks who live on the edge of loneliness in these trying times. I know I don’t need to try to find ways to motivate you to give. All I need to do is remind you that this is a natural time to reflect on your giving to your church, and to commit yourself to giving freely and generously in 2026.

During this year when so many have lost life and so many have lost livelihood, I find myself more grateful than ever before for the gift this church is to me – the gift YOU are to me! Your support throughout these past months is an inspiration. Thank you for your prayerful response and for all the ways you make this family what it is.

Blessed Adventide,

Rev. John Michael Barich, Care Pastor

## From the BISHOP:

Have you ever paused to consider how the Christmas story includes the very sordid tale of an engaged young woman who, to all appearances, was unfaithful to her fiancé? While we often sing about the hope and joy of this child (we know who this child is after all!), those in the middle of it all, heartache abounded. Joseph wondered who the father of this child truly was. Mary's parents feared for her reputation and her future. And Mary? Mary did not walk through any of this untouched by pain. What a miserable, tangled mess. Poor Joseph. Poor Mary. And what a precarious, almost unthinkable situation for God to choose to be the way of coming into the world.

And perhaps this is why we love this story so deeply. Because God coming to the world as a baby, God becoming flesh – incarnate – becoming human, was never meant to only be miraculous and beautiful and amazing. It was never merely a night where angels sang and shepherds worshiped. It was never simply about a couple who accepted and embraced this new thing without thought or questions or fear.

No. In this story of incarnation we are given truth. The truth that life is sometimes difficult, sometimes hard. The truth that in this world there is confusion and fear and brokenness and messiness. Though no angel has come to interrupt our lives with such extraordinary news, every one of us knows frustration and grief and those heavy, unspoken things that keep us awake at night. And so, this story is not only something we know – it's a story that knows us.

If you have a Bible handy (or a Bible app), I invite you to open it up to Matthew 1 and read the genealogy listed there. At first glance, it reads like a list of heroes. But if we scratch the surface, there is a more complicated truth of who these people were. Abraham nearly sacrificed his son. Jacob cheated his brother out of his birthright. David arranged a man's murder to prevent a scandal. And then there's all those women listed – Bathsheba, Rahab, Ruth – whose stories, or at least the way they have been remembered, are filled with struggle, tragedy, or suspicion.

But here's the thing. We know that God was with every one of those men and women, as broken as they were, as much fear or anxiety they might have had, as messy as their lives were, as complicated as the world was. God worked through their lives in the midst of it all. We know that Abraham's son Isaac was not sacrificed, a ram was provided. Rahab saved God's people. Ruth became the ancestor of kings. And above all these stories, we have the Christmas story – truly the whole Jesus story.

We know, through all these stories, that God comes and is incarnate in the lives of messy, complicated people. We know that the Spirit is always moving through broken places to bring wholeness and new life. Always, always God comes – even when all seems hopeless or chaotic.

So, perhaps now, in this time, when so much seems to be fraught and unknown, so much seems to be uncertain or just plain bad, when we aren't sure what is next or what choice is best, we hear the Christmas story anew. And, in hearing it, may we trust that God is here, always, in our stories and in our lives.

Today we live in expectation. Today, we hope and trust, even in our messiness, that God comes to us, holds us, and loves us. Today we hold onto the promises that God is with us – incarnate in Jesus – and together we have the promise of a world made new through Jesus Christ, bringing true peace to this world. And, until then, we pray, come, Lord Jesus, come!

Blessed Advent and Christmas,

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

[bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Contact Gail Larson (206/852-4967) with your prayer requests.

IFCH Dinner Program - VLC will not provide a meal at Vashon Presbyterian Church at 5:00 PM the fourth Thurs. of Nov. & Dec. The meals will resume in January. Contact Cheryl Weise: [cheryl.weise@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.weise@gmail.com).

The Care Closet, Medical Equipment/Supplies – 206-473-8715. Vashon Care Network – 206-473-8715. Email: [contact@vashoncarenetwork.org](mailto:contact@vashoncarenetwork.org); website: [www.vashoncarenetwork.org](http://www.vashoncarenetwork.org)

VCN FAMILY CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP - Vashon Care Network invites you to join other family caregivers in a safe, supportive space to share the experience of caregiving. Thursdays, 6:30–7:30 PM at VLC. ?? Call Tory Hayes, 206.304-4544, [victoriansmith@comcast.net](mailto:victoriansmith@comcast.net).

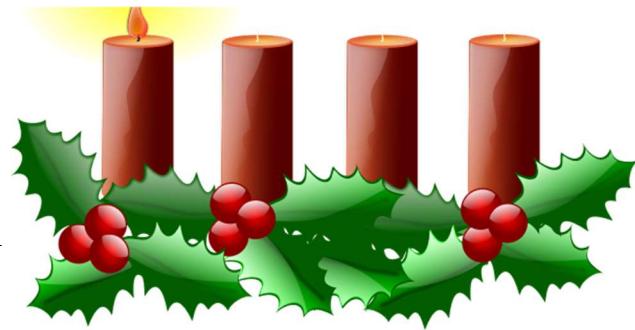
The Vashon Old Friends Club will officially open at the Presbyterian Church, Wednesday, Sept. 17. The Club, a place of fun & friendship for adults with memory loss or cognitive change, provides breaks for their caregivers. It's offered every Weds., 9:30 am– 2:30 pm. If you're a caregiver or know someone with cognitive challenges & have questions, please submit a Program Interest Form, available on the VCN website: [www.vashoncarenetwork.org](http://www.vashoncarenetwork.org). If you want to volunteer, contact: [laurettahyde721@gmail.com](mailto:laurettahyde721@gmail.com).

## Our Faith In Action

### SUNDAY

1<sup>st</sup>  
9:45 AM – 10:15 AM  
10:30 AM  
6:30 – 8:30 PM

Food Bank Sunday  
Bible Study in Fellowship Hall  
Worship Service  
AA Group



### MONDAY

Dec. 8, 5:30 – 8:30 PM

Care Closet Team Meeting

### TUESDAY

2<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
3<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00 AM – noon

Quilt Sewers Group  
Vashon Quilting Group

### WEDNESDAY

1<sup>st</sup>, 9:00 AM – noon  
Dec. 24, 4:00 PM

Lutheran Quilters Group  
Christmas Eve Candles and Carols Service

### THURSDAY

6:30-7:30 PM

VCN Family Caregivers Support Group at VLC

### FRIDAY

7:00 – 8:30 PM

AA Group for Men

### SATURDAY

Jan. 11, 2026, noon

VLC Council Meeting





## VASHON LUTHERAN CHURCH

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