

December  
2024



# NEWSLETTER



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## FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF LUTHER'S LODGE: AN UPDATE ON 2024

Hello Friends,  
News from this year. The Lodge has been close to full occupancy these past months.

We continue to work with our local hospitals and clinics to house patients of the hospitals and/or their families while undergoing medical care.

Our current Lodge has five bedrooms and three bathrooms. Guests enjoy a quiet place of respite during stressful times. We charge a modest fee per night.

While staying at the Lodge the guests enjoy kitchen privileges and can prepare their own preferences for food versus going out to restaurants. Also, the Lodge has two living room areas that are nicely furnished. And a washer and dryer also are furnished for our guests convenience.

We have big news to share on our future – please read about it in this newsletter.

2902 Glenwood Lane  
Billings, MT 59102  
406-256-5756

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this message, I have a nagging pain in my right foot. Nothing to worry about, but I recently had some minor surgery to remove a painful bone spur. The surgeon told me it would hurt, but only for a few weeks, and then I will feel much better. Still, I am feeling sorry for myself since I can't get out in the beautiful autumn weather to enjoy the outdoors, and I'm getting bored with the inside of my house.

As I drove this day to the doctor's office to have my bandages renewed, I drove past Luther's Lodge, and I saw three guest cars parked at the house. For those guests, I now realize the real value of having that warm and comforting environment to provide a safe place of refuge during a period of medical stress. It made my foot feel a lot better.

For 43 years, Luther's Lodge (formerly The Lutheran Center) has provided just that warm and comforting retreat for guests who are visiting the Billings medical

community for treatment or to accompany another who is a patient. For those of us who serve as Board members or employees, our service here is a quiet but greatly rewarding effort which brings us personal satisfaction, and which provides our guests with a brief respite from the trauma of medical intervention.

Since 1981, we have provided affordable, relaxing housing for out-of-area patients and their families accessing the Billings health care providers. We now have a great opportunity before us. In 2023, the members of First English Lutheran Church graciously invited Luther's Lodge to repurpose a portion of their education/administration wing to accommodate six guest rooms and related living spaces within the existing church building. Located at 1243 North 31st Street, just across the street from St. Vincent's Hospital and three blocks from Billings Clinic, this location will be much more accessible than our

current house on Rimrock Road. We now are actively soliciting funds to finance this building project.

As we redouble our fund-raising efforts to reach our goal of \$900,000, we are excited to look forward to a closer and more convenient facility to continue our longstanding goal of providing the comforts of home to those who are temporarily away from home for medical reasons.

Please join with us by offering your generous support.

~Andy Hall, President

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF LUTHER'S LODGE

Luther's Lodge started in 1983 as a mission supported by local Billings Lutherans who wanted to provide a home away from home for patients and their families. While a family member was getting medical care, the Lutheran Center (as it was called then) was meant to ease the burden of families as a place of respite. The first home was located on 30th Street near the hospital corridor and was leased from the Deaconess Hospital. Currently, Luther's Lodge is near the hospital corridor on Glenwood Drive and Rimrock Road. Luther's Lodge is owned with no debt thanks to generous supporters over the years.

As of this year, we have been offering a safe clean place to stay for 42 years and have an exciting future ahead of us with plans to expand.

The mission goal was to give a safe clean shelter for families coming to Billings from outlying areas to receive medical care. Like Ronald McDonald house except the Luther's Lodge is open to anyone (not just families with kids in the hospital). To stay at the Lodge a guest or family member needs a medical referral by a local medical facility. We collaborate closely with social workers at both hospitals.

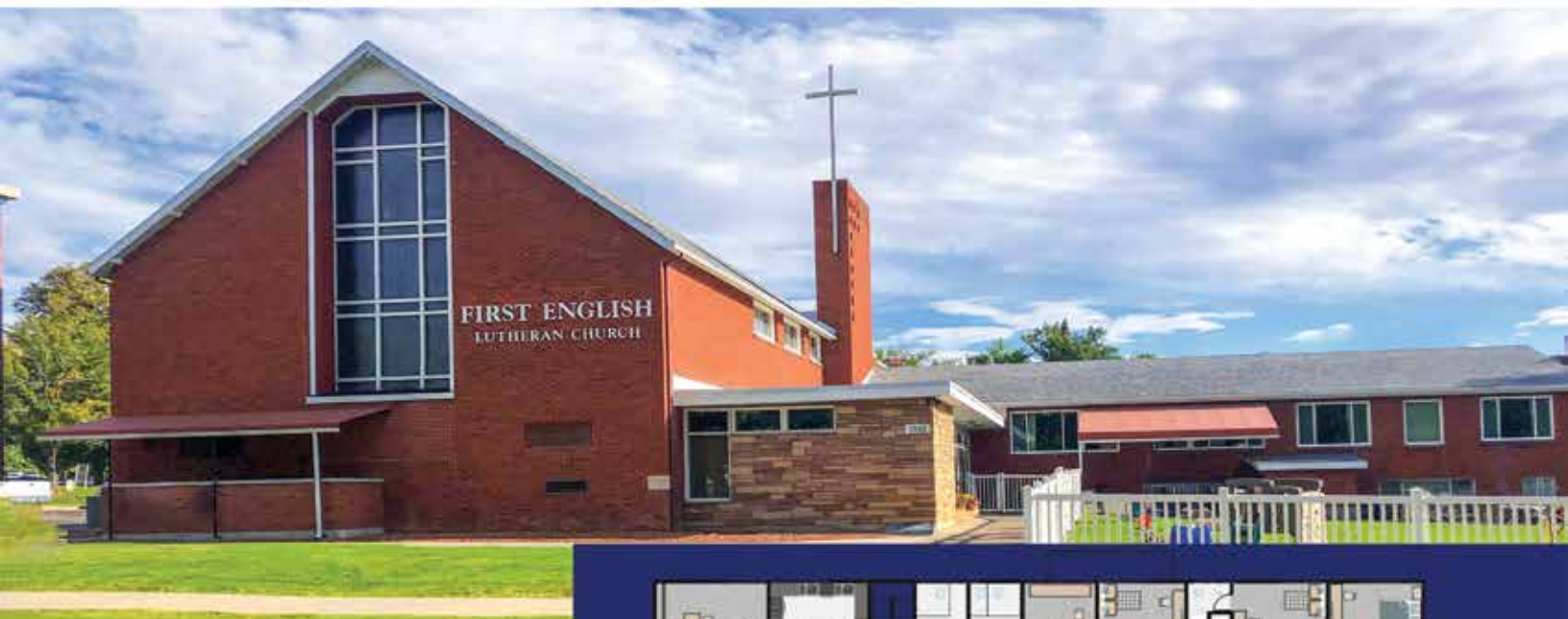


## FIRE

Our deep roots and long history are Lutheran. Our bylaws require us to serve all who come to Billings for healthcare. This means you, your neighbors and your acquaintances. Our long tradition of service has been inspired by the Montana tradition of neighbor helping neighbor and more fundamentally the fire of the Spirit as in Pentecost, with a shared inspiration to serve you. We are planning for a future for you with new facilities and are eager to serve you into the foreseeable future. We hope that if so moved, you can assist us in our fundraising effort. Just call us and we'll tell you all about it and how you too can help.

This brings me to tell you about the recently departed Ted Rist who served as our board leader for many years. This could have been about many who founded and serve on our board and in various capacities. However, Ted had a drive and passion for Luther's Lodge that was like the North Star. Leading with a directness that helped you see the facts and made you want to pitch in. He knew in his bones that the core mission of Luther's Lodge is the pure love for thy neighbor that guided his and many of our lives, even though we are miles apart. We miss him.





## PLANS FOR EXPANSION

After years of trying to locate Luther's Lodge close to the hospital corridor we have exciting news to share. In a partnership with First English Lutheran Church (located across the street from St. Vincent's Regional Hospital) we have agreed to remodel the church and make six rooms with private bathrooms (en suite rooms). There will also be a kitchen for the guests to use, laundry facilities, and a common living area. With six private rooms each with their own private bathrooms we feel our mission will be expanded and upgraded. First English Lutheran Church will continue to worship in their sanctuary and offer their building for an incredibly special ministry.



The funding of this capital project comes from three main sources: the sale of the existing Lodge, which is owned outright, committed donations from the Board of Directors at this point pledging \$176,853, and another \$200,000 raised from donations in our public phase of the capital campaign.

The construction timeline is dependent on the funding from our capital campaign. We look forward to sharing the updated timeline sometime next year 2025. Please note our request for donations in this newsletter.

## CONSIDER SUPPORTING LUTHER'S LODGE



As we work to complete our Capital Campaign please consider donating to Luther's Lodge and helping us get to our goal for the expansion and relocation to First English Lutheran Church.

Our ministry looks forward to the future where we can provide safe, comfortable, and peaceful lodging for

families and patients here in Billings for medical care. We have done this for over forty years now and remain committed to helping others in a time of need. With an expanded Lodge we will serve more folks and the proximity to the hospitals will be very convenient.

We hope to raise an additional \$200,000 to

reach our goal of \$900,000 and then begin the renovation. Hoping not to borrow any funds for this project, we will hold off on starting the project until we have met our goals. We are set up to receive gifts of stock and Qualified Charitable Gifts from Required Minimum Distributions (RMD). Your donations are tax deductible. Thank you.

**DONATIONS MAY BE SENT TO:**  
**Luther's Lodge**  
**PO Box 825**  
**Billings, Montana 59102**

[www.stjohnsunity.org/services/luthers-lodge/](http://www.stjohnsunity.org/services/luthers-lodge/)

*We are a 501(c) (3) organization - a non-profit organization.*





## NOTES OF THANKS AND APPRECIATION FROM GUESTS

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for housing our families and giving them a wonderful place.

We appreciate you and all that you have done for our family. It is people like you that truly make a difference.

A quick note to thank you for your kindness and sweet welcome to Luther's Lodge. We were in a crisis and the lodge was an answer to our prayers. We are taking each day as it comes, but in the midst of it all, we have the Lord's overwhelming peace reigning in our hearts. Many Blessings.

It could not have been better. Having a clean place to stay while going through a medical crisis. Thank you for all you have done.

Everything was well organized and clean. Thank you.

My spouse loved recovering here instead of a motel.

Appreciated being able to stay at this Lodge in prep for husband's surgery. Needed to be in Billings 24 hours after surgery so this was perfect. Close to the hospital. We will continue to stay here if the need arises. Wish the Luther's Lodge continuous success as you look forward to your future site.

Wonderful and compassionate people. And, nice cozy comfortable home. It was like a big family. Thank you for your kindness.

Very nice accommodations. Pricing makes it affordable to be with family staying in the hospital. Very nice people to deal with. I will recommend this facility to friends and I will be back myself.





## ICE

“ICE” In Case of Emergency: Having a plan for important health events or surprises is a necessity. Lodging while receiving care or while in recovery is typically not covered by health insurance. Full expenses for treatment, recovery and lodging can easily mount unexpectedly when far from home. The risks are very real. Friends and family also provide soothing support and encouragement. They can make all the difference in your remote journey to your normal life. We know that a “home” away from home where they can also stay is in your best interest.

It’s recommended to keep emergency contact information in your cell phone contacts with the “ICE – Spouse Name” as a way for emergency medical providers to quickly call important contacts in a time of critical need. Luther’s Lodge asks that you include us in your “In Case of Emergency” information under a “ICE-Medical Lodging in Billings” entry. Who will remember if you don’t have it written down as an “ICE”? We have been here for you for 42 years, by good grace will be here when you need us for years to come. Whether your needs are

planned, emergency or for those who come to support you, we’ll keep a light on for you.

Yvonne Eckhardt,  
Luther’s Lodge House Manager  
406-256-5756,  
[lutherslodgebillings@gmail.com](mailto:lutherslodgebillings@gmail.com)

## BOARD MEMBERS

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2902 Glenwood Lane  
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