



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"We invite all to share the joy of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ."

Our guiding principles are to:

- "Reflect God's love by being inviting, non-judgmental, compassionate, and respectful;
- Work to be dependable and responsive in our community and global efforts;
- Adapt to the changing needs of our congregation;
- Joyfully proclaim the story of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ."

Ministry Team

Robert Neubert
Pastor

Dr. Denise Reed
Worship Musician

Frank Kenny
Administrative Assistant

Sandy Young
Administrative Assistant

Phone: 503-397-0090

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FROM PASTOR ROBERT

Dear Fellow Children of God,

Being a student of history I often reflect back on the major events that have shaped us. Recently I have been reflecting on the Civil War and the many broad themes that shaped that bloody period in American history, and while slavery, states' rights, racism, and power were all involved to various degrees in the reasons why war broke out I believe they were all secondary to the real reason behind it all, fear. In the north they feared that succession was a threat to the government's power, and in the south they feared the change that freeing the slaves would bring to their economy. This fear that pervaded the nation would manifest itself in the anger, frustration, hate, and bitterness that resulted in the deaths of nearly 650,000 people between the years 1861-1865. Since then there have been several more movements that have brought fundamental change to our society including the Industrial Revolution, Woman's Suffrage, Civil Rights movement, and more recently the Black Lives Matter and Me Too movements are continuing to change the way we think and act. Every movement throughout history has affected the world in both positive and negative ways pushing us forward in often unexpected directions. Black Lives Matter and Me Too continue to grow and affect our society in various ways, what the end results of those movements are we have yet to know, but things are changing, and that can cause fear and discomfort.

Alongside these broader cultural movements in the US, the church is changing, and this has caused its place in society to begin shifting. Once upon a time Churches were the center of local communities yet due to a variety of reasons we have seen local churches sidelined in many areas. Some of these reasons are beyond the control of local churches as the communities change and cultural sensibilities evolve around them causing the local congregations to lose their place in the hearts of the residents. Unfortunately, some of the reasons why this is happening is the fault of the churches themselves as they may have abused their power, were not welcoming to newcomers, or failed to progress in order to meet the needs of the communities around them. One of the main reasons is that we live in an increasingly more diverse population where people's beliefs are more and more varied. This can cause a lot of fear and anxiety amongst those who are living through these changes because not only does it affect the church but it also affects the local community as they grow or shrink depending upon what area one lives in.

Continued on Page 5

OUR CHURCH COUNCIL

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Appointed, non-voting:

Jon Vingerud, Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary

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Cathy Bowcock, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary
Barbara Gordon, Financial Secretary

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COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



The First Lutheran Church Council met on January 12, 2025. The meeting was called to order by President Rodney Sherpe.

- ◆ **December Minutes:** The council reviewed the minutes from the December meeting. It was moved and seconded to accept them and the motion passed.
- ◆ **Financial Report:** Jon Vingerud submitted the financial report and reported there was a big income in December. We are right on budget for the year. More people are using Vanco for making their offerings. It was moved and seconded to approve the financial report. The motion was approved unanimously. Jon also provided a draft of the proposed budget for 2025 for the council to discuss.
- ◆ **Pastors' Report:** Pastor Robert reported that the memorial service for Wendy Rude will be held on

February 7th. He also stated that he did in-home communion visits and that visiting and talking with people is a major part of ministry.

- ◆ **President's' Report:** No report.

Committee Reports:

- ◆ **Properties:** Tim Meyers reported that a bench will be installed outside. He also brought up the Electrical System Survey that was discussed at prior meetings. Jon recommended that this be done. Council discussed moving forward with this.
- ◆ **Worship & Music:** The Worship & Music Committee met on December 18th to plan for January, 2025 hymns and liturgy.
- ◆ **Fellowship:** Tim Meyers shared about the upcoming event with St. Frederic Catholic Church ' Pastor Robert reported on the Blue Christmas service that was held in December.

TREASURER'S UPDATE

Information as of Jan 31, 2025

	Jan 31 <u>Actuals</u>	Jan 31 <u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>	
General Fund (GF) Income	\$ 14,051	\$ 16,839	\$ 2,788	behind proposed budget
General Fund (GF) Expenses	\$ 17,043	\$ 18,243	\$ 1,200	under proposed budget

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Thanks for all of your continued support.

Jon...



CHURCH COUNCIL Cont.

Old Business:

- ◆ Jon Vingerud presented the proposed budget for 2025. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed budget. The motion carried.
- ◆ Council discussed the anticipated needs for the upcoming Annual Meeting.
- ◆ Roof repairs were approved by email vote to Council members.
- ◆ Work on the church directory has started.
- ◆ Altar rails (funded by the Memorials Committee) may be in construction soon.

New Business: None

Review of the February 2025 Calendar

- ◆ No changes.

Good of the Order/Announcements

- ◆ Pastor Robert will be in Seaside January 25-27.
- ◆ Nominations were mentioned and everyone on Council is eligible to serve another term.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

- ◆ Closing prayer provided the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned by President Rodney Sherpe.



NEW MEMBERS

New Members

Welcome



are welcome!

Are you thinking about becoming a member here at First Lutheran? Please let Pastor Robert or the office know. We will be scheduling a new member Sunday in the near future. All

SERVING IN FEBRUARY

February 2

Ushers: The Sundeen's
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Kate Freitag
 Lay Reader: Linda McCoy
 Communion Server: Linda McCoy
 Comm Prep. Katie Garman
 Comm. Clean-up: Geri Logan
 Tech: Mike McCoy
 Altar Flowers: Jon & Jackie Vingerud
 Coffee Fellowship: Annual Meeting

February 9

Ushers: Tim Meyers & Kathy Bauska
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Frank Kenny
 Lay Reader: Sandy Young
 Communion Server: Katie Garman
 Comm Prep. Candice and Peach Becker
 Comm. Clean-up: Donna Meyers
 Tech: Teri Sherpe
 Altar Flowers: TBD
 Coffee Fellowship: Mike & Linda McCoy

February 16

Ushers: Terry Rude & Ben Ruff
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Enid Schantz-Hagelberg
 Lay Reader: Katie Garman
 Communion Server: Katie Garman
 Comm Prep. Katie Garman
 Comm. Clean-up: Audrey Webster
 Tech: TBD
 Altar Flowers: Mike & Linda Easterling
 Coffee Fellowship: Tim & Donna Meyers
 Harold & Louise Gullickson

February 23

Ushers: Mike & Linda McCoy
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed
 Cantor: Kate Freitag
 Lay Reader: TBD
 Communion Server: TBD
 Comm Prep. Candice & Peach Becker
 Comm. Clean-up: Geri Logan
 Tech: TBD
 Altar Flowers: Charlie Boelk
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please take a look at the sign-up sheets. They are waiting for you to put your name on them. Prayerfully consider reading the scriptures, setting up or cleaning up communion, serving for communion, providing altar flowers and hosting the ever-popular coffee hour. Your help makes our worship service inviting and meaningful.

THANK YOU!



CELEBRATING



- 4 Jennifer Anderson
- 5 Jackie Vingerud
- 6 Cindy Mullican
- 10 Erika Reardon
- 11 Don Bolieu, Bea Kubitz
- 14 Steve DuBois
- 20 Fred Hora
- 27 Caroline DuBois



- 7 Doug & Sue Christophersen
- 20 Mike & Linda Easterling

CONTEMPLATIVE GROUP

The Women's Contemplative Group will be meeting on February 13, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome! Contact Mariel McMullen 503-396-1646 or mariel.mcmullen@live.com



FROM PASTOR ROBERT—CONTINUED

As the world changes all around us, it is important to remember that God is with us in the midst of the change. Even though there may be some rather large bumps in the road God's presence continues to surround us. Even though there are many loud people out there spreading anger and division regarding the changes in our society, many more are out there calling for peace and reconciliation. A sign of hope that I see throughout our national church body, the ELCA, is that while in many churches the numbers may be shrinking, the level of faith is rising. This has resulted in many young people in this nation who may have drifted away from churches coming back, inspired by the level of faith they see turned into action. Since it is no longer socially dictated that individuals should go to church, those who do go are there of their own choosing and therefore share a much deeper faith in Christ's word than people did twenty years ago. There are many things in this world to be afraid of but remember God is in the midst of the change, all we have to do is listen to where God is leading us.

As the community here at First Lutheran and our broader communities of St. Helens, Columbia County, the state of Oregon and our Nation continues to go through change, I hope that you keep your eyes, ears, mouth, nose and especially your hearts open to wherever it is that God is calling you in the next days, weeks, months, years, and decades to come.

Peace and Blessings
Pastor Robert Neubert

from the
PASTOR 

DOG & CAT FOOD

SAFE of Columbia County will be starting to collect SMALL bags of dog and cat food . Many clients come with service animals or pets and need to be able to feed them. If you would like to donate some pet food, please bring it to the church and we'll make sure it gets to SAFE.



ZOOM GUILD

Zoom Guild meets on Monday, February 10, at 11 a.m. on Zoom. They will be using this meeting to discuss potential Bible studies and choose the one to follow next. If you are



interested in joining for the next study, let a member know. Zoom Guild is made up of Candice Becker, Beth Hunnicutt, Judy Ann Johnson, Geri Logan, and Audrey Webster.

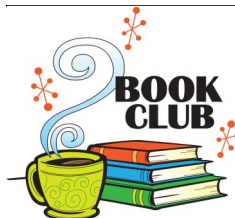


We can do the difficult work of true love — actions, not just feelings — only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine's Day, if you don't remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart:

"We love because God first loved us." —1 John 4:19 (NCV)



FLC BOOK CLUB



In February, the FLC Book Club will be discussing *The Weight of Ink* by Rachel Kadash. It is a long read (704 pages), which is perfect for cold days of February. They meet via Zoom on Monday, February 24, at 11 a.m. If you would like to join,

but don't want to mess with Zoom, you are welcome to come to Candice Becker's house to participate on her computer with her. The Book Club welcomes people who want to just read the book on a particular month; there is not a 12-month commitment or anything formal like that. Just let Candice know so she can add you to the email list. There has been a change to the book schedule, so here it is for March and beyond: March- *Blue Nights* by Joan Didion, a shorter read at just 208 pages; April- *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt; May- *Band of Sisters* by Lauren Willig; June- *All My Knotted Up Life* by Beth Moore; July- *Foster* by Claire Keegan; August- a "wild card" month, where each person reads something and then gives a mini-review of the book, which could potentially make the next reading list; September- *The Lost Letters of Ainsley* by Cynthia Ellingson; and October- *The 19th Wife* by David Elbershoff. .

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

We have a new construction coordinator at Columbia County Habitat for Humanity! We are delighted to have Anna on board to help lead our volunteer construction teams and manage the building process for our home build projects. She also has cleared our wait list of folks who were waiting to have ramps built to safely access their homes, so now is a great time to apply for one of these critical home repairs!

If you, or a neighbor you know, is a low income homeowner in need of a ramp in order to safely enter and exit their home, please let us know or direct them to the application we have online: <https://habitatcolumbiacounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Ramp-Application.pdf>

DEVOTIONALS

Daily
DEVOTIONALS
Available

The "Christ in Our Home" publication for January - March is available. It is important we find some quiet time to spend with our Lord. "Christ in Our Home" is a useful tool for that contemplation. These devotionals are located at both main entrances and are available in both regular and large-print versions.



IN OUR PRAYERS

- Our congregation.
- Our nation.
- Peace in our world.
- Refugees and Victims of terrorism and war.
- Those serving in our Armed Forces.
- Police and other first responders.
- Victims of Covid-19 and health care providers.
- Those affected by natural disasters and weather.
- Those in need of healing for body, mind, or soul including:
- Those affected by unemployment, lack of housing and hunger.
- Those in recovery.
- For healing and support for Terry Rude, Jayne Schilling, Kitty Heide, Clara Jensen, Carlene Clore, Kim Mathisen, Doreen Gordon, Marilyn Hensley, Ashleigh Dahlgren, Cheryl Perkins, and all others in need of prayers.



If you would like something specific published in the "In Our Prayers" column, please contact the office. 503-397-0090

LENT & EASTER



Ash Wednesday

If you have looked ahead on your calendars, you will see that Lent and Easter are late this year. Ash Wednesday is March 5 and Easter is on April

20. Watch for details in the March newsletter and Weekly Windows regarding services, soup suppers, etc.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

REMINDER!! Confirmation classes are at 11:30 a.m., on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Children between the ages of 10-14 are welcome to join us as we explore what it means to be part of the church. For more information, contact Pastor Robert.



CATHOLIC-LUTHERAN RELATIONS

In March of last year during our joint service with St. Frederic CC, a promise was made that, with the help of God, we would strive to find a new and better way to relate - Lutherans with Catholics and Catholics with Lutherans.

From the book "Conflict to Communion", published in 2016 prior to the 500th Reformation Commemoration, a blueprint for reconciliation was developed by the Commission on Unity. Chapter 5 of this book, titled Baptism: the Basis for Unity, is explained here –

Item 219: The church is the body of Christ. As there is only one Christ, so also he has only one body. Through baptism, human beings are made members of this body.

Item 230: Because Jesus Christ before his death prayed to the Father "that they may be one," it is clear that a division of the body of Christ is opposed to the will of the Lord. It contradicts also the express apostolic admonition that we hear in Ephesians 4:3-6: be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." The division of the body of Christ is opposed to the will of God.

Item 238: Catholics and Lutherans realize that they and the communities in which they live out their faith belong to the one body of Christ. The awareness is dawning on Lutherans and Catholics that the struggle of the sixteenth century is over. The reasons for mutually condemning each other's faith have fallen by the wayside. Thus, Lutherans and Catholics identify five imperatives.

The first imperative: Catholics and Lutherans should always begin from the perspective of unity and not from the point of view of division in order to strengthen what is held in common even though the differences are more easily seen and experienced.

The other four imperatives will be discussed later.

A STATEMENT ON IMMIGRATION

Region 1 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



As Lutherans, we are called to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ, who welcomed strangers and emphasized love, mercy, and justice for all people. We believe that every human being, regardless of their country of origin or legal status, is created in the image of God and has inherent dignity and worth. This foundational truth compels us to approach the issue of immigration with compassion and a commitment to the common good.

Scripture repeatedly instructs us to love our neighbor and show the stranger hospitality. God commands the people of Israel, "The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself" (Leviticus 19:34). Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) shows us that caring for people in need is central to who we are as Christians. The parable also challenges us to acknowledge the goodness in all people because the "foreigner" in the story is the one who acts in the most Christlike way. In light of these teachings, we advocate for an immigration policy that reflects Christ's love, recognizing that all people deserve respect and protection.

The Lutheran tradition emphasizes both mercy and justice. Justice requires everyone, including immigrants, to be treated fairly and equitably. While upholding the rule of law is important, it must not be done in ways that dehumanize or exploit vulnerable people. We are especially concerned about the possibility that places of worship, hospitals, and schools could be the target of deportation raids. A policy that allowed such raids would increase the suffering not only of undocumented people but also of many people who would fear being unjustly targeted and thus avoid those places. Denying people the opportunity to attend worship, be educated, or receive medical treatment violates individuals' fundamental rights. We urge those in government and law enforcement who are responsible for the detention or deportation of undocumented persons to consider how their actions might be seen in the eyes of God.

We are all members of the same human family. Therefore, we approach immigration not merely as a political or legal issue but as a matter of human solidarity. The health and prosperity of the United States are intertwined with the contributions and lives of immigrants. Immigrants bring diverse gifts and play an essential role in our communities and economies. Our immigration policies should reflect a commitment to the welfare of all, especially the most vulnerable.

As people who have received God's mercy and grace, we are called to extend that same mercy and grace to others. This means offering opportunities for new beginnings, particularly for those already present in the United States without legal documentation. A just immigration policy would provide pathways to citizenship for those who have lived in the U.S. for years, contributing to the country and integrating into our communities. It should also guarantee protection for those fleeing violence or persecution, ensure that immigrant families remain united, and make sure that children are not punished for their parents' actions.

We are called, as individuals and as a society, to remember that the immigrants among us are not intruders or enemies but bearers of the image of God, deserving of our care, respect, and advocacy.

The Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee, Bishop, Northwest Washington Synod

The Rev. Richard Jaech, Bishop, Southwestern Washington Synod

The Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling, Bishop, Montana Synod

The Rev. Laurie Larson Caesar, Bishop, Oregon Synod

The Rev. Dr. Meggan Manlove, Bishop, Northwest Intermountain Synod

The Rev. Timothy Oslovich, Bishop, Alaska Synod



Community Meals is back after a much needed

COMM

MARY & SARAH GUILD

Mary Guild will be meeting at Avamere Monday, February 17th, at 10:30 a.m. with lunch and visiting at 11:00 a.m. in the dining room. Lunch tickets for non-residents are \$5.00 Please join them for this time of reflection and fellowship.

Sarah Guild will meet on Tuesday, February 18th, at 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome



CELEBRATION OF LIFE

A Celebration of Life service is planned for Wendy Rude on February 7th at 11:00 a.m. at First Lutheran Church. Wendy passed away on January 5, 2025. A luncheon will be held following the service in the Fellowship Hall. Wendy will be missed and this will be a wonderful time of remembrance to share with everyone.

In Loving Memory

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Church Photo Directory

Beginning in February, we will start developing a NEW directory for the church. The directory will

include all information that you and your family wish to share. Photos will be taken here at church following services on February 2, 9, 16 and 23. Forms for updating your information are available. Please bring them with you when you have your picture taken. If you have a family picture of your own that you would like to use, please bring that to the church with your information form or you may email the picture to the church. Please be aware that this directory will be seen by people other than just members. Also, February 2 is the Annual Meeting day, so time for photo will be limited. You don't have to sign up for a particular time slot, but look for a sign-up sheet with the photo dates listed and add your family's name under the date you would like to have your picture taken.

If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Young at 503-396-0147 or the church office.

BUNCO

With winter months being so dark and dreary at night, Bunco Bunch decided to have another daytime get together in February:



Sunday, February 23, at 2:30 p.m. The game is played in the Fellowship Hall. Audrey Webster is bringing treats. If you have been wanting to try Bunco but not wanting to go out at night, this is a great opportunity. Come check it out and meet the wonderful ladies in the group.

NEWSLETTER DATE

Please have any submissions for the March newsletter into the office by Wednesday, **February 19th**. Thank you!

Newsletter
DEADLINE

"When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be." —Leo Tolstoy

IN APPRECIATION

THANKS FROM THE HEART

Thank you for the plate of Christmas cookies that were brought to me. They were delicious and I am so grateful to all the wonderful bakers and people who helped with this.

Marilyn Hensley

Thank you so much to everyone for the cards, calls and support during my recent surgery. Let's hope this is the last one for a very long time!

Love, Sandy



Puzzle!

Use the clues to fill in the boxes. Then write those letters on the correct numbered lines below to complete 1 John 4:16 (NIV).

A place to live

1	2	3	4	5

Opposite of dark

6	7	8	9	10

Companion

11	12	13	14	15	16

Hand greeting

17	18	19	20

Male adult

21	22	23



8 2 16 13 4 6 2 19 5

17 9 2 5 19 5 12 6 7 19 5 4

13 15 6 2 19 20 6 7 19 14 4

13 15 8 2 16 18 15 16

8 2 16 13 23 10 1 14 21

1 John 4:16, NIV

Answers: house, light, friend, wave, man; God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 John 4:16, NIV

NOTE FROM BISHOP LAURIE

Friends in Christ,

Considering the new Trump Administration directives changing the landscape for our undocumented friends and neighbors and limiting congregational rights to offer sanctuary for refugees and immigrants, and in light of our position as a faith community rooted in biblical admonitions to accompany the stranger, it is time for us to educate ourselves, stand together and love our neighbors as ourselves.

I highly encourage you to participate in one or both of the upcoming immigration events listed below. Both are rooted in the work of the Oregon Synod and its mission developments.

*With you on the Way,
Bp, Laurie*

February 6, 12-1 pm on Zoom. Join Together Lab for a Know Your Rights training to learn more about the administrative policy change and what you can do. This training is designed for clergy, office staff/building volunteers, and chairs/presidents of your councils, boards, sessions, and vestries.

February 12, 6:30 pm on Zoom. Gather with ELCA Region 1 synods (Pacific NW, Montana and Alaska) for a forum discussing protections for churches, organizations and individuals and how we might know our rights and/or rise up to use our voices for our most vulnerable. This event includes immigration experts from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and Lutheran Community Services NW. Please invite any other key leaders you know, of any denomination. Registration required. Spread the word!

First Lutheran Church
 St. Helens, OR



FEBRUARY 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship	3 7:00 p.m. Alanon	4 10:00 am. Bible Study 11:00 am. WELCA 5:00 pm. Executive Comm. 5:30 p.m. Community Meals 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Properties Meeting	5 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 p.m. AA Meditation	6 10:00 am Contemplative Group 1:00 p.m. Peace by Piece	7 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous 11:00 a.m. Wendy Rude Celebration of Life	8
9 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship 11:30 am. Church Council	10 11:00 am. Zoom Guild 7:00 p.m. Alanon	11 10:00 am. Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Community Meals 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	12 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 p.m. AA Meditation	13 10:00 am Contemplative Group 1:00 p.m. Peace by Piece	14 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	15
16 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship 11:30 am. Confirmation	17 10:30 am. Mary/Guild at Avonere 7:00 p.m. Alanon	18 10:00 am. Bible Study 1:00 p.m. Sarah Guild 5:30 p.m. Community Meals 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	19 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 1:00 p.m. Worship & Music 6:30 p.m. AA Meditation	20	21 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	22
23 10:00 am. Worship 11:00 am. Coffee/Fellowship 2:30 p.m. BUNCO	24 7:00 p.m. Alanon	25 5:30 p.m. Community Meals	26 10:00 am. Quilters & Crafters 6:30 p.m. AA Meditation	27	28 12:00 pm Parents Anonymous	



First Lutheran Church
360 Wyeth St.
St. Helens, OR 97051

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St. Helens, OR 97051

Return Service Requested

The Skylight

February 2025

First Lutheran Church

The Skylight
is the monthly newsletter of
First Lutheran Church

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