

The Nugget



**EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT,
UNITED TO SERVE**

January 2026

Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church
934 Placer Street - Butte, MT 59701
(406) 723-4242

We are a Stephen Ministry Congregation and
a Congregation of the Montana Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

From the Pastor's Study

Greetings from Pastor Sarah!

Where to begin? I typically use these articles as a devotional, but it seems fitting this month to use this as one last good-bye to you, my beloved first congregations. I can't seem to adequately put into words the influence that you have had on my life. During my time serving here with you, I have grown and changed in ways that I never saw coming, ways I didn't even know I needed to grow, and we have done so together, as a congregation, growing, changing, learning, always seeking out what God's will is for us in this place and at this time.

As it has now come the time for me to leave this place and embark on a new journey, I find myself reflecting on the countless moments we've shared, the laughter, the tears, the celebrations, and the challenges. Each of these experiences has woven itself into the fabric of my life, creating a tapestry rich with memories that I will carry with me forever.

I am especially grateful for the ways you have opened your hearts and homes, inviting me into your lives. Whether it was through meaningful conversations over coffee or tea, shared prayers in times of need, or the joy of celebrating milestones together, each moment has left an indelible mark on my spirit. I will always cherish the bonds we have forged in faith, and I hope that our time together has positively impacted your lives as well.

As I step into this new chapter, I want to encourage each of you to continue nurturing the love and support that makes this congregation special. Keep striving to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community, offering hope and love to those around you.

Thank you for being such an incredible part of my life. I will miss you deeply, but I am so excited to see how God will work through you in the future. "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look on you with favor, and grant you peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen."

Peace,

Pastor Sarah



Prayer Concerns

Please call the Church Office

(723-4242) or email us:

*(goldhill.elca@gmail.com) with your
prayer requests. Only prayers given to the*

entire congregation will be included here.

Patricia Coleman- prayers for health and healing.

Aric Sorenson- prayers for health and healing.

Ginger DeWitt- prayers for health and healing.

Terry Nash- prayers for health and healing.

Arlene Munyon- prayers for health and healing.

Dannette Fitzpatrick- prayers for health and
healing.

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January Birthdays /Anniversaries:

Jan. 15 Robin Jordan

Jan. 22 Noah Thennis

Jan. 28 Colleen Tamblyn

Jan. 31 Bob Carlson



Jan. 19 Jeanette & Curt Quist

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**If your birthday or
anniversary is missing please
notify the church office!**

**Please help us to stay updated
and notify the church office
with any address, phone, or
Email address changes!**



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Check it out!

Please make sure to like and follow our Facebook page so that you can stay up to date on announcements!

<https://www.facebook.com/Gold.Hill.ELCA/>

If you have anything that you would like to have posted on our Facebook page please email the office at goldhill.elca@gmail.com

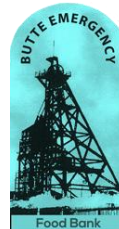
Important announcements or pictures of the services are always welcomed!

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If you have any announcements or changes you would like to have in the Bulletin please submit them **no later than Thursday morning**.

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Food Bank Donations



Please consider donating to the food bank. Gold Hill is currently not accepting donations at the church.

**Mail your monetary donation
directly to:**

**Butte Emergency Food Bank
1019 East Second Street
Butte, MT 59701**

Thank you for your generosity!

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Sunday School Teachers for January
Jan. 4- Schilcher Family
Jan. 11- Dan Schilcher & Christy Chain
Jan. 18- Lisa Button & Kayla Harvey
Jan. 25 -Chelsea Peck & Christopher

We Deliver-Sack Lunch Ministry

Volunteers for December were: Annette Lawson, Patty Callaghan, Nick Elings, Lynn Aniksdal, Machell Keim, Larroll and Carol Leach, Rande & JoAnn Farrow.

Food supplies & donations for food provided by: Patty Callaghan, Bev

Becker, Lynn Aniksdal, Machele Keim, Linda Moore, Nick Elings, Annette Lawson. Thank you!

There will be no sack lunches until the month of March. If you have any questions please feel free to call Annette Lawson, at 406-490-7751.

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Outreach Ministry **by Linda Moore**

Gold Hill members demonstrated outstanding support for our December Outreach projects. We organized a Giving Tree, featuring twelve names-five residents from Copper Ridge and seven from the Southwest Montana Veterans Center. All names were selected, and participants returned beautifully wrapped gifts, ensuring that each recipient received everything they wished for, and even more.

Our Hat and Mitten Tree was equally remarkable this season. Though an exact count has not yet been made, the tree is completely covered with donated items. Thank you! All contributions—including hats, mittens, scarves, and monetary donations from November and December—will be given to Action Inc.

For January, our focus turns to helping fill the MT Tech food pantry as students return from their Christmas break. Well-nourished students learn and work more effectively, so we are inviting everyone to donate snack able, microwaveable, and nutritious food. Please include soup cups, macaroni and cheese, cereal, ramen noodles, and tuna with crackers. The Dollar Store is a good source for these types of foods. Since the pantry is equipped with a refrigerator and freezer, items such as yogurt and cheese sticks are also welcome—please place these items in our fridge with a note attached. Additionally,

there is a need for personal care items for both men and women.

Thank you for all you do to help others!

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LESSONS FROM A CHARLIE BROWN **CHRISTMAS**

By: JN Shimko

We all know the story of the angel appearing to shepherds on the night Jesus was born. In church, we'll hear Matthew's version this year, but many will think of a young boy named Linus standing in an empty auditorium with his trusty blue security blanket, framed by a spotlight as he recites Luke's version. As the TV special *A Charlie Brown Christmas* turns 60 this year—and the beloved Peanuts characters turn 75—it's hard not to finish with "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

Whenever I watch this program, I think about two things. First, I wonder what those angels presented to the shepherds when they were "sore afraid." Second, I wonder what our holiday would look like now if, back in 1965, Linus hadn't read from the Bible to teach Charlie Brown about the true meaning of Christmas.

It's an endearing passage from the first Peanuts animation. However, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* was deemed so bad by its producers and network that even the director, Bill Melendez, mused, "We've killed it" (in a bad way) before the special debuted in December 1965. Of course, they were wrong: nearly half of all U.S. households watched *A Charlie Brown Christmas* that night, and just as many watched it the next year, starting a new tradition for millions. The impact the special had on American culture and the Christmas season expands well beyond making it an annual watch—it's a Christmas Eve must, right after church—it even changed how people decorated their homes.

Midway through the special, Charlie Brown and Linus head out to find the perfect Christmas tree. Lucy asks for a pink aluminum one. For most children today, that's an odd request. Even more peculiar is when Linus and Charlie Brown arrive at the Christmas tree lot and start knocking on

options; a hollow sound indicates that they are as fake as the snow falling in El Paso, Texas. Charlie Brown finds a small tree—just a few branches and a handful of pine needles, a couple of which fall every time someone touches the tree. Linus remarks that he didn't know they still made wooden Christmas trees, closing this strange scene from a time long passed.

What makes this segment so fascinating is that it reflects the United States in the Space Age. People were clamoring for “modern” conveniences—shiny, sleek and minimalist. Even the holiday decorations seemed out of this world. A part of this cultural shift was the aluminum Christmas tree, introduced in 1958.

The aluminum tree is exactly as it sounds: a tree consisting of a metal pole with holes, metal branches that fit into them and strips of aluminum that glisten as they are fluffed out to look like a tree. The metallic sheen is amplified not with lights adorning the silver “leaves” but a color wheel on the ground that spins around, projecting blue, green, yellow and red hues onto the branches to bounce onto the walls and ceiling. Companies such as the Aluminum Specialty Company in Manitowoc, Wis., churned these out, adorning homes across the country and beyond. But once *A Charlie Brown Christmas* aired, after Linus read Luke's reading of Jesus' birth, sales of aluminum trees fell. By the 1970s, people were opting for “wooden” Christmas trees and, later, plastic artificial trees that looked real.

Maybe it's the enduring power of the Nativity Story or the Scripture being spoken so plainly that it disrupts the commercial cacophony of the holiday season. Whatever the reason, the resurgence in “real” Christmas trees reminds us that, as rapidly as the world evolves around us—amid the Space Age or the AI Revolution—God still chooses to enter the world as a baby, born in the most unremarkable way in the quiet hours of night, when all the world seems still.

Hearing these words, we stand in awe alongside the shepherds as they receive these “good tidings of great joy.” This passage gives us the same hope felt by so many people in ancient Judea: a savior for all people has arrived. When we hear

those words, we can join the chorus of angels in singing “glory to God in the highest.”

Because that's what Christmas is all about, isn't it?

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Gold Hill Lutheran Church
Council Minutes – December
9th, 2025

**Council meeting was held at Gold Hill
at 5:30 p.m. MST.*

1) Call to Order

- President David Stordahl called the meeting to order.

2) Attendance

- David Stordahl (President)
- Ty Inglis (Administrative Director)
- Kolby Sukut (Secretary)
- Jim Anderson (Treasurer)
- Shelly Anderson (Worship)
- Miriam Haley (Leadership)
- Linda Moore (Outreach)

3) Devotions

- Linda shared the devotion.

4) Approval of the Minutes: November 11th, 2025

- It was motioned, seconded, and carried (MSC) to approve the Council Meeting Minutes for November 11th, 2025.

5) Pastor's Report

- Pastor Sarah was absent. Nothing to report.

6) Treasurer's Report

- Jim provided an update on the year's financials and outlook.
- The Council discussed forming a committee to manage the Parsonage sale money.
- Jim shared the November Financial Report; it was MSC to approve the report.
- The Council scheduled an interim meeting for Tuesday, January 6th to set the 2026 Budget.

7) President's Report

- Nothing to report.

8) Administrative Director's Report

- Ty provided an update on ongoing church administrative matters.

9) Worship Ministry

- Shelly provided an update on Advent services.
- The Council discussed putting together a schedule for pulpit supply.

10) Leadership Ministry

- Miriam notified the Council that she is working on her annual report, and would be finishing out the year and then stepping down from the Council.

11) Spiritual Growth Ministry

- Nothing to report.

12) Outreach Ministry

- Linda shared the Outreach Ministry's ongoing efforts, including the hat/mitten tree, the giving tree for Copper Ridge and Veterans Home, and January will be a "fill the pantry" fundraiser for Montana Tech students.

13) Other Business:

- It was discussed scheduling a Joint Council Meeting to establish a Call Committee; a meeting will be scheduled after Gloria Dei's Council meets this week. A date of January 13th was proposed.
- The Council discussed the meeting the Parish Council held with the Bishop; he suggested forming the Call Committee quickly and putting together a schedule for pulpit supply prior to Pastor Sarah's departure.
- The Council discussed transitioning responsibilities (worship decisions, home visits, confirmation, etc.) from Pastor Sarah in January.
- The Council discussed the Nomination Committee and Council members who will be up for re-election in 2026.
- Dave provided an update on the mediation held on November 19th for the slip and fall incident.
- It was MSC to set the date for the 2026 Annual Meeting for Sunday, February 1st.

**The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.*

1 *New Year's Day* What are your hopes, resolutions and visions for this year? Share them with God and ask for help in bringing them to fruition.

2 Much of the world yearns for peace, unity and the healing of rifts that lead to violence, injustice, suffering and deep-rooted prejudice. Ask God for guidance and strength so we —individually and as communities of faith — can be persistent bearers of hope, grace, compassion and reconciliation in the world.

3 Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry reminds us: “Our rootedness in Christ sustains us with his love. His love connects us to one another. We must stay connected to face the challenges of this moment.” Give thanks to God for the infectious nature of caring relationships and communities of faith grounded in the gospel and for the example of Jesus Christ’s life and teachings.

4 Thank God for the opportunities we have through ELCA Global Mission to use our gifts, skills and life experiences to do God’s work. Pray that the Spirit will inspire and embolden siblings in Christ who are discerning their response to God’s invitation to serve alongside our companion churches and related organizations around the world.

5 Pray that our lives bear witness to the life, light and grace that Jesus Christ, the son of God, brought into the world for all people.

6 *Epiphany of Our Lord* Give thanks and praise to God for revealing to us daily God’s majesty and the new life we receive in Jesus Christ!

7 Pray that we increase Mission Support — the portion of offerings that congregations share with synods and the churchwide organization that enables new ministries, supports development of new leaders, nurtures partnerships around the world, and strengthens our church’s efforts to alleviate poverty and work for justice and peace, here and around the world.

8 Pray for the Spirit to continue to shed light on the mystery of our salvation and strengthen our faith in God’s promise of redemption fulfilled in Christ, a promise made to us with full awareness of our human quirks, flaws, questions and complexities.

9 Thank God for the ELCA’s special relationship with the United Methodist Church, a full communion partner

since 2009. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that together we will find strength and resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these challenging times for the church and society.

10 Pray for churchwide staff and volunteers from across the country who are planning the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis. Ask God to guide their preparations and stir their faith, creativity, wisdom and vision.

11 The presence of Jesus Christ among us — God’s love expressed in human form — makes the unimaginable real. Praise God for the amazing gift of salvation and the freedom to live in this world as children of God who follow Christ!

12 Remember in prayer and give thanks for the ELCA’s Gender Justice and Women’s Empowerment program, which provides leadership, resources and advocacy for our church and society that is shaped by the unique voices and experiences of people across race, ethnicity, ability, class, sexuality and age.

13 “Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt, gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Immanuel) everywhere” (*WOV* 754)! Give thanks for the Spirit who creates and nurtures unique gifts in each of us that help us serve our neighbors and share the good news of Jesus Christ far and wide.

14 Pray that we awaken each day with renewed wonder, awe and respect for the complexity and beauty of God’s creation, from microscopic organisms and human beings to towering mountains and vast oceans.

15 Ask the Spirit to help us grow more resilient so that we can navigate change and situations that are stressful, discomfiting and overwhelming. Pray that our efforts to teach children and youth skills that lead to greater resiliency will be fruitful and effective.

16 *National Religious Freedom Day* Give thanks that our nation supports the freedom to embrace religion, to worship and to share our faith according to our personal beliefs. Pray that we will respect the religious beliefs of our neighbors and support their right to practice their faith openly, without constraints, persecution or unfair advantage.

17 “A life steeped in generosity pours out love unconsciously” (the Rev. Peter W. Marty, *Living Lutheran*, 2015). Pray that we exercise a generosity that is not defined by financial wealth but flows from us as a daily expression of faith, with a spirit of gratitude for God’s abundant grace and the belief that our gifts contribute to God’s work in the world.

18 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6). Pray with our siblings in Christ around the world that we will find strength and joy in knowing that we are of one body in Christ that is not confined or divided by individual institutions or leaders, religious traditions, cultures or denominations.

19 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Give praise and thanks to God for courageous saints of the past and present who help bring about change. Pray that we value one another as children of God and that we are bold and persistent in confronting racism, injustice and inequity.

20 Remember in prayer ELCA campus ministries and the Lutheran Campus Ministry Network (LuMin), inclusive faith communities on college and university campuses across the United States that nurture the faith of young adults through worship, study, fellowship and service. Give thanks for congregations that support and partner with campus ministries.

21 “I have not hidden your saving help within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness” (Psalm 40:10). How can we keep the good news to ourselves? Pray for enthusiasm and the courage to share the story of our salvation and faith — God’s story — through our words and actions. Let us give thanks for how the Spirit equips us for such work.

22 Pray for nations at war that are on the verge of peace and for those for whom a vision of peace is not yet clear.

23 Pray for partnerships that help spread the gospel and provide love and care for our neighbors and siblings in Christ, including companion churches, full communion partners, the Lutheran World Federation, ecumenical and interfaith organizations, Lutheran Services in

America’s network, Global Refuge, the World Council of Churches and others.

24 Remember in prayer Lutheran outdoor ministry leaders who are recruiting young adults to serve in summer camp programs and are planting seeds of invitation in those who are unsure of how their faith, gifts and passions can be used to serve children, youth and adults of diverse abilities and backgrounds.

25 Pray that we respond with a resounding yes — or even an uncertain yes — as the first disciples did when Jesus beckoned, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.”

26 *Conversion of Paul* Give thanks for God’s unfathomable power to change and redeem anybody, including us. Pray for those whom we feel are lost, unreachable and even undeserving of our mercy, trusting that all things are possible for God and that God will change our hearts and nudge us to be a loving and inspiring presence in their lives.

27 We are a church that believes we accomplish more when we work together and collectively employ our diverse gifts for doing God’s work in the world. Ask God to help us bridge and mend divisions in our faith communities and society that get in the way of valuing one another and working together for the benefit of all, especially our neighbors in need.

28 Praise God for theologians and teachers who help us study Scripture, develop a deeper understanding of God’s activity in the world, contribute to the maturing of our faith and explore how we live our faith in daily life.

29 Pray for the ELCA Horizon International Internship program, which provides seminary students with intensive experiences here and with companion churches around the world, with the purpose of enriching their talents and leadership skills for ministry and the mission of the ELCA.

30 Give thanks for stewardship and generosity resources and the assistance provided to congregations through the ELCA Mission Interpreters, Stewardship Key Leaders, stewardship coaching and Ventures Steward Leaders networks.


31 Pray that we trust God's enduring love, mercy and patience to renew and encourage us when we fall short of our promises, goals and good intentions.

January 2026

Church Office Hours: 11:35 AM to 2:35 PM, Mon. – Fri. CLOSED Sat. – Sun.

Contact: (406) 723-4242 or goldhill.elca@gmail.com

Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church Empowered by the Holy Spirit, United to Serve

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Joint Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship Service Potluck to follow	5	6 8:30 am Perkins Bible Study 10:30 am Women's Bible Study	7 10:30 am LWR Quilters	8 6:30 pm Choir Practice	9	10
11 9:00 am Worship Service 10:00 am Coffee Hour 10:15 am Sunday School	12 6:00 pm Stephen Ministry @ Gold Hill	13 8:30 am Perkins Bible Study 10:30 am Women's Bible Study	14 10:30 am LWR Quilters	15 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Knitters 6:30 pm Choir Practice	16 12:00 pm 55+ Lunch Bunch	17
18 9:00 am Worship Service 10:00 am Coffee Hour 10:15 am Sunday School	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Office Closed	20 8:30 am Perkins Bible Study 10:30 am Women's Bible Study	21 10:30 am LWR Quilters	22 6:30 pm Choir Practice	23	24
25 9:00 am Worship Service 10:00 am Coffee Hour 10:15 am Sunday School	26 6:00 pm Stephen Ministry @ Gold Hill	27 8:30 am Perkins Bible Study 10:30 am Women's Bible Study	28 10:30 am LWR Quilters	29 6:30 pm Choir Practice	30	31

Date	Ushers	Lector	Acolyte	Worship Asst.	PowerPoint	Communion Asst.	Coffee Hour
Jan. 4				N/A			
Jan. 11	Aaron Hoffenbacker & Byron Dewaay	Chris Ketchum	N/A	Dorothy Tallon	Ron Gruss	N/A	Revonda Stordahl
Jan. 18	Jody Bickford & Shelly Anderson	Patti Chain	Tavia Broudy	N/A	Elaine Fuller	Linda Moore	Peggy Probasco
Jan. 25	Sukut Family	Aaron Hoffenbacker	N/A	Julie Corbin	Chris Ketchum	N/A	Jody Bickford