



# The Good News

## Pastor's Press: Invitation into a Lenten Journey to the "Vulnerable Edges"

The Season of Lent can be understood as a holy invitation to attend to our vulnerable edges—those places in human life where our strength gives way, our illusions are stripped, and our need for *grace* becomes unmistakably clear.

### ***Lent as God's Meeting Place at the Edges***

Lent does not exist to make Christians stronger, better, or more spiritually impressive. In Lutheran theology, God does not meet us in our self-sufficiency but at the *edges of our vulnerability*—where sin, suffering, mortality, and fear are exposed. Lent intentionally leads us there.

Ash Wednesday names this truth plainly: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." This is not spiritual cruelty; it is pastoral honesty. The ashes mark the fragile boundary between life and death, reminding us that we live always at the edge of our own limits. Yet these ashes are traced in the sign of the cross—as we are already joined to Christ.

### **The Vulnerable Edges We Face in Lent**

#### 1. The Edge of Mortality

Lent acknowledges that we are finite. Our culture often avoids death or hides it behind productivity and

positivity. Lent gently but firmly brings us back to the truth that our lives are contingent and fragile. Through my pastoral lens, this is freeing: we are not required to save ourselves or make our lives ultimate. God has already claimed us in baptism.

#### 2. The Edge of Sin and Truth-Telling

Lutherans tend to traditionally resist treating Lent as a moral boot camp. Confession in Lent is not about self-improvement but about truth. At our vulnerable edges, we admit where we are curved inward on ourselves. Much of my Lenten pastoral care, in the past, has emphasized to folks that confession does not create forgiveness—it receives what Christ has already accomplished and that they are worthy of forgiveness and are not alone in the confession.

#### 3. The Edge of Suffering and the Cross

The time of Lent walks us toward the cross, not around it. This matters because many people already live with grief, illness, loneliness, or trauma. Lent does not add suffering; it gives language and space for it.

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# Council Corner

Thank you all for your engagement with and support of the 2026 budget! In addition to the budget, Council wants to make sure everyone is aware that PoL has several ministries that are supported by donations, including:

- Elevator Fund
- Bunk Bed Ministry
- Building Fund
- Christmas Fund
- Easter Fund
- Fellowship
- Supporting our Neighbors (SON)
- Quilt Fund

- Good Samaritan Fund
- Youth Fund
- Mission Endowment Fund
- HOPE Fund (Helping Other People Eat)
- Memorial Funds
- Start Right Fund
- Backpack Buddies Fund

Please prayerfully consider supporting any of these important ministries in addition to your regular giving, and if you have questions about them, please feel free to reach out to anyone on Council or Pastor.

## Financial Secretary Update on 2026 Giving

Total monetary giving through the second quarter ending January 25, 2026:

- Total Giving to General Fund year to date: **\$21,798.80**
- Year to Date budgeted need: **\$19,744**
- Over/(under) budget year to date: **\$2,054.80**

Thank you for your financial support at Prince of Life!

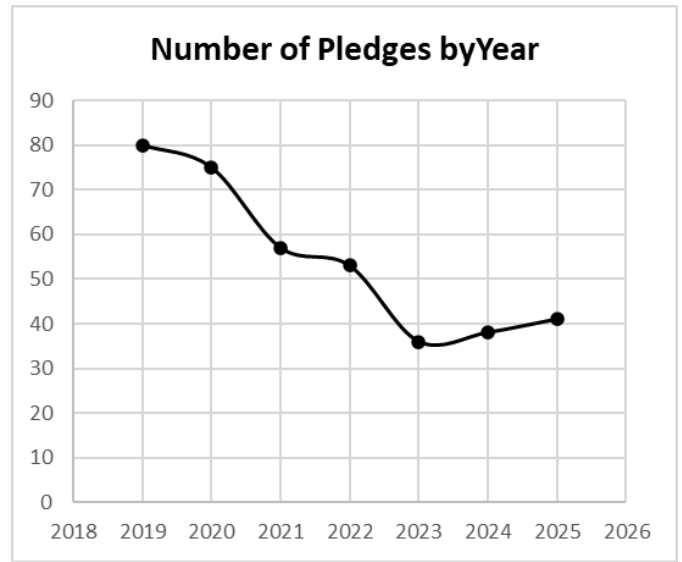
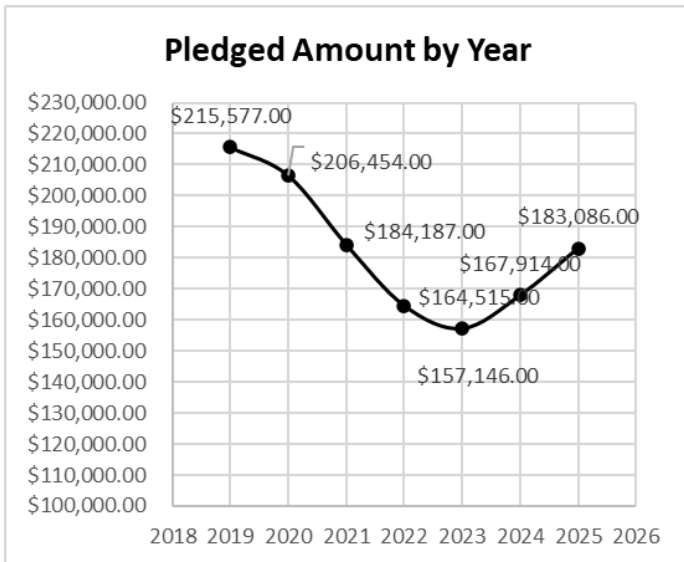
Dan Hughson  
Financial Secretary



# Financial Secretary Report Cont.

## CONTINUED FROM P. 3

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>	
<b>Total Pledges Received:</b>	15	41	<u>% of 2025 Pledges met</u>
<b>Total Gifts Pledged:</b>	\$70,256	\$183,086	94% (101% if designated funds included)
<b>Total Gifts Received (general fund)</b>		\$171,873.27	
<b>Total Gifts Received (designated funds)</b>		\$12,833	



This section describes the member demographics and compares giving over the past four years. One notes a steady decrease in the number of members who are donating at least once during the calendar year. To counter this, the remaining members have greatly increased their monetary gifts. The average donation per member family has steadily increased. This has maintained the financial stability of Prince of Life over time. The drawback is that less members are giving more. This makes the financial base of the church more dependent on fewer people which may cause more fragility over the coming 5 or so years.

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
<b># of Member Donors</b>	72	79	83	102
<b>Total Donations Gen. Fund</b>	\$245,884	\$225,301	\$226,365	\$232,994
<b>Total Avg. Donation</b>	\$3,415	\$2,852	\$2,727	\$2,284

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# Pastor's Press Cont.

## CONTINUED FROM P. 1

The church dares to say that God is present not only in resurrection light but also in Good Friday darkness.

### **Christ at the Vulnerable Edge**

Therefore, at the heart of any Lenten season, is not only our vulnerability but Christ's. Jesus fasts, is tempted, rejected, betrayed, beaten, and ultimately crucified. In hopeful response, God chooses to meet humanity not from a distance but by inhabiting our most fragile edges. Edges of self, edges of community, edges of struggle and even at the edges of life itself.

From a Lutheran perspective, this is decisive: Christ does not save us by avoiding weakness - Christ saves us by entering it.

The cross reveals a God who works "*sub contrario*"— under its opposite. Strength comes through weakness. Life comes through death. Hope where hope seems most unreasonable.

In closing, please consider that fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are not spiritual achievements or practices. Consider instead that they are *edge-making practices*—they gently loosen our grip on what numbs us or gives us false security, they loosen our mind to follow our heart, and in many respects, they loosen our grip on who we are, so that we can step more fully into who we are *becoming* and *whose* we truly are.

Lent always moves toward Easter, but it never rushes there. This is deeply Lutheran in this way. We trust that resurrection is God's work, not ours. Lent teaches us to remain at the vulnerable edge long enough to hear the promise spoken again: **You belong to Christ—at your weakest, most honest, most exposed – and so does everyone else!**

It is my prayerful hope this Lenten season that I, as your pastor and you as beloved community together, will use the time not to try and fix broken people or systems, but to accompany all beloved people as they encounter the God who already knows their edges—and chooses to dwell there.

*Joyful to be on the Way with you,  
Pr Sena Norton*

## Fill the Alter for Lent!

During Lent, our tradition is to fill the alter with food for our local food bank.

Your contributions of boxed, canned and packaged foods help feed our neighbors in need.

Please bring food all Sundays in Lent (February 22 - March 29). Let's help feed our community!



# Invitation to Lenten Life

Lent invites us to slow down and pay attention. To notice where life feels thin, where faith feels fragile, where the weight we carry has edges sharp enough to hurt. These are not places to avoid. These are places where God is already at work.

Inside the Lenten life, we practice honesty:

- honesty about our limits
- honesty about our sin
- honesty about our longing

Not so that we can fix ourselves, but so that we can stop hiding from the One who already knows us completely and loves us anyway.

To engage the Lenten life is to accept the courage of truth-telling. It is to let prayer be less polished and more real. It is to let fasting reveal our hunger rather than deny it. It is to let generosity loosen our grip on what we think keeps us safe.

These practices do not make us righteous; they simply make space for

us to receive again the righteousness that is already ours in Christ.

And above all, the Lenten life keeps our eyes on Jesus—the One who does not stand above our suffering, but steps into it. Jesus walks the wilderness, faces temptation, endures rejection, and carries the cross. He does this not to show us how strong to be, but to show us how deeply God is willing to go to meet us.

So, I invite you—not as an obligation, not as a test—but as a gift: Enter this season.

**Walk honestly. Trust deeply. Bring your weariness. Bring your doubts. Bring your needs. Christ will not turn away.**

For the Lenten life is not about what we give up to God, but about what God gives again to us: *mercy, forgiveness,* and a *love* that holds us even at our most vulnerable edges.

-Pr. Sena Norton

## Lenten Opportunities

Ash Wednesday

2/18

Ashes available 12-5:30pm

Worship at 6:30pm

Pastoral Care

Wednesday in Lent

12-1pm

Extended pastoral care hours.

Appointments encouraged, but drop-in's welcome.

Come share faith, your life, and your edges with

Pastor.

Dinner Church

2/25, 3/11, 3/25

6 pm

We will gather as the ancient church gathered - to share a simple meal (soup/bread), talk about faith, pray together and most importantly just "be" together.

Preaching Series

Sundays, 10am

"Vulnerable Edges"

Faith Food

3/1, 3/8, 3/22

Following Service

We will highlight Reconciling in Christ (RIC)

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# Rhythm and News:

## Updates from our Music Director

Winter has been a wild ride, if not with the weather, then in so many other ways. I'm so looking forward to Spring, with new flowers, more sunshine and warmth, just the excitement of that gentle change. I guess we'll have to get through March to see much of that (sigh).

Along with seasonal changes, I'm excited about some changes upcoming in the music and how it's presented—gradual changes, but hopeful improvements, some made possible by generous equipment donations (thank you, Peggy) and gear loans. We're making necessary adjustments to the YouTube feed (thank you, Bryan and tech crew), and we'll try moving some things around in the music area to make it more attractive and efficient.

Eventually we'll ask for some help in relocating equipment and instruments, but it's one step at a time for now. We have some purchases that may require a fundraiser, and I welcome your ideas on what that may look like.

Meanwhile, thank you to several people who have given feedback on some of the new songs and other music that you'd like or have missed singing during the worship services. I'm making a list and looking forward to an inclusive, blended service that can speak to families, friends, and guests.

It's an honor to serve with you!

**Suzan -  
Music Director**

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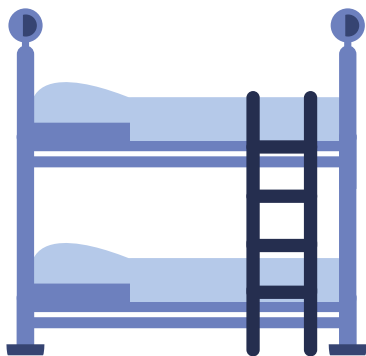
## Bunk Bed Celebration on February 8th

We'll be celebrating our Bunk Bed Ministry on Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> during worship.

We have built and distributed 200 bunk beds since the creation of the ministry in 2008 in collaboration with Love INC. of Clackamas County.

A celebration will be held after worship, hosted by Council.

Please join us as we celebrate this impactful ministry!



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# Council Elections Coming in April

**It's not too early to start thinking about taking on a leadership role at Prince of Life.** Elections are in April at our Annual Congregational Meeting. There are many places where your gifts will be an asset to Prince of Life.

Three council member term's end in 2026: Judy Cook, Bev Spilseth, and Peggy Vermaas. The remaining members of Council are Bryan Bowyer, Becky Linke, Melissa Martenson, Kathy Metzger, Paul Rickey, and Annie Sakaguchi.

Council member terms are 3-years and generally Council meets once a month. As a Council member, you help direct the ministry of PoL and the business of the Church. Traditionally you volunteer to attend committee meetings and report back to the Council the activities of the committee. Some committees don't have regular meetings, but still serve.

Mission Endowment Fund Committee and Nominating Committee also elect members at the Annual Congregational Meeting in April. Susan Rodway and Sue Stark's terms end in 2026.

Remaining members of the MEF Committee are Rebecca Harms and Lyle Wiese. MEF Committee terms are 2 years. By and large meetings are quarterly.

Nominating Committee terms are also 2 years. Leaving Nominating Committee in 2026 are Linda Garrett and Janet Mann. Remaining members are John Mohlis and Linda Wiese. There are several meetings in February, March and April in preparations for the Annual Meeting in April. Nominating Committee members are also asked to count ballots at the Congregational meeting and any elections during the year, ie. Budget Meeting.

Pastor Sena is giving us all an opportunity to share our gifts as she and we work to transform ourselves into a stronger and more faithful community.

Please prayerfully consider becoming a nominee for one of these positions mentioned above. You may contact any one on the Nominating Committee to discuss it. - **Annie Sakaguchi, Linda Garrett, Janet Mann, John Mohlis, or Linda Wiese**

*"The meaning of life is to find your gift.  
The purpose of life is to give it away."  
-Pablo Picasso*

## **Interested in Other Service opportunities?**

Beyond serving in Council leadership, there are many of opportunities to serve at Prince of Life! Consider signing up on the Sunday Servant list. Come and share your gifts as a reader, usher, server or as part of our alter guild.

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# Child Care Advocacy Committee Update

This report will be focused on research that recently became available.

The Child Care Coalition of Clackamas County met on 1/26/26 to discuss the Common Sense Institute's paper A Four-Pillar Child Care Investment Strategy to Achieve Oregon's Prosperity Roadmap. This paper was written by their Center on Workforce and Education based on research in Oregon. It was released 10/28/25 and is stunningly similar to Clackamas County's Policy Paper-Solving the Child Care Crisis in Oregon released in 2024. I need to go through the references listed for both papers to see if they built off of each other or what. I do imagine the Common Sense Institute had started work on their research along a similar timeline as the Clackamas County paper.

The main difference in the papers is that the Common Sense Institute suggests goals to be achieved but really doesn't suggest a detailed plan of implementation to fix it. I want all those interested to read this new paper.

It is located at Oregon's Child Care Crisis: High Costs, Limited Access, and Workforce Impacts. ([commonsenseinstituteus.org/oregon/research/workforce/childcare-in-oregon-an-economic-opportunity-with-wide-implications](https://commonsenseinstituteus.org/oregon/research/workforce/childcare-in-oregon-an-economic-opportunity-with-wide-implications)). Browse around the rest of their website to get a better sense of who they are. Apparently they have provided research for AZ, CO, UT, OR and IA too.

The Social Justice Childcare Advocacy Committee will meet again on Sunday 2/15/26 during the Coffee Hour to talk about both papers and find out what else was discussed at the 1/26/26 Child Care Coalition Zoom meeting.

**Janet Mann, Childcare Advocacy Committee**

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## Lilies for Easter Worship



You are invited to help decorate the sanctuary and remember or honor someone who has been a special gift to you by donating a Calla Lily. Lilies are \$15 each and may be taken home after worship on Easter Sunday.

Special Envelopes will be available in the narthex for your contributions. Please remember to list the names of anyone being honored so we can include them in the Easter Sunday bulletin and place these envelopes in the offering plate.

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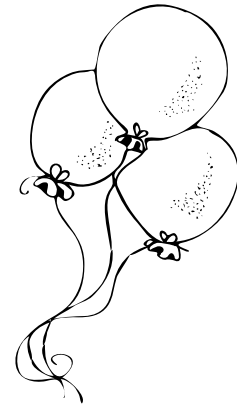
# February Celebrations

## Birthdays

- 2 John Mann, James Tyler
- 7 Julie Schedler
- 10 Michelle Silva
- 12 Chris Hulett
- 17 Nora Bowyer
- 20 Margaret Murphy
- 21 Janet Mann
- 26 Ora May Millington

## Anniversaries

- 28 Randall and Suzanne Wood



*God's Blessings on your celebrations!*

## **Thank You from NW Disability Support**

NW Disability Support wants to extend a big thank for for the use of the church for pancake with Santa event! This is our 3rd event and each year brings back a great crowd and volunteers! This year we hear "this is the holiday event I can depend on for my child with a disability ". Also had some new families who said this was the only event they have attended where they felt accommodated and welcome! It's great to have a safe, welcome space like the church to use for this event each year! I was to busy visiting with families and forgot to take pictures but here are a few. We estimate about 150-200 served this year !

Thanks again and merry Christmas!  
Molly Hulett



# February Calendar

1 10am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube 11am Coffee Hour 11am Faith Food 6pm Private Event	2 12pm Stewardship Task Force Meeting 4:30 Private Event	3 4:30 Private Event	4 10am Bible Study 4:45 Navigators USA 5pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 Recovery 1	5 9am Peace by Piece Quilters 6:15pm Scouts	6	7
8 10am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube 11am Bunk Bed Ministry Reception 6pm Private Event	9 4:30 Private Event	10 5pm Mutual Ministry Meeting 6 pm Private Event 7pm Council	11 10am Bible Study 4:45 Navigators USA 5pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 Recovery 1	12 9am Peace by Piece Quilters 12:30 OC Women's Club 6:15pm Scouts	13	14
15 10am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube 11am Coffee Hour 11am Faith Food 11:15 Child Care Comm. 6pm Private Event	16 4:30 Private Event	17 10am Material Girls 12pm Men's Lunch @ Wichita 4:30 Private Event 6pm Private Event 7pm Private Event	<b>Ash Wed.</b> 18 10am Bible Study <b>12-5:30 Ashes available</b> 4:45 Navigators USA 5pm Music Rehearsal <b>6:30 Ash Wed. Worship</b> 6:30 Recovery 1	19 9am Peace by Piece Quilters 6:15pm Scouts	20 6:30 pm Family Game Night	21 9:30am DAR
22 10 am Worship Sanctuary & YouTube 11am Coffee Hour 11am NAMI Presentation	<b>MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b> 23 4:30 Private Event 7pm Private Event	24 6pm Private Event	25 10am Bible Study 12pm Pastoral Office Hours 5pm Music Rehearsal 6pm Dinner Church 6:30 Recovery 1st	26 9am Peace by Piece Quilters 12pm Backpack Buddies 6:15pm Scouts	27 12 pm Scrapbooking Group	28 9 am Scrapbooking Group

## February Fellowship Opportunities

### LLL Happy Hour 2/17

Location and time TBA for Feb. Watch our Sunday announcements for more information.

### Men's Lunch 2/17

3rd Tuesday each month. Men are invited to meet at Wichita Pub (OC) at 12pm for food and fellowship. Need a ride? Call Harlow Jacobson at 503-656-1616.

### Family Game Night 2/20

Join us at 6:30 with your favorite board game and a Potluck dish to share.

PRINCE OF LIFE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
13896 MEYERS RD  
OREGON CITY, OR 97045



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## Prince of Life's Welcoming Statement:

The love and mercy of God move us to welcome all people, including those who have ever felt excluded because of race, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental challenges, addictions, imprisonment, economic status, family status, or anything that might divide us.

Whatever your country of origin or ancestry,  
wherever you are on your journey of faith,  
we welcome you.

**Our unity is in Christ.**

**PRINCE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
ALL ARE WELCOME! We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation.



*To know the love of God in Jesus Christ, and to share that love through word and action*

phone: 503-657-3100  
[www.princeoflife.org](http://www.princeoflife.org)