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Longview Community Church
Community Matters

Elder's Perspective

By Rob Buckingham, Elder

"Pilgrimage As a Spiritual Discipline: Lessons from El Camino"

In July 2025, my youngest daughter Isabel and I experienced "El Camino" as a dual celebration. The Camino de Santiago is not a single trail, but a network of ten ancient pilgrimage routes that cross Europe and converge at the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. We started in Porto, Portugal, took the Littoral/Coastal route (270 km) that was a blend of beach boardwalks, cobblestones, paved & dirt paths through farms, vineyards, small towns, cities, and eucalyptus forests. Those journeying to Santiago are known as 'Pellegrinos'. Pilgrims follow well-placed small yellow arrows for guidance, visit landmarks, restaurants, and shops to receive at least two stamps a day in their pilgrim's Compostela passport. We marveled at nature, struggled physically, listened, reflected, prayed, and built community with those ranging in age from toddlers in strollers to 79 years old, international, and those on their first Camino to one who had completed 108.

Pilgrimage always involves a threshold experience...leaving the old self behind and transforming to a new self in the journey. The Camino simultaneously impacted every aspect of me—mind, body, heart, and soul. The importance of receiving the insight that came with moving slowly and without hurry. Much like how our spiritual maturity can reflect the character of Christ and our church's transformation into the Body of Christ on mission.

As I walked and reflected, over the thirteen days, the following lessons were "taught" to me.

"Taste and See"

The richness of the colors, tastes, smells, and sounds created depth of experience that reading and knowledge couldn't match. Fellow pilgrims greet one another with kindness, strangers help with directions, and hospitality appears unexpectedly. These moments echo Psalm 34:8: *"Taste and see that the Lord is good."* Applying this on our spiritual journey, both individuals and churches must slow down enough to humbly savor God's goodness—through relationships and moments of grace—and let those experiences stir gratitude and worship.

Perseverance

No pilgrim escapes blisters, swollen feet, soreness, uncertain lodging, or the grind of long climbs and dormitory sleeping. Yet pilgrims often say, "Blisters are blessings," because every discomfort shapes endurance. Romans 5:3–5 reminds us that suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope. Applying this to our path to maturity, we learn new spiritual "techniques"—prayer rhythms, relational skills, mindset flexibility—just as pilgrims learn foot care, open mindsets and the ability to 'pivot'. As we are learning at LvCC, churches, too, must adapt, learn new habits, and stay committed even when hard.

Agape Edifies

It is hard to describe the experience of feeling the fruit of the Holy Spirit emanate from fellow pilgrims, locals with their friendly 'Bom Camino', kindness at Albergues, gentle guidance of veteran pilgrims, and faithful connecting of pilgrims socially.

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Elder Meeting Highlights

The Elders opened the meeting praying over the prayers cards from the previous Sunday. They then spent time discussing John 1:1-5 and 9-14, focusing on the essential truths of the Christian faith presented in the passage.

Jaime Boaglio share that contributions for October were strong at \$42,264, the second-highest month of the year. However, the YTD deficit is nearly \$86,000. He presented the 2026 Budget as a balanced budget with total expenses projected at \$614,800. The 2026 budget was approved by the Elders.

Jay Holland explained that the church's insurance carrier is requiring replacement of four electrical panels to renew the policy mid-December. The Elders approved accepting a contract with Busack Electric for the work.

Jay also reported that the Chapel basement flooded due to a plugged sump pump, but the Properties team believe they can handle the repair. Other recent projects include work on the stage transition, removal of moss from a section of the roof, and completion of an electrical inspection and 20th & Beech.

The Elders decided to sell the church van due to deterioration from lack of use and an annual cost of \$4,000 -\$5,000. The designated funds can now be used for rentals.

After meeting with church leaders, both Ron Wentz and Robert Levy were approved for membership and will be presented at the next Testimonies Sunday on Nov 30.

Dave shared that Rose of Sharon had a successful ministry event for the Highlands neighborhood at 20th & Beech with about 50 in attendance. The event included worship, rap music, testimony and prayer, with a positive and energetic atmosphere. A debrief meeting will be scheduled soon with the ministry and our staff.

A celebration is being planned for a Sunday in January to honor the closing Counseling Center and former counselors.

The next Elders business meeting is scheduled for January 20 at 5pm.

Elder's Perspective, cont. from page 1

This is agape love in motion. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 8:2–3 that love, not knowledge, is what truly builds up the community. Our journey toward maturity requires humility, teachability, and building up others as we receive and let the Holy Spirit lead us in love.

Abide in the Way

Walking the Camino teaches a sacred rhythm—moving steadily, resting as needed, eating slowly, and engaging in conversation. The journey transitions from strenuous, step-by-step climbs to moments of relief, embraced by cool eucalyptus forests just when they are needed most. These experiences remind me that we are called to abide and gratefully receive all that is given, even as seasons change. Through this pilgrimage, I gained a deeper, holistic understanding of Jesus' teaching in John 15:4–5. This lesson applies to our spiritual maturity and church renewal, which grow through slow, steady, and relational connection with Christ and one another.

We Travel Alone, but Are Never Alone

Though each pilgrim walks on their own feet, the Holy Spirit, the testimony of centuries of pilgrims, and the daily company of fellow travelers (~2,500 pilgrims/day on all routes) formed a deep companionship. Journaling, reflection, evening communal meals, and celebrating the journey's end reveal that God has been present all along. Likewise, individuals and churches grow spiritually by recognizing the Spirit in and with each of us.

As I reflect with longing on the simplicity of the walk and the deep sense of community found along the Camino, I am encouraged that each day presents opportunities to treat our activities and conversations as pilgrimages—to behold and abide in the glory of Christ reflected in one another. May we, as a church, embrace these lessons: to savor God's goodness, persevere through challenges, build up one another in love, abide in Christ, and remember that we are never truly alone on our journey.

Help Needed for History Ministry

By Bob Chace, History Team

The Church's History Ministry needs short-term volunteers to help digitalize documents and DVDs. Our plan is to save this historical information on our computers so that information can be retrieved. The History Ministry's current projects are converting Church photographs to a digital format, Church annual reports, board minutes and some other ministry documents. The plan is to store the digital documents on the church's computer.

Our vision is that these projects might help high school students meet their graduation requirements and enhance one's experience for later life's journey through the digital world. Interested people give Bob Chace a call at (360) 270-3681 or text him using the same number.

FISH Report

By Peggy Reibe, FISH Ministry Leader

It has been my greatest joy leading FISH of LvCC for the last four years. The wonderful volunteers, the sense of purpose, and the material difference that FISH makes in the community marks FISH as an incredible ministry. We have a significant and successful mission, one that I hope thrives for many more years. Because I am transferring my membership to Longview Presbyterian Church and joining the FISH of Cowlitz County Board to help all the FISH churches in the area, the January 2026 distribution will be my last at LvCC.

New leaders will need to step forward. The tasks that I do can be broken up so everyone who wants to lend a hand can. If you hear that little voice urging you to get involved, follow it! This is a great opportunity. I would be happy to train new leaders or help in the transition in any way. Thank you for allowing me to serve the community in this way.



Advent/Christmas 2025 Events

Mark your calendar and join us for these events and special worship services!

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Nov 30 9:45am | Lower Columbia Clarinet Guild will provide prelude music before the service |
| Dec 5 6:30-7:30pm | Christmas Carol Sing in the Sanctuary-Join us for an old-fashioned carol sing around the piano and Christmas tree! Christmas cookies and cocoa will be provided. |
| Dec 7 10am | Community Kids will sing during the worship service |
| Dec 13 7-9pm | SWWA Symphony and Chorale Christmas Concert-These concerts are a community favorite! Doors will open 45 minutes before each concert. A free will offering will be taken to benefit Community House on Broadway and FISH of Cowlitz County |
| Dec 14 3-5pm | SWWA Symphony and Chorale Christmas Concert |
| Dec 20 4-6pm | Community Kids Christmas Pajama Party-This is a "drop off" event for kids 5 and older. Contact sarah@longviewcommunitychurch.org for more details |
| Dec 21 10am | Lessons and Carols Service-This traditional worship service features scripture passages and corresponding carols about the fulfilled prophecies and events regarding Jesus' birth |
| Dec 24 4pm | Christmas Eve Candlelight Service-This service blends traditional carols and contemporary worship songs, a short lesson based on the Christmas story, and ends with a beautiful congregational candlelight ceremony. |



Children's Ministry *By Sarah Fix, Director of Children's Ministry*

I can hardly believe the holidays are here and then I'll blink again and it will be the New Year! I know many of you parents can relate. It's been a busy, but good, couple months for me personally! I had my birthday late October and my niece, who wasn't due to be born until November decided to come early and be my birthday buddy. Which was deeply special for many reasons, and I feel like the timing of her birth was just a true gift from the Lord directly to me. On top of celebrating new life, I will be going home to Greenville, SC for a week over Thanksgiving to

go meet her and see my family which will be such a blessing, but prayers for safety and peace while I'm away from my family here would be appreciated!



Fun in Community Kids!

In November, Community Kids have been learning about Nehemiah, through our series called "In the Zone". Nehemiah was a faithful, bold, and focused leader who accomplished a great task in a short time. The kids are learning how Nehemiah dealt with the obstacles that blocked his mission of rebuilding Jerusalem's wall, and how Nehemiah represents an example that would be completely fulfilled in Jesus. In December, our series is "All Over the Map" where we'll explore the significance of all the humble places where Jesus was born, escaped to, and lived to see what they teach us about who Jesus is and what He is like. My volunteers and I have been loving this curriculum, and I truly feel/sense our kids' genuine interest and processing of the stories and truths we're looking at. Since each series is a month long, we feel it gives kids time to dig deeper into the concept/person/story that we

can learn from without having to grasp something new each week. Lately, we've also celebrated having guest kiddos visiting and enjoying being in class as well!



After-Lesson Activity



Pirate Boys at Bob Koenig's house for summer-end gathering

I pray everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas as we thank God and celebrate His birth! Immanuel- God with us- what an incredible meditation for this season.

Coming up and News:

No Community Kids on November 30th since it's our fifth Sunday family service (we will still have nursery available and our parents' lounge open as well)



Pumpkin Carving and Seahawks!

The kids will be singing and motioning to the song "It's About the Cross" by Go Fish on December 7th at the beginning of the service. Please have your kids in the sanctuary at 9am so we can start practicing promptly by 9:15! Email or text me and I'll send a link to the song.

Community Kids Christmas pajama party on December 20th at 4 pm in the youth room! Come in your pj's for lots of Christmas games and fun! We will end with pizza and dessert and parents can pick-up at 6.

Ages 5 and up-this is a drop-off event. I am currently looking for volunteers to help with this! Please talk to me for more information.

We will not have Community Kids on December 21st for Lessons and Carols, but we will have class on December 28th.

We are adding a new check-in system for community kids at the Welcome Center in the lobby! When you arrive at church, please stop by the iPad in the lobby of the sanctuary and check your child in to Community Kids. A sticker name tag will be printed for your child and a one for you with a matching code for pick-up. Since we've been experiencing growth with visitors, we want them to feel secure dropping their kids off to class. It also gives us a better way to follow up or contact parents if needed. This is a great new step in the growing process! Thanks for your help with this.



Celebrating Grace McMullan's Birthday

Celebrating 47 Years of the Lay Counseling Center

By Dr. Steve Meharg and Elizabeth Jacobsen

In 1978, God planted a vision in the hearts of Dr. Kenneth Working, Senior Pastor, and Dr. David deVidal, Clinical Psychologist. Inspired by a similar ministry in California, they dreamed of a Lay Counseling Center at Longview Community Church—a place where trained lay people could offer hope, support, and Christian love to those in need.

The congregation embraced the call. Twenty members stepped forward for the very first counselor training, and by October of that year, the Lay Counseling Service was officially adopted as a ministry of the church. From those humble beginnings, the Lay Counseling Center grew into a vital outreach, touching lives for nearly five decades.

In December 1979, the first client was welcomed. Since then, over 1,375 individuals have received care—each one listened to, supported, and encouraged in Christ's love. The Center offered free, hour-long sessions, bereavement groups, and classes that strengthened both the congregation and the wider community.

Over the years, faithful leaders guided the ministry: Wes Ellis served briefly as Administrator, followed by Elizabeth Meharg Jacobsen, who dedicated herself to this work until her retirement in 2023. Elaine Theriault then took over the helm as Administrator. Dr. deVidal and later Dr. Stephen Meharg provided supervision and training, equipping generations of lay counselors to serve with compassion and skill.

The Lay Counseling Center has been more than a program; it has been a mission. Counselors gave countless hours, offering hope in times of grief, guidance in seasons of struggle, and affirmation of God's presence in every circumstance.

Now, after 47 years of faithful service, the Lay Counseling Center will close at the end of this year. While the need for counseling remains, our community is now blessed with many organizations offering free or low-cost services. In recent months, requests have dwindled, affirming that the ministry has completed its purpose.

We celebrate this legacy with gratitude. We give thanks to God, to Drs. deVidal and Meharg, to Elizabeth, Elaine, and to every counselor who answered the call. Together, they have written a story of compassion and faith that will live on in the lives of those they served.

Making Year-End Gifts with Greater Purpose and Impact

By Bob Chace, former Church Treasurer

You can receive tax and financial advantages while fostering ministry at LvCC and creating new opportunities to Experience the Presence of God!

1. **Start Now.** Allow time to consider and give thanks for God's gifts to you. Meet with advisors to identify key deadlines for securing tax deductions.
2. **Align your gifts with your goals.**
 - **A gift of appreciated securities like stocks, bonds, mutual funds or ETFs**, provides a deduction for the full fair market value and bypasses the capital gains tax.
 - **A gift from your IRA**, if you are age 70½ or older, made directly to Longview Community Church is tax free (up to \$108,000 in 2025) and counts toward your required minimum distribution.
 - **A grant from a donor-advised fund** comes from money you've already set aside for charitable giving, so it has no effect on your current finances.
3. **Take full advantage of deductions.** Bunching gifts for two or more years into one tax year may make itemizing worthwhile—especially helpful if you want to offset extra income this year.

Always consult with your tax and financial advisors before making a gift.

This and That

Join us Friday, Dec 5 from 6:30-7:30 for an old fashioned **Christmas Carol Sing** around the Christmas tree in the Sanctuary! Christmas cookies and cocoa will be provided!

Come back the next morning, Dec 6 from 9-11am for the **TriHOP Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser** and family portraits in the Fellowship Hall! This is a great opportunity to get a nice family photo for the holidays and support the ministry of TriHOP!

Church Office Holiday Closures:

Nov 27, Dec 25, Dec 31 and Jan 1. The Office is also always closed on Fridays. The Office will be open from **9am-12pm** (not 1pm) on Monday, Dec 29 and Tuesday, Dec 30 for those who would like to drop off year-end contributions.

End of Year Giving

All cash or asset contributions for 2025 must be received in the Church Office by 9am on Tuesday, Dec 30, 2025 or postmarked no later than Dec 31, 2025. In addition, all online gifts must have an "approved" status by Dec 31, 2025 in order to receive contribution credit for 2025. Any gift received or postmarked on or after Jan 2, 2026 will be credited to 2026. Please contact Jackie Erickson, Bookkeeper, or Jaime Boaglio, Treasurer if you have questions. Also, please remember to notify the Church Office if you had an address change this year.

Join the **"Write Your Own Story"** group that meets on Wednesdays from 11-12pm, usually in the Chapel Conference Room. What better treasure to pass on to your family than your remembrances of what happened "back in the day". Contact Sharon Kuroda, 360-431-2097 or Clark Carroll, 360-442-0685 for more information.

OCTOBER FINANCIALS

YTD CONTRIBUTIONS: \$ 359,790

YTD OTHER INCOME \$ 29,626

YTD EXPENSE: \$ 475,271

YTD NET INCOME: -\$ 85,855

Dear Church Family...



My heart is full of appreciation and love for the support during Al's decline over the last four years and death on August 16, 2025. It has been a difficult journey with many emotional challenges. Your concern, support, and prayers have meant so much to me and our family. We have been assured of God's presence with us then and now through your faithful prayers and the faith that looks forward to our future in eternity yet to come. May God bless you and yours.

~Mary Ross

The **power will be turned off** for several hours on Wednesday, Dec 3 in the Lay Counseling wing and Choir room areas to replace electrical panels in those areas. The power in other areas of the church will not be affected.

Do you have **musical or technical abilities** that you would like to use to serve the Lord? We would love to chat with you about possibly getting involved with serving on the worship or tech teams! Please contact Patty Howland in the Church Office for more information.

If you're interested in **becoming a member** at LvCC, you may contact the Church Office to have a membership packet emailed, or you may pick up a printed copy in the office.

Medical Equipment Available If you or someone you knows needs medical equipment, i.e. walker, wheelchair, commode, etc, please contact Roberta Baird at 360-430-8402.

90+ Birthdays This Month

To honor our most senior members and attenders, we will be listing their birthdays each month using the records in our database. If you or someone you know is 90+ years of age and has an upcoming birthday, please contact the Church Office by the 20th of the prior month so we may be sure to include it!

Dec 12	Pete Pickett	92
Dec 13	Joan Wilcox	95
Dec 18	Darlene Bradburn	94

Longview Community Church

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Longview, WA 98632
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longviewcommunitychurch.org



December 2025

For the most current information and updates, see the online calendar in the Calendar tab of our website
Zoom=online Zoom meeting;
all other meetings are onsite
unless indicated

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 10a Staff Meeting 5p Monday Outreach 6p TRIHOP Prayer 6:30p Young Adult Study	2 7a Men's Grp-Zoom 9a MomCo Meetup 6p TRIHOP Prayer 6:30p Elder/Staff Meeting	3 11a Write Your Story 6:30p Worship Team Rel	4 7a Men's Group 9a Circuit Training Class 10:15a Plates Class 11:15a Fit for All 6p TRIHOP Prayer	5 6:30p Christmas Carol Sing	6 8a TRIHOP Pancake Breakfast 10a Cast Your Cares Group 3:30p FCA/YL
7 Communion 10a Worship 4p MS Gathering 5:30p HS Gathering	8 10a Staff Meeting 5p Monday Outreach 6p TRIHOP Prayer 6:30p Young Adult Study	9 7a Men's Grp-Zoom 9a MomCo Lead Team 6p Fireside Folks Group 6p TRIHOP Prayer	10 11a Write Your Story 6:30p Worship Team Rel	11 7a Men's Group 9a Circuit Training Class 10:15a Plates Class 11:15a Fit for All 6p TRIHOP Prayer 6:30p Missions Meeting	12	13 7p Symphony/Chorale Concert
14 10a Worship 3p Symphony/Chorale Concert 4p MS Gathering 5:30p HS Gathering	15 10a Staff Meeting 5p Monday Outreach 6p TRIHOP Prayer 6:30p Young Adult Study	16 7a Men's Grp-Zoom 9a MomCo Meetup 10a History Team Mtg 6p TRIHOP Prayer	17 11a Write Your Story 6:30p Worship Team Rel	18 7a Men's Group 9a Circuit Training Class 10:15a Plates Class 11:15a Fit for All 6p TRIHOP Prayer	19 7p Pure Light Karaoke at 20th & Beech	20 Newsletter Due 4p Comm Kids Christmas Pageant Party
21 10a Worship-Lessons and Carols 11:30a Worship Team Rel 4p MS Gathering 5:30p HS Gathering	22 10a Staff Meeting 5p Monday Outreach 6p TRIHOP Prayer 6:30p Young Adult Study	23 7a Men's Grp-Zoom 6p Fireside Folks Group 6p TRIHOP Prayer	24 4p Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS CLOSED	26 CLOSED	27
28 10a Worship 4p MS Gathering 5:30p HS Gathering	29 10a Staff Meeting 5p Monday Outreach 6p TRIHOP Prayer 6:30p Young Adult Study	30 7a Men's Grp-Zoom 6p TRIHOP Prayer	31 CLOSED			