

The Spirit of Atonement

DEC 2025/JAN 2026

From Your Pastor...

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

First let me say ... Blessings and Peace from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN!

This past month has been moving forward with the Speed of Light ... probably a bit of an exaggeration on my part, but clearly we have accomplished a lot. Thanks to all of you who made things happen. We've had a number of people who have stepped forward and taken leadership positions and for those of you who are "leaders in waiting" ... let us know what you'd like to do.

A major accomplishment was the submittal of the Lutheran Foundation Grant on the 1st of December 2025. Another was a large gift, presently "lost in the mail" ... but will be found. And then the \$35,000 matching gift that has already started to bare fruit ... and then, oh my, an anonymous \$53,000 gift towards roof maintenance.

Getting all of these things done is critical as we are looking towards having a Call Committee formed by late Spring. That is important from a timing standpoint so that a possible pastor with a family can make a move over the summer and get their children enrolled in school as well as find a house to live in.

What are those things that we need to get done? First, cover our financial shortages for this school year, and then it is the Constitution, then the Strategic Plan, then the Ministry Site Profile, and finally the Call Committee.

President Cathy Hohl reported that the Constitution will be voted on in May of 2026 at our Congregational Meeting. The Strategic Plan should be done enough to start the Ministry Site Profile in February, and once that is done, the Call Committee may be selected at that same May 2026 meeting.

This past Sunday, the title of my sermon was, "GOD IS MAKING ALL THINGS NEW". The title, was a repeat title, of a message I delivered in early April of this year right after I came to Atonement. And the message is still as appropriate today as it was at the beginning of my ministry with you. We are making major progress towards our goal of calling a new pastor, but we still need your help in all three of the T's ... your Time, your Talents, and your Treasures. **We cannot do it without you and with Jesus leading us ...**

"Heavenly Father, You have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love is supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN."

Blessings and Peace, Pr Larry





Seniors Alive

Monthly Meeting

Seniors (age 50 and over) are invited to monthly meetings in Fellowship Hall. The next meeting will be on Monday, Dec 15 beginning at noon. This is the annual

Christmas Party. Please bring a side dish to share. Barbara Kay & husband bring the spirit of Christmas. Barbara always has an engaging program for us.

The January meeting will be on the 26 at 1:30 pm in Fellowship Hall

Tours

Watch for upcoming tours.

<https://www.alcs-web.com/seniors-alive>

Mondays - Zoom Bible Study

10 a.m. -11 a.m. on the lectionary texts for the following week led by Pastor Larry Lemke.



Atonement Book Club

Atonement Book Club meets again on January 11, 2026. We would like to welcome you to our group of book lovers for fun and interesting discussions of a new book each month. We meet on the second Sunday of the month—in the Family

Room beginning at 1:30 p.m. Please enter through the back parking lot door.

On January 11, we will discuss *The Borrower* by Rebecca Makkai. Lucy Hull, a young children's librarian in Hannibal, Missouri, finds herself both a kidnapper and kidnapped when her favorite patron, ten-year-old Ian Drake, runs away from home.

Sound interesting?? Please join us! Contact Jan Koch at njkoch@aol.com with any questions.

Christ / Growing in Faith / Celebrating Our Journey



The 75/70 Anniversary Planning Team has begun its work. The first event was the kick-off on September 28 celebrating the beginning of the 75th/70th years of church and school.

or members listed know.

Additional events are in the planning stages. If you have ideas for events service projects you would like to see, please let one of the Planning Team

Team members are: Pastor Larry Lemke, Betty Luebke, Principal Ted Jander, Karen Meyer, Brenda Blight, Bill Meyerkord, Ruth Blundell, Jane Meyerkord, Sharon Carter-Eichenberger, Jeri Dietz, Dolly Schroeder, Cathy Hohl, Joycelyn Pugh-Walker, Angie Kemper, Makiya Wheeler, Jan Koch, Barb Wishon, Norm Koch

From Our Parish Nurse Cathie Lehr, R.N.



Maintaining Health During the Holiday Season

Amid all the festivities and meaningful moments with friends and families you may experience this holiday season, being in the emergency room certainly isn't one of them. Studies have shown that hospitals see a 15% increase in hospital admission rates during the holiday season. We should all be aware of holiday health risks. Below are some common health concerns prevalent during the holiday season.

Heart Concerns "Holiday Heart Syndrome":

Historically, a spike in heart attacks during the holidays, particularly on Christmas Day, the day after, and New Year's Day occur annually. Additionally, cardiac-related deaths are [nearly 5% higher](#) between Christmas and New Year's day. Holiday celebrations can trigger the onset of an irregular heartbeat (atrial fibrillation) or the onset of heart palpitations, even in otherwise healthy individuals. Both abnormal heart rhythms can potentially interfere with heart function.

As a result of a combination of increased stress, overindulgence of rich and salty meals and higher alcohol use, heart health suffers.

The holiday season can trigger stress, anxiety and depression which may raise risks for people with heart disease. Additionally, holiday stress also increases cortisol levels, which can elevate blood pressure and blood sugar.

Pre-Existing Health Conditions:

For those already managing a mental health disorder, the stress and emotional toll of the holidays can worsen existing chronic conditions like heart disease or cause flare-ups of other health conditions.

Delayed medical care:

Individuals are more likely to ignore or delay seeking medical attention for symptoms during the holidays, which can be dangerous, particularly for heart conditions. People may find it difficult to address symptoms during the holidays or ignore significant warning signs and symptoms. Not listening to our bodies can create a potentially fatal health occurrence.

Seasonal viruses:

Holiday travel and large gatherings increase the risk of spreading respiratory viruses. The highest rate of influenza in the United States typically happens during the winter months with activity often peaking between December and February. Holiday gatherings increase the risk of catching and spreading common respiratory viruses like the flu, COVID-19 and RSV. The holiday season often means late nights, irregular sleep patterns, and more indulgent eating and drinking habits. All of these factors can weaken the immune system. Lack of sleep in particular reduces the body's ability to fight off infections. To make matters worse, older adults are especially susceptible to getting sick partly because the immune system gets a little weaker as we get older.

Digestive problems:

Having difficulty maintaining healthy eating habits - weight gain and poor diet are the consequence of eating rich, high-calorie foods and indulgent treats that are abundant during the holidays. This can lead to weight gain and digestive issues. On top of that, changes in diet, overeating, increased alcohol consumption and higher stress levels can cause uncomfortable gastrointestinal issues like indigestion, bloating, and heartburn.

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...Maintaining Health (continued from page 3)

Allergic reactions:

Holiday traditions can introduce new allergens, such as those from Christmas trees, certain plants, nuts in festive foods and scented candles or diffusers.

Accidents and Injuries:

- **Motor Vehicle Accidents** – alcohol-related ER visits spike by 25% - 30% on New Year's Eve with an associated increase in motor vehicle crashes.
- **Kitchen Accidents** – there is an increase in heat-related injuries related to burns.
- **Decorating Accidents** – falls from ladders and other accidents related to holiday decorating are common and can result in broken bones or more serious injuries. Increased alcohol intake can significantly result in impaired judgement and heighten the risk of falling.
- **Choking** – choking on food or small objects can be a risk, especially for children and pets.
- **Fire Risk** – the incidence of fires in homes increase during the holidays due to increased activity with cooking and use of decorative elements like Christmas trees, holiday lights and candles. Key risks include unattended cooking, dry Christmas trees becoming flammable, overloaded electrical outlets and candles placed too close to flammable materials. Lithium-ion batteries in electronics also pose a fire risk if damaged or used improperly.

Stress and Mental Health Risks:

- **Holiday Blues and Depression**– the pervasive societal pressure to be happy and socially interactive can intensify feelings of sadness, loneliness and isolation for many during the holiday season.
- **Sleep Disruption:** late nights, travel across time zones, holiday stress and increased alcohol intake can disrupt sleep patterns and circadian rhythms leading to fatigue.

Other Related Concerns:

- **Financial Strain** - the pressure to buy gifts, travel and entertainment can create significant financial stress. This anxiety can then lead to mental and physical health issues.
- **Unrealistic New Year's Resolutions** - setting overly ambitious or vague new year's goals often leads to feelings of failure and low self-esteem when they are not met. The all-or-nothing mindset can be counterproductive to long-term health.

By following some of these tips, you can enjoy the holidays while prioritizing health and well-being.

1. Listen to your body. Your body will tell you if something is not functioning well. Do not hesitate to seek medical advice from your physician or health care provider. There is no dishonor concerning your health. Know the health risks and warning signs for conditions like stroke, heart attack, infection, anxiety and stress.
2. Medication Management – keep prescriptions up to date and carry necessary medication when traveling. Try not to skip or miss doses.
3. Maintain a balanced diet. Fill your plate with fruit, vegetables and lean protein. Savor each bite and pay attention to hunger and fullness cues during meals. Remember, everything is okay in moderation. You should savor treats but shouldn't overdo it.
4. Preventing seasonal diseases involves a multi-faceted approach including getting vaccinated, practicing good hygiene like frequent hand washing, cleaning and disinfecting frequently used surfaces, avoiding close contact with sick individuals and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. On airplanes, direct the air vent toward your face, as the air coming from the vent is filtered and will help to deflect any germs away from your nose.
5. Practice mindfulness – slow down, resist the urge to multi-task and focus on one priority at a time. Make safety a priority. Use caution and take necessary preventable measures to prevent mishaps.
6. This time of year, there seems to be one holiday and activity after another. With so much focus on others during the holidays, people often forget to take care of themselves. Find ways to relax and manage stress, such as engaging in hobbies, address your passion to do things you truly enjoy, or commit to spending time with friends and family.



News from Atonement Lutheran School

"Behold, I [the LORD] make a new thing. It now springs forth. Is it not yet known to you? I will make a way in the wilderness and a river in the desert." -Isaiah 43:19

With a brief, yet relaxing Thanksgiving break, we settle in for the remaining few weeks of the first semester. That said, the latter part of October and much of November has seen plenty of activities, such as:

- Well received Parent-Teacher Conferences October 15th and 16th
- Fire Safety Presentation on October 23rd
- Skate with Stitch on October 28th
- Costume Parade on October 31st
- Our fifth Emergency Protocol Drill on November 3rd
- Chipotle Fundraiser on November 4th
- Culver's Fundraiser on November 18th
- The conclusion of a fun-filled volleyball season and the start of basketball season and cheerleading

We continue to move along wonderfully as the students put the finishing touches on music for "A Joyful Night", our Christmas concert on December 18th at 7:00 pm! All are welcome to join in this delightful evening of seasonal music.

The first semester concludes on December 19th, followed by our two week Christmas break, where we will spend time with family and friends celebrating the joy, hope, and peace of God's gift to the world that first Christmas night.

Second semester kicks off on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, providing us a fresh start to a new year grounded in Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

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Excitement is in the air as January 2026 will see the launch and grand opening of the Atonement Early Learning Center.

We ask that you keep our students, staff, families, and church community in your prayers as we progress forward through the 25-26 school year, celebrating community, unity, and newness in Christ.

Blessings and newness in Christ,
Principal J

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https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=AY5JSU5UWCVS6



Atonement Events



Men's Club Tree Lot Now
Open Daily!!



It's time to decorate the church for Christmas! Please join us on **Saturday, December 13 at 9:00 a.m.** in the nave. We especially welcome people who climb ladders!



Midweek Wednesday Advent services - 7 p.m. (Dec. 3, 10, 17)

Christmas Eve Services will be held at 4:30 and 10:00 p.m. service. Christmas Day service will be at 10:00 a.m.



New Year's Eve: Family Fun Night and Devotions 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Lutheran Church of the Atonement
1285 North New Florissant Road
Florissant, MO 63031

Return Service Requested

November 2025 Newsletter

Deadline for the

February issue

12:00 Noon

Wednesday, Jan. 7



Mark your calendars for "A Joyful Night" - our Christmas concert on December 18th at 7pm! Just one month away and the excitement is building! This magical evening is perfect for the whole family, so bring grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends along for the celebration! Can't wait to see everyone there for a night that'll have you humming carols all the way home! ✨