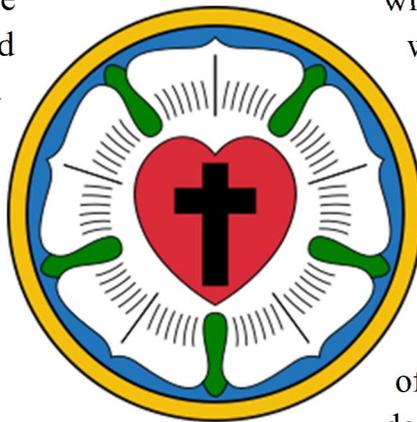


The Courier

FEBRUARY

Volume 85 ~ Number 2 ~ February 2026

Martin Luder (Luther) was a German priest and theologian, author, hymnwriter, professor, and former Augustinian friar, more importantly he's the reason we are Lutherans today! Luther was born 1483 in Eisleben, Germany ordained as a priest in 1507. He translated the Bible into German opening up and creating protocols for Biblical translation especially in later translations into English (the Tyndale Bible). Reading and understanding scripture and getting into God's word on an individual level is the cornerstone of what he believed to be a way to get closer to God and to know Christ Jesus.



He came to reject several teachings of the "contemporary" Roman Catholic Church at that time. The Catholic church, Pope Leo X demanded that Luther renounce all his writings (Ninety-five Theses, authored in 1520, outlining the indulgences [a way to buy or purchase forgiveness from sins and reduce punishments from the church] and papal authority) challenging the Catholic church teaching that justification is not earned by any human acts or intents or merit; rather, it is received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believers faith in Jesus Christ. Good works are a necessary fruit of

living faith and part of the process of sanctification but NOT a way to salvation.

He was excommunicated January 1521. The theology of Martin Luther dealt with the relationship between the Law and Gospel (Old Testament to New Covenant with Jesus, physical world law and government to God's spiritual kingdom rule), and that needing a priest, or Pope was NOT necessary to have a relationship with Jesus, with God. Firmly believed that "**faith**" is what brings the Holy Spirit through the merits of Christ". **Romans 1:17 "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith, to faith: as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'"**

Originally Martin entered the University of Erfurt meant to be working toward a degree in law to become a lawyer. He dropped out almost immediately believing that law was an uncertain profession. He was then drawn to theology and philosophy, the latter of which turned out to be "unsatisfying" to Luther because it offered assurance about the use of reason but none about loving God, which Luther believed was more important.

"Reason could not lead men to God"

Luther's explanation of "justification":
"The first and chief article is this: Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (Romans 3:24-25 ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the

redemption that came by Christ Jesus.²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished”). He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29 “²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”), and God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6 “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”). All have sinned and are justified freely, without their own works and merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood (Romans 3:23 “²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”). This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit. Therefore, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us ... Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and everything else falls (Mark 13:31 “³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”).” As written in the Schmalkaldic Articles for the Schmalkaldic League in preparation for an intended ecumenical Council of the church.

~ Jaime Doganes

CALL COMMITTEE

Stand by work is being done, pray for our committee and that God's will be done, and God's appointed shepherd be shown and provided!

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Worship & Music committee will be in touch with news regarding the upcoming Lenten season, Resurrection season, and everything in between. Please note that Ash Wednesday is February 18th with a service here at 7PM.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Hello again. Last month I spoke to the **Barriers to service.** This month I will address the **Motivations for Serving your church.** As a reminder, this is what AI references as barriers:

- ***Spiritual Growth:*** *Serving strengthens faith and offers a firsthand experience of God's work.*
- ***** Sense of Belonging & Community:***** *Building deeper friendships and finding authentic connection with others.*
- ***** Purpose & Fulfillment:***** *Discovering their unique purpose and finding joy in helping others.*
- ***Using Gifts:*** *Utilizing their God-given talents and developing new skills.*
- ***** Obedience & Love:***** *Following Jesus' example to serve and love their neighbor.*

Spiritual Growth can be so very rewarding. Imagine if the Disciples had not gone out and told the Story to others. Going back to their previous lives would still be fruitful, BUT the church would have stagnated. Remember the Great Commission tells us to “Go and tell”. Also Christ says he will return after ALL have heard the Story. I am pretty sure everyone has NOT heard this wonderful story. The “first hand” experience is your story with God in it: how Christ came to your life and what that relationship means to you. The story is simple: the impact amazing. All we do is tell it ; God does the rest, and in this process, our faith grows bigger and bolder.

When we walk together as a Council, we grow closer to each other. Our common bond of working together reminds us that community is fellowship and fellowship leads to serving. It is easy to say you can help out in some mundane task like Usher, or reader or making the Bread. Those tasks still support our growth as Christians and they are important, but the service is one time, or limited. That can affect the ongoing needs of the church as well as your growth as a Christian. These isolated tasks are a great way to get involved , and they help you move closer to leadership roles. Doing these jobs along with other members reminds us that we work together, not in isolation.

Purpose and fulfillment: I think the best example for this is my time helping to build homes for Habitat. We were shown the task at hand and how to do it, and we did that job in community with others for a cause much greater than our own. Having a Psychologist for a son; I am reminded of how important it is to “do

something” in the world. You learn from the experience; you feel good doing it; and you build a sense of community as you work with others. This is important even in our jobs. As a member of a laboratory staff, we had different roles and skill sets, but we had to bring them together to function as a team. As an OLD person, this becomes even more important. A sense of purpose gets you out of bed and the house.

If you are part of our Bible study, you know we have begun learning about our **GIFTS**. We all have them, and typically we have more than one. Even if you concentrated on just ONE of your gifts for the church, you would still be helping immensely. Not everyone has leadership skills but everyone can serve, and they can grow into those leadership roles over time. That’s why serving on Council is so important. We become students again, and with the help of other members and our Committee folks, we learn to lead. I have led Mission, Evangelism, Worship and Music, as well as being the President, Vice President , and recording Secretary. In those roles, I ALWAYS had someone to walk with me and guide me. I was NOT the expert in any of those positions either.

Obedience and love: I hate to keep referring to my age, but in these later days, I look forward to going home to Christ. Just the thought of being in His Presence gives me goose bumps. Here on earth, when we serve, Christ walks with us and that can give you goose bumps too. Think of times when prayers were answered, healing happened, or when everything just seemed to click. That’s Jesus! We are far from

perfect, and mistakes will always happen, but we know by turning to our Savior, saying 'sorry' and moving forward is always a good thing. It is much easier to smile than to frown; to hug rather than hate; to walk with other believers than to walk alone.

I hope this is helping you in your faith journey in service to God. Next month we will talk about how churches can help and motivate us to serve. Have a great month, and remember to **DO SOMETHING FOR YOUR CHURCH!!**

Pam Garcia

MISSIONS

We are partnering with Fellowship Committee and LSS heading into the Lenten season! If you have any reusable bags, don't throw them away bring them to church!! LSS is in need of bags to hand out the food donations to those in need!!

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

This month our St. Luke's Walking Group will be strolling on the Electric Trail in Seal Beach on Saturday, January 24 at 9:30 am. This easy walk through the park to the beach includes the historic Red Train Car. Jaime continues to find new fun walks in our local community as well as blending in previous walks that we all enjoy.

January is planning time for our Fellowship Committee. We met this week and reviewed our activities and events from last year to determine which we'd like to continue and started to think about additional ones to add for 2026. We were pleasantly surprised at how many activities and events we had last year including Soup Suppers, Easter Pancake Breakfast, BBQ Cookout, Sourdough Baking Class, Photography



Workshop, Preschool Holiday Movie night and Pasta dinner, and many more. We've all had such a good time doing fun things and hanging out

together.

Although our Fellowship activities and events are focused on creating bonds within St. Luke's Church and Preschool, we also support other groups such as Missions (decorating and filling Easter bags and Backpacks for LSS to provide to those in need in Long Beach) and Music & Worship (decorating the church). This year we'll raise funds on our April El Dorado Walk that supports Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Also, we will collect items to fill three "Welcome Home" laundry baskets at one of our Soup Suppers for LSS who provides these to those in need in Long Beach that they help find homes.

Please let us know if you have suggestions for activities or events that you would like to see at St. Luke's. Also, look for flyers regarding upcoming activities and details as our planning continues. In February our Walking Group will be going to West San Gabriel River Parkway Nature Trail in Lakewood. We hope that you all will join an activity or event that sounds fun and get to know each other better.

Berit Bode & Erin McCuan



St. Luke's Christian Preschool February

Love is in the air ♥♥♥

Our preschool is excited to celebrate Valentine's Day! Please send in a Valentine card for your child to exchange with their classmates.

- **Card details:**

Please choose a small, pre-made card or create your own, making sure to include your child's name on the front.

- **Treats:**

If including a small treat, please be mindful of allergies and check with the teacher if your child has any dietary restrictions.

- **Class celebration:**

We will be celebrating Valentine's Day party with activities in the classroom on **Thursday, 2/15/26**.

Please check-in with your Classroom Teacher for details.

Do you remember a special person in your life, as a child?... An adult who made you feel important, valued, smart, capable, and loved.

We, at SLCP, know how important these special adults are in a child's life. They choose to invest themselves into these kids, and for that, we have a special day to honor them.

Every year SLCP has a tradition to celebrate "Special Person Day." Each child invites one special person to school. The school puts on a special Chapel, then the child and their special person stroll and participate in activities throughout the preschool classrooms.

Every year our Special Person Day is a rewarding time of sharing enjoyed by all. The kids are abuzz about who they are bringing as their special person and the twinkle in the eyes of the adults honored by this day says it all.

This is a "just because" event: just because we think it's important to sing the praises of often un-sung heroes. This day teaches the children mindful gratitude for relationships with adults that are safe, nurturing, encouraging, and fun. In a world that feels increasingly dangerous to children, these special persons are those who have taken the time and energy to invest into creating a safe harbor for them to grow up.... It takes a Village; Welcome Home!

Special Person's Day Friday, 2/6/26
10AM – 11:30 AM

IMPORTANT DATES ahead...

- 2/6 Special Person's Day
- 2/16 School Closed President's Day
- 2/18 Ash Wednesday (10AM Chapel)
- 2/24 Soup Supper & Project @ 6PM
- 3/11 Spring Pictures
- 3/13 St. Paddy's BINGO shenanigans **FUN**draiser



Lenten Soup Supper & Projects:

What is Lent? Lent is a time of prayer, fasting & almsgiving (caring for others). It is a preparation of our hearts for the coming of Easter, becoming aware of our own sins toward God so that we can engage in repentance to fully embrace the celebration of Easter and the empty tomb.

How can we participate? Beginning Tuesday, 2/24/26 @ 6PM please join us in Chapel for a simple soup supper, prayer & fellowship. Each week we will participate in a special family project geared towards caring for those less fortunate.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Tuesday's: February 24th – March 24th

BOOSTER NEWS...

- **2/12/26 Booster Meeting**
- **February 15th Saver's Donation Fundraiser**
- **Spirit Night @ Chick-fil-A**
2/18/26
(Long Beach Traffic Circle location)
- **2/24/26 Soup Supper & Project**
@ 6PM in Chapel
- **March 13th, 2026 @**
1 card= \$10 / 3 cards= \$20
Fun prizes, **\$cash\$** and more!!!!



February is buzzing with excitement for all the calendar has in store for us...Lenten season onward to Easter, Week of the Young Child leading to Family Picnic and MORE!

ASH WEDNESDAY 2/18/26
Our students will participate in a short Ash Wednesday service at 10:00AM

This marks the start of our Lenten Soup Supper & a Project hosted on Tuesday evenings @ 6PM. Join us for Food, Fun & Fellowship as we use our hands to do God's work through various community projects.

More details coming soon...

Service hours awarded



SPRING PICTURES
Wednesday, 3/11/26

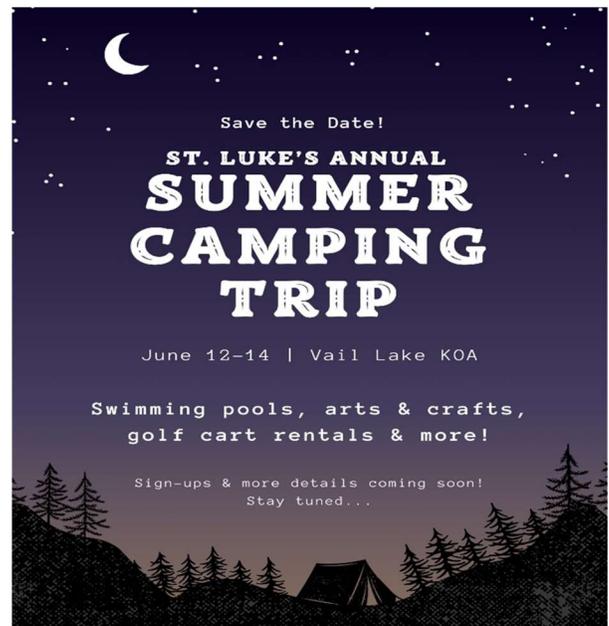
Please welcome **Julie Andress**, a new photographer to St. Luke's Christian Preschool.

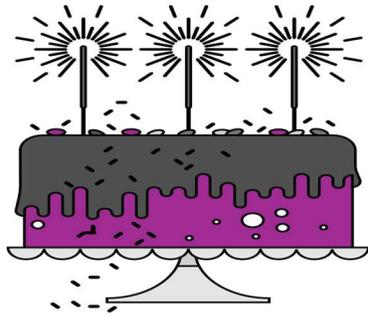
"A Modern Approach to Traditional School Photography; Portraits Capturing the Unique Personality of Each Child."

Our former beloved photographer, Lesley Lukens, has had to make the difficult decision to step down from her school sessions. Although she will be dearly missed, we are **ExCiTeD** to share our silliness & smiles with Ms. Andress!

Check it out:

<https://www.julieandressphotography.com/>





FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY'S

Feb 07

Hans Heimburger



No Anniversaries for this month, check back in next month!



Upcoming Events

- Feb 01** Annual Congregational Meeting after single worship service @10AM
- Feb 06** Special Persons Day at Preschool each student brings a special guest
- Feb 12** Classroom Valentine Day Celebration for our school!!
- Feb 12** Booster's Monthly Meeting @6:30PM
- Feb 14** Jack McDaniel's Celebration of Life service and fellowship starting @1PM
- Feb 14** Valentines Day
- Feb 16** President's Day. No school!!!
- Feb 17** Preschool Board Meeting @6:30PM
- Feb 18** Ash Wednesday Service @7PM
- Feb 21** Walking with Purpose ~ San Gabriel River Parkway @9:00AM
- Feb 24** First Soup Supper of the Lenten Season!! Meet you for soup in the sanctuary @6:30PM
- Feb 26** Next Courier Published

The Courier is the newsletter of
St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Preschool

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SUNDAY SCHEDULE

In-Person & Online Services

9AM & 11AM

ONLINE STREAMING LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/@stlukeslongbeach>

Online giving link: sllc90808.churchcenter.com/giving

Come visit us soon! You are welcome here!

**St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church
& Christian Preschool**

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Change Service Requested