

JANUARY 2026 | ISSUE NO. 1

JOYFUL NEWS

Joy in Christ Lutheran Church
110 Balboa Road
Hot Springs Village, AR 71909
501-915-9569

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JULIE

Dear friends in Christ,

At the end of 2025, the congregation adopted a new mission statement: "Joyfully living by grace through faith to worship, love, and serve." It is my hope that in 2026, we will spend time exploring this statement, understanding and internalizing it, and eventually learning to live in to it. This is how we have defined who we are as a church and what we are here to do.

It seems fitting that at the start of the year, we would look at the start of the new mission statement. What does it mean to be "joyfully living?"

First, let's agree that happiness and joy are not the same thing. Joy, in fact, is not even truly an emotion. We can experience joy on our happiest days and even on our darkest days. Joy is deeper and more complex than a fleeting emotion.

Joy is produced in us by the Holy Spirit. It causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the **word** and in the **world**. Joy is a practice and a behavior, deliberate and intentional. Joy becomes a state of being that changes how we live so that we can "live joyfully."

Jesus says to the disciples in John 15:11, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." This comes immediately after the verses that begin, "I am the vine; you are the branches," indicating joy is the result of realizing our connectedness to God and our connectedness to each other. How might this realization affect how we feel and how we live?

His Holiness the Dali Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, two men who have experienced incredible suffering in their lives, teamed up in 2016 to write a book about the joy they experience entitled, "The Book of Joy." Together, they explore the nature of joy itself as they share their personal experiences of both happiness and suffering.

Jesus shares his very own joy with us and desires for our joy to be complete. He wants joy to be a defining characteristic of our lives. As we begin 2026, I wonder what the Holy Spirit is doing in and among us to grow our joy and to inspire us to share joy with others. Let's wonder that together!

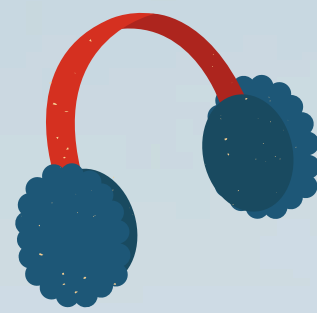
Speaking of joy...on behalf of myself, the office staff, and our contractors, I want to extend special thanks for the Christmas cards, gifts, and love offerings given by the congregation. You shared your joy with us with outrageous generosity. Our joy was increased in experiencing your love.

Peace,
Pastor Julie



WOMEN OF JOY

Women of Joy will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 20th at 9:00 a.m. The program that day will be a service project to assemble rice and bean meal kits that can be distributed at food pantries or at Love Lunches. All women of the congregation are encouraged to attend as we begin the new year in fellowship and service to others.



Happy Birthday

Tom Grasse	January 1
John Plautz	January 3
Gayle Shaner	January 8
Beth Mielke	January 13
Harvey McIntyre	January 15
Carolyn Gustafson	January 29



Happy Anniversary

Jim & Dianne Degner January 30 (53 yrs)

Welcome New Members

On Saturday, December 13th new members were installed during the evening worship service. New members are Adam & Julie Edmonson from Baton Rouge, LA.

Susan Torpy who moved from Texas six years ago.

Paula & Bruce Brown reside in Ottertail, MN but spend three months in HSV. A reception was held before the 5:00 service.

Welcome...we are so glad you are here!!



LOVE Lunches

Our Love Lunches crew was blessed to serve Love Lunches 8 different times in 2025. A big thank you to Don and Ina Gohr, Joyce Geraghty, Melanie Pederson, Diane Shaw, Terry Sterzik, Jerry and Dorothy Fager, Sharon Leonard, Tom Funk, Kathi and Bruce Mielke, Phil and Linda Keller, Joanie Ibinger, David and Penny Miller, and Susan Torpy for making and serving the lunches, distributing the produce from Kroger, and handing out our donations of clothes and shoes over the course of the year. Many of these people served on multiple occasions.

Another big thank you to the cookie bakers from 2025- Carla Olson, Dorothy Fager, Melanie Pederson, Laurel Gunderson, Sue Fisher, Eileen Miller, Alexis Funk, Ina Gohr, Susan Torpy, and Karen Sterzik.

We will start our mission of feeding the hungry for 2026 on January 11th. We will need 4 cookie bakers to make 4 dozen cookies each as well as a crew of 8 to make and serve the lunches. I will be contacting the people who indicated on their Time and Talent sheets a desire to serve with Love Lunches, but if you did not complete a Time and Talent sheet or missed the Love Lunches line, please contact Karen Sterzik and let her know you would like to be placed on the contact list for 2026.

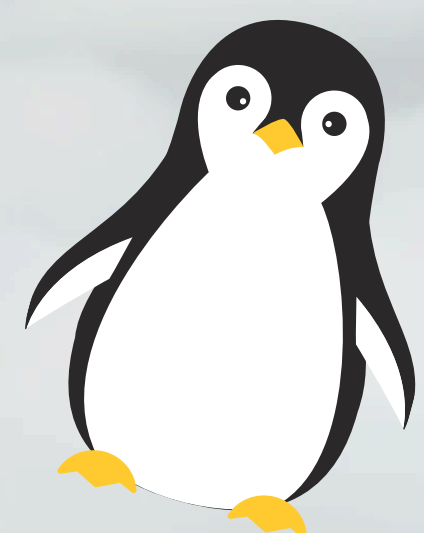
Thank you.

BIG WORRIES CAN BE OVERWHELMING.

No need to face them solo; a trained Stephen Minister can walk alongside as you deal with them. Couldn't hurt.



STEPHEN MINISTRY OF JOY IN CHRIST
"CHRIST CARING FOR PEOPLE THROUGH PEOPLE"
Contact Pastor Julie or a Stephen Leader.



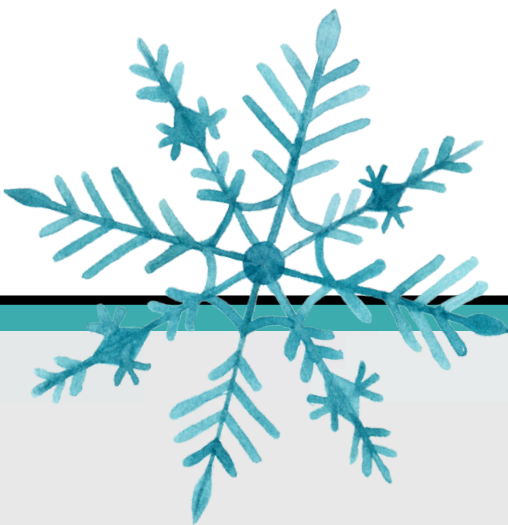
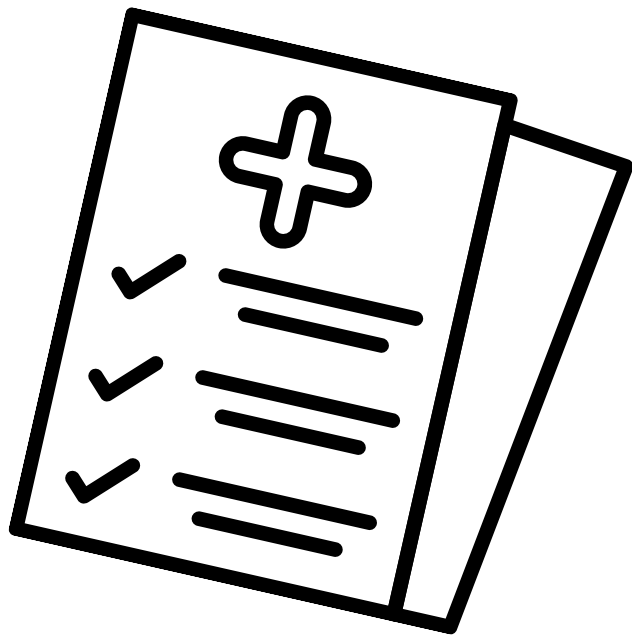
TREASURER
REPORT

	November Actual	November Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	19,832	22,625	216,330	248,875
Expenses	20,322	22,585	236,919	248,437
Surplus	(490)	40	(20,589)	438
Cash on hand	519,779			
Liabilities	5,017			
Dedicated Funds	405,489			
Operating Capital	109,273			

The month of November ended with a deficit of \$490. Income for the year-to-date was under budget by \$32,545. Year-to-date expenses were under budget by \$11,518. The operating capital, cash less liabilities and dedicated funds, is \$109,273.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask me.

John Keller, treasurer



“Un-Decorate”

At the end of November a group of eleven folks helped decorate the church and narthex for the Advent and Christmas season. It will be time to take all those decorations down and carefully store them away for another year on Jan. 5 th at 9:00 a.m.

Taking down is much quicker than putting up, so if you can spare an hour that morning, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.



REMINDER

Please make sure upcoming meetings, events, etc. are written on the large calendar located on the counter in the office. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.



New Format

Welcome to the first edition of “Joyful News”.
So...what do you think?

I’ve been working on a new format of the newsletter for the past couple of months and this is the result so far.



I do hope you like it.
Jill

Flowers

Did you know you can designate flowers to a special occasion each week? The sign-up sheet is in the narthex. Let us know if its a birthday, anniversary or just because. You may take the flowers with you after church on Sunday.

SHOEBOX SCRAMBLE

The Joy in Christ Shoe Box Golf Scramble this past summer was a huge success! It not only gave us the opportunity for fellowship and evangelism but, as a missions project, raised over one thousand dollars (that's \$1000+) to fund monetary grants to underprivileged students at Mountain Pine and Jessieville High Schools. The Missions Team elected to supplement the money raised by the golf program to provide checks in the amounts of \$600 for each school. The funds were non-restricted and the schools could choose the program that best fit their needs.



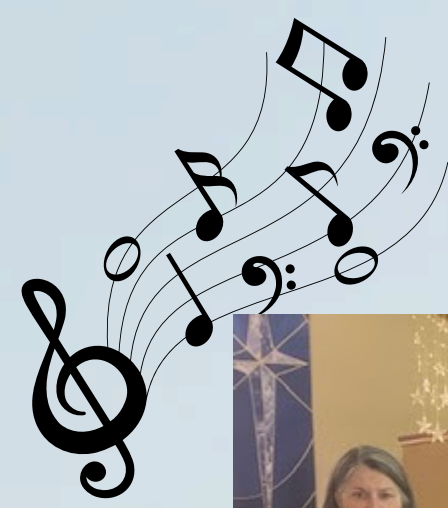
Mountain Pine will use the grant money to purchase supplies for their Hygiene Closet. The closet is stocked with necessary products including emergency clothing, shoes, school supplies, medical products, etc. and is open to students every school day to obtain any item they need, no questions asked. The only rule is that they take only what they need so that there will always be enough for everyone who has a requirement. Student Councilor Lillian Alderman accepted the check from Dick Coulson, Shoe Box Scramble Coordinator with Pastor Julie Wesley and Karen and Terry Sterzik, Missions Team members, also attending.

Jessieville High School Principal Michael Spraggins accepted the check from Dick Coulson while Chris Benson, Assistant Councilor, Pastor Julie, and Karen Sterzik looked on. Principal Mike expressed thanks for the donation and noted that the school has a program to assist students with difficult financial or personal situations where this grant would be very useful.

This was the most successful year we have had for the Shoe Box Golf Scramble and the participants are to be congratulated for their efforts and generosity. Watch for the sign up sheet in the Narthex and announcements in the service bulletins next March or April for the next opportunity to do God's work while having fun, good fellowship, and raising money for a very worthy cause. Even if you don't play golf, you are still invited to come to dinner and join in the fun!



Christmas Party Fun



meet your 2026 council



On Sunday, January 11th the 2026 Council will be installed during the worship service. As we enter a new year, we ask for your support and feedback. The Council will be meeting on the 3rd Friday of each month at 9:00 AM.

Pictured left to right front row: Gayle Shaner, member at large; Barbara Mitchell, member at large; Jerry Fager, President; Nancy Wilkins, member at large; Susan Maser, Secretary

Second row: Pastor Julie Wesley; Ken Poulsen, Treasurer; Lynda Grasse, Vice President; Beth Mielke, member at large

Bible

Treasures From the Parables

Jesus gives examples of natural things that have spiritual truths
... in Matthew, Luke and John.

When

Starts February 3, 2026.
10 Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5:00 pm.
Daily study questions at home.

Where

Joy in Christ Lutheran Church, Conference Room.
110 Balboa Road, Hot Springs Village, Arkansas

Texts

Your choice of Bible both Old & New Testaments.
Lessons use the NIV Study Bible.
Joy of Living Bible Study Guide
\$16 to Jerry Fager by January 13, 2026

Contacts

Jerry Fager 210-885-2725 jdfager@yahoo.com
Erwin Hoeft 501-915-0495 hoeft@suddenlink.net



Upcoming Study Series: Exploring World Religions



You are invited to participate in a new education event; a study of World Religions. Together, we will be reading and discussing The Complete Idiot's Guide to World Religions, Third Edition.

Our gatherings will take place on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m., beginning January 15. Throughout the year, we will explore the major faith traditions of the world—learning not only what sets them apart, but also the values and beliefs they share.

This is a long-term study, and we understand that schedules vary. Please feel free to join the study whenever you are able; regular attendance is encouraged but not required.

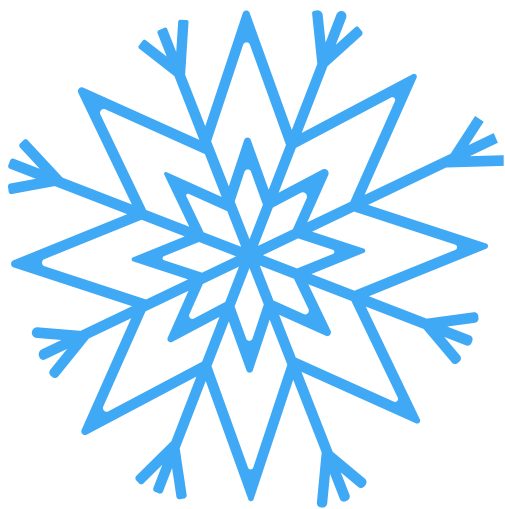
If you would like to participate or have questions, please contact Joan Plautz at joan.plautz@gmail.com or the church office.



**For unto us a child
is born**



**If so, share your pictures with
the office and we can all enjoy
your memories!**




2026

JANUARY

01

MONTHLY PLANNER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 	2	3 4:30pm Hospitality 5:00pm Worship
4 8:30am Hospitality 9:00am Worship	5 9am Undecorate the church 12:30 Mahjong	6 9:30am Communications 1pm Lake Forest Worship	7 9am Clergy Prayer Group 10am Prayers	8 <u>Annual Reports Due</u> 9-11 am BibleProject	9	10 4:30pm Hospitality 5:00pm Worship
11 LOVE LUNCHES 8:30am Hospitality 9:00am Worship Council Installment	12 12:30 Mahjong	13 9:30 am Finance 1pm Fellowship 3:30pm Bible Study	14 1pm Property	15 9:30-11 am World Religions Discussion 1pm Worship & Music	16 9am Council	17 4:30pm Hospitality 5:00pm Worship
18 8:30am Hospitality 9:00am Worship	19 12:30 Mahjong	20 9am Women of Joy 10am Endowment 3:30pm Bible Study	21	22 9:30-11 am WRD 3pm Congregation Meeting	23 NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE	24 4:30pm Hospitality 5:00pm Worship
25 8:30am Hospitality 9:00am Worship	26 12:30 Mahjong	27 8am Debra's Breakfast	28	29 9:30-11 AM WRD 1pm Evangelism	30	31

