

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER



News of Elizabeth Lutheran Church

January Highlights

Jan 1st

Office closed

January 8, 15, 22 & 29

Craft Days @ 1pm

January 15, 16 and 17th

Community pantry volunteering

January 18th

Council & Altar Guild Installation

January 21st

Council meeting @ 5:30

January 25th

Acolyte training immediately after worship (4th, 5th, or 6th graders)

January 27th

Newsletter info deadline @ 10 am

Elizabeth Lutheran Church

165 CR 307 (PO Box 675)

Caldwell, TX 77836

Office: 979-567-4286 (Mon-Thurs 9-1)

office@elizabeth-lutheran.org

www.elizabeth-lutheran.org

Pastor's email:

pastor@elizabeth-lutheran.org

Prayer Chain

Lisa Blum

Margaret Hibbeler

Clair Schulle

Connie Suehs

Debbie Skrabanek

Twana Benner

Sue Brinkman

Christie Havemann

Becky Goetsch

Penny Neal

Dianna Curington

Council Members

President – Cody Novosad

Vice Pres – Vince Neal

Secretary – Christie Havemann

Treasurer – Jaxton McNair

Property – Trent Groce

Worship – Vince Neal

Cong Life – Melanie Woods

Christian Ed – Rhonda Schroeder

Membership – Maryanne Rogers

Evangelism – Shawn Faust

Temp Pastoral Services – Richard Brunk

Loving God, loving others, sharing the Word.

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Pastor's Post



THE FANTASY OF THE CLEAN CALENDAR

Every year I get a new desk calendar and a new pocket planner/calendar. I write things down very neatly and clearly. Already, I have doctor appointments, birthdays, and other events written in my 2026 planner and calendar. I take pride in my neat and clean calendar until..... You guessed it. Something changes or I wrote it in the wrong day. My perfect year now has something scratched out or a blur where I tried to erase what I wrote in pencil.

The same thing happens with my New Year's Resolutions. We've probably all done something like start a diet or an exercise regimen, start a Bible study or devotional program, or just promised ourselves we would have a better attitude this year. My Resolutions usually last about as long as a Kleenex umbrella in a thunderstorm. And what about the news? My optimism about a New Year lasts until the first or second news story about a wreck, a war, persecution, crime, or an economic downturn. So, what are we to do?

When I was ordained 50 years ago a church member gave me a plaque with a quote from a pastor friend.

"Christ keeps the church, I only work here."

This helps me keep things in perspective. We wish everyone a Happy New Year, but we all know that trouble, pain, loss, death, and yes, that three letter word, sin, will pop up quickly. Maybe we could change the greeting a little. How about?

HAVE A GRACE FILLED NEW YEAR!

*May you receive God's grace-His free gift of forgiveness.

*May you walk daily in God's grace filled guidance and love.

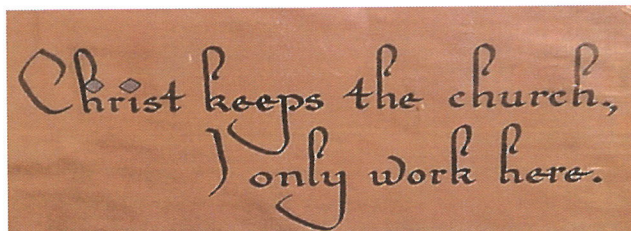
*May you know the true meaning of God's grace in action as we move from the Christmas Season into Epiphany.

Remember a Christmas word throughout 2026. Emmanuel, a name for Jesus, meaning God with us.

May you receive, live in, grow in, and share God's free gift of love in Christ our Lord.

Happy New Year and Blessed Epiphany.




Pastor Richard Brunk



During this transition period I will be helping with visitation, hospital calls and other pastoral services. Give me a call if I can help in any way. 832-483-0702 or brunkfin@aol.com

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CELEBRATIONS*

January Birthdays		January Anniversaries		January Baptisms	
<p>Stephen Skrabanek 1</p> <p>Duane Suehs 1</p> <p>Rosemary Degner 6</p> <p>Brynleigh Parkin 7</p> <p>Mandy Novosad 8</p> <p>Deni Kate Lloyd 12</p> <p>Derrick Duke 14</p> <p>Jeffery Zgabay 20</p> <p>Patsy Jennings 21</p> <p>Paul Schulle 25</p> <p>Caitlyn Faust 27</p> <p>Daniel Duke 27</p>		<p>Randy & Sonja Brinkman 16</p>		<p>Eileen Schneider 2</p> <p>LJ Graves 8</p> <p>Irene Schumacher 13</p> <p>Tanner Stefka 18</p> <p>Blair Groce 19</p> <p>Dana Skrabanek 25</p> <p>Stephen Skrabanek 25</p> <p>Houston Gerland 27</p> <p>Emma Brekenfeld 29</p> <p>Sterling McManus 30</p>	

*For corrections or additions, please email office@elizabeth-lutheran.org

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January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				Craft Day @ 1pm		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				Pantry Volunteer 6 PM Craft Day @ 1pm	Pantry Volunteer 9 AM	Community Pantry Distribution 7 to 10 AM
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Council & Altar Guild Installation			Council Mtg @ 5:30 pm in the FH	Craft Day @ 1pm		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Acolyte training immediately after worship.		Newsletter info deadline by 10 AM		Craft Day @ 1pm		

Monthly Financial Information:

2025 Annual Budget: \$287,635.00
 Amount needed monthly: \$ 23,969.59
 Amount needed weekly: \$ 5,531.45
 General Funds rec'd in Dec: \$ 17,556.00
 Building Funds rec'd in Dec: \$ 25,650.00 (\$595.0000 current principle balance owed)
 Average Sunday attendance: 97

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January Worship Responsibilities

9 AM Service	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	
USHERS	Larry Blum, Nathan Blum, Devin Gerland, Paul Hobbs and Bryan Woods				
ALTAR GUILD	TBD				
ACOLYTES	Aubrey Maurer	Jackson Lloyd	Lila Supak	Jenna Hibbeler	
READERS	Hudson Novosad	Gail Broussard	Willie Hobbs	Hadleigh Novosad	
AUDIO/ VISUAL	Britt Lloyd	Cody Novosad	Jack Moore	Devin Gerland	
COMMUNION SERVERS	January Ushers	January Ushers	January Ushers	January Ushers	

WOMEN'S MORNING BIBLE STUDY

- ✚ All women are invited 😊
- ✚ Do you know of someone in need of prayer? Prayer chain contact info on the front page or call the church office @ 567-4286.
- ✚ Join us this fall for Bible Study each Monday @ 10 a.m. We will start a new study during advent.
- ✚ All ELC women, 18 years and older, are automatically WOW members!
- ✚ Has your contact info changed? Would you like to serve on a 2026 committee? Please contact: Clair 956-793-1160 or Joni 979-220-0417

Acolyte Training

Acolyte training will be held on Sunday, January 25, immediately after the worship service at the start of Sunday School. Any children in 4th, 5th, or 6th grade who are interested in learning how to serve as an acolyte are encouraged to attend. Contact Christy Faust for more information, 979-220-8573.



Mission Moment

by Pastor Bryce Formwalt
Director of Mission Growth



Celebrate Jesus

Amid the twinkling lights and festive cheer, it's easy to forget why we celebrate Christmas. We can get caught up in the hustle and bustle of it all: parties and programs, gift buying and cookie baking, travel planning and family gatherings. All the activity of the season can crowd out the real meaning and purpose for the holiday itself. While we may say "Jesus is the reason for the season," what does that really mean for us today? What if an often overlooked Bible story can help us reconnect our celebrations to the true gift of Christmas?

One cold December Sunday when I was in the first grade, I got to read my very first verse with my own eyes out of a real Bible. I still remember it to this day. In Sunday School, we studied a part of the Christmas story that is rarely talked about. The lesson came from Luke 2 and was about Simeon meeting the baby Jesus in the temple. Simeon was a righteous and faithful man who had been waiting for God to send the Messiah to bring salvation to Israel and hope for the world. In fact, the Lord had promised Simeon that he would not die before seeing the Messiah.

We read aloud Luke 2:29-32: "*Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said, 'Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised. For my eyes have seen your salvation. You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples—a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.'*" And just like that, my eyes were opened to see Jesus as the true gift of Christmas. Here Simeon sees and responds joyously and faithfully to God's grace in giving Jesus to the world. Can't you just picture the joy Simeon must have experienced as he lifted baby Jesus, praising God and delighting in his goodness and mercy?!?

Then as Luke 2 continues, we are introduced to Anna, an elderly widow who had dedicated her life to serving the Lord in the temple, to prayer and to fasting. She, too, met baby Jesus that day and began praising God and telling everyone that he was the Messiah, the long-awaited anointed one who had come into this world to bring salvation.

I love the story of Simeon and Anna as it reminds us what Christmas is really about. The world is in desperate need of Jesus, the Messiah. Like Simeon and Anna, we are invited to recognize and rejoice with a deeper appreciation for the gift that Jesus is to the whole world. We rejoice and celebrate this season full of hope and gratitude. Our faithful response in celebrating Jesus' birth should be like theirs: gleefully praising God and telling others what this means not only for us, but for everyone who calls on His name.

This Christmas, pause and ask: How can my celebrations better reflect the joy of meeting Jesus, the promised Messiah and savior of the world? May our response give glory, honor and thanks to God. And let us share the Good News with a lost and broken world desperately in need of all that Jesus came to give. JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON. So let's celebrate Jesus!

Pastor Bryce Formwalt is the Director of Mission Growth for LCMC Texas District and Program Director of Harvest Workers, an online ministry training program (learn more at www.harvestworkers.net). Residing in Georgetown, Pastor Bryce is available to coach congregations on mission. Please contact him with any questions or comments: 512-942-7776 or bryce@lcmctexas.org.

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CRAFT DAYS STARTING BACK UP - EVERY THURSDAY at 1 PM

Please bring a project. If you do not have a project (yet), please come anyway. Enjoy the fellowship and perhaps get inspired! We look forward to seeing you!

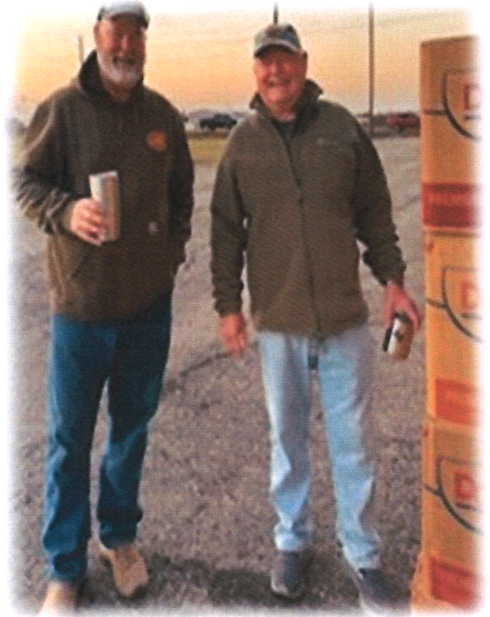
The 30th Annual KBTX Food for Families Food Drive, Burleson County collection took place at St. Mary's Catholic Church on December 3rd. Food and monetary donations benefit our 3 local food pantries (ELC pantry, Christians Care pantry and In God's Hands pantry).

Pictured here are some ELC pantry volunteers:
Willie Hobbs, Diane Broadhurst, Joni Cook and
Byron Sommerlatte.



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Fun at the Food Pantry



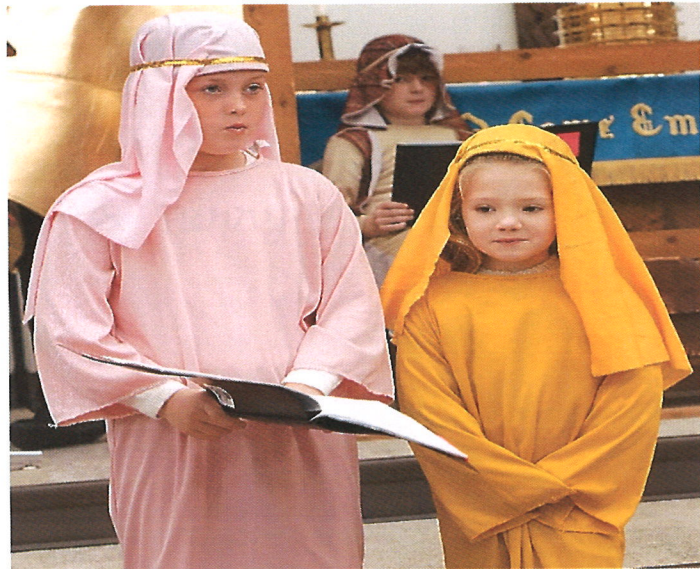
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SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM – DEC 14

"The New Star" was the Christmas program shared by our Sunday School children as they retold the beautiful story of Jesus' birth. This program reminded us of the special star God placed in the sky, one that quietly and faithfully led the wise men to the baby Jesus. Through their words and songs, our children showed us how God used a simple light to guide people to His Son. As we watched, we were reminded that Jesus is still our light today, guiding our hearts and leading us closer to Him. We hope you all had a Merry Christmas! (Photos taken by Megan Suzhs)



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