

STEEPLE ECHOES

*A Monthly Newsletter
of*

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MT. HOREB

A family in faith, reaching out to share God's love with all people.

January 2026



WE WELCOME ALL TO ELC!

Everyone. Without exception. Regardless of race, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, faith traditions, physical or mental abilities, financial resources, family status, or personal struggles. We are committed to being an anti-racist community. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we will work to extend God's grace, love, justice, and dignity. You belong here. Your story and your life are valuable.

In Christ's love, we welcome you.



WORSHIP SCHEDULE AT ELC

Holy Communion Celebrated 1st & 3rd Sundays at all services.

SATURDAY: 5:00 pm- (in Chapel) Modified Traditional Worship

SUNDAY 9:00 am Blended Service

Pre-recorded online worship available:

www.elcmthoreb.org/home/worship/sermon-archive/

ELC'S STAFF

Accompanists: Ruth Heinecke, Barb Underwood, Kathy O'Donnell

Agape Preschool Director: Amy Kellesvig

Bell Choir Director: Kristin Willcutt

Custodian: Jeremy Kahl

Maintenance: Karl Lasse

Music Team Leader: Barb and Chris Underwood

Office Manager: Nancy Voss

Organist/Senior Choir Director: Diane Dangerfield

Pastor: Karen Hofstad

Youth Director: Brenda Martin

Pastor's Reflections...

The Epiphany season opens with the story of Jesus' baptism—when the heavens are opened, the Spirit of God descends upon Jesus like a dove, and God speaks: “*This are my Son, the Beloved; with whom I am well pleased*” (Matthew 3:13-17). That’s where the 1st Sunday of Epiphany reading ends. But do you know what comes next? “*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil...*” (Matthew 4:1ff).

Notice: It wasn’t Jesus’ choice. All the Gospel accounts make it clear that Jesus didn’t simply *decide* to go into the wilderness. He was *led* there by the Spirit (or *driven* there, as Mark puts us). I’m guessing if he’d had a choice, Jesus probably wouldn’t have gone there; and truth be told, neither would we. I mean, who in their right mind would choose to spend time “*in the wilderness*”—in scripture, often a place of danger and threat... a place of wandering and unknown... a place of testing and formation? Who would willingly enter into that?!

Yet, is it possible that “*wilderness times*” are good for us (for our faith)? It seemed to be for Jesus. Although it couldn’t have been easy—alone for an extended period of time... hungry and vulnerable ... being tempted / tested—it was during his “*wilderness experience*” that Jesus discovered his strength and grounding in Scripture... and in faith (trusting in God’s promises and his relationship with God) as well as his clear sense of call and direction for his life and ministry.

None of us like the “*wilderness experiences*” of life, whatever they are—struggles at work, nagging questions and doubts (faith-related or otherwise), partisan division, unexpected or prolonged illness, strained or broken relationships, life or church transitions, etc. We will do almost anything to get out of them as quickly (and painlessly) as we can. But, is it possible that “*wilderness times*” can be good for us... or that God can use them for good (as God so often does)? Is it possible that at times, like in Jesus’ story, the Spirit of God actually *leads* us (or *drives* us) “*into the wilderness*”—to learn to rely more on God and less on ourselves and the empty promises of this world... to help us grow in our faith (both trust and understanding) ... to help us see that our grounding in God’s Word and in our relationship with God (our baptismal identity) —knowing *who* we

are and *whose* we are —gives us the strength and courage we need to stand up against the temptations and trials and conflicts and struggles that come our way... and prevail?! Yes, I think it is possible.

Jesus was not left alone in his “wilderness experience” ... and neither are we. We can trust that God is right here with us (the promise of Emmanuel) ... that *God’s angels are there waiting on us*—tending to our needs... and that God will lead and guide us during this interim time of self-study and discernment.

New Year’s blessings to you all!

Pastor Karen

.....

As we enter into a new year together, I urge you to pause and take some time to reflect... to remember how far you have come... to consider what lies ahead for you as a congregation... to clear your vision and refresh your dreams for the journey you are on as God’s people – in this place and time.

Looking back:

- How has God enriched, affirmed, and enlivened you as a congregation?
- How have you been challenged and tested (perhaps re-formed) along the way?
- What have you learned about God? yourselves? your level of commitment? your ministry together?

Looking ahead:

- Where is God leading you in the coming year(s)?
- What new areas should be explored?
- What are the assets / resources you can draw from? What concerns need to be addressed?
- What needs to be left behind? What should be carried forward?

Dear friends, the journey we are called to as the church is not to stick to the well-worn paths of the PAST... not to keep retracing your steps (what you know and feel most comfortable with). It is good to know where you have come from and how far you have come, but life and faith are not lived in the PAST. They are lived in the PRESENT... always looking to the FUTURE. As we begin a new year of ministry together, let us reflect on and learn from the PAST ... but let us focus even more on the needs of the PRESENT... and the promise of the FUTURE God wants to lead you into.

Pastor Karen

CHILDREN & YOUTH NEWS

SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15 am - 11 am: (3 years old - 8th grade) Join us to hear Bible stories, music, play games, create crafts, and enjoy snacks. We begin in the chapel each week. All are welcome.

We resume on January 4th.

7th & 8th GRADE CONFIRMATION: 7 pm - 8:30 pm

- Jan 7th, 14th, and 28th - Regular class time
- Jan 21st, 7 pm - 8:30 pm - Bowling at Norsk, bring \$5/person

2026 MISSION GROUP MEET & EAT - Jan 23rd, 4 - 5 pm - Youth traveling to Kansas City will meet (and eat) to make plans for our summer trip in July.

PARENTS NIGHT OUT at ELC: Jan 23rd, 5:30 pm - 8 pm: Our high school youth will be offering a night of games, crafts, and treats for youth ages 3 years through 5th grade at ELC of Mt Horeb.

Fundraiser for 2026 Mission Trip.

Donation: \$10 per child and \$5 for additional children (family rate).

Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend. Sign up with the QR code or link -<https://vbspro.events/p/ad14b8>



MISSION TRIP 2026 - WHO'S INTERESTED? Open to our **current 8th - 12th graders**. Our trip will be **July 12 - 18th, 2026 to Kansas City, MO**. Great opportunity to experience and serve. Please contact Brenda (608.437.0332) to sign up, including a \$50 deposit. Balance paid by fundraising. Join us!

THANK YOU - As we say hello to a new year, I want to thank everyone who has helped, supported, and participated in our youth programs this past year, including our many fundraisers. We look forward to 2026.

Brenda Martin, Youth Ministries Director
brenda.martin@elcmthoreb.org

CHILDREN & YOUTH NEWS Cont.



TROLL WAY PIZZA (TIME TO ORDER) - Our youth are taking orders for our delicious "church-made" pizzas after worship services **Dec 14th - Jan 11th**. Orders may be placed online, using the link below or the QR Code. **Pick up day will be on February 1st, in Fellowship Hall.**

TROLL WAY PIZZA
ORDER HERE



(After worship service) One great way to stock up on pizzas before the Super Bowl. Funds raised will support our youth programming.
<https://forms.gle/u1t8fKgJR5owPuVJ9>

Happy New Year and Welcome 2026!



The first day back to school will be January 6th, and we are excited to start the new year with lots of fun together. The students will learn about winter animals and their habitats, as well as explore topics related to snow, ice, and winter. We will also keep practicing how to put on our winter gear for our outside playtime. Maybe we will have some snow for them to play in?

I am eager to begin 2026 in collaboration with my esteemed team of educators: Cathy Fountas, Jenelle Ollendick, Katy Seibel, and Anita Symons. These women consistently support the children, families, and ministry of Agape Christian Preschool, and I am grateful to work with them.

Wishing you all a good winter.

Amy Kellesvig, director
Agape Christian Preschool
608-437-7100
agapekids@mhtc.net

Upcoming Dates:

Tuesday, January 6: 4K and 3K classes resume

Friday, January 9: Toddler Time resumes

Friday, January 23: No 3K or 4K Classes; end of first semester

TREASURER'S REPORT

BALANCE SHEET	11/30/2025	10/31/2025	12/31/2024
General Fund	8,681	2,157	35,757
Building Capital Fund	19,366	19,764	26,603
Mortgage Designated Fund	9,206	3,472	0
Other Designated Funds	77,959	77,107	78,674
Mortgage	(115,426)	(115,426)	0
TOTAL	(214)	(12,926)	141,034

CASH FLOW	November 2025	2025 YTD
General Fund Income	34,012	288,757
Transfers		6,000
General Fund Expenses		
Mission and Outreach	1,934	21,823
Personnel	20,165	203,643
Congregational Life	1,423	19,968
Facilities and Administration	4,065	76,398
Total General Fund Expenses	27,587	321,832
Net General Fund Gain (Loss)	6,425	(27,075)
Building Capital Fund	775	32,329
Designated Funds	8,457	90,883
Total Other Income	9,232	123,212
Other Expenses		
Building Capital Fund	1,174	39,566
Designated Funds	1,723	191,818
Transfer to General Fund	0	6,000
Total Other Expenses	2,897	237,384
Net Gain (Loss) from Other Expenses	6,335	(114,172)
NET GAIN (LOSS)	12,760	(141,247)

TREASURER’S REPORT Cont.

General fund income in November was \$34,012. Thank you! Expenses were \$27,587, resulting in a general fund gain of \$6,425. At month’s end we had \$13,337 in cash against \$4,656 in liabilities for a general fund balance of \$8,681. Expenses continue to track closely with our budgeted estimates, setting aside the temporarily lower personnel expenses due to the pastoral vacancy over the summer. (Congregational life is a little higher because of the supply pastors needed during the vacancy.) But giving remains under projections. Giving trends will play a large role in determining the compensation package we’ll be able to offer to a prospective senior pastor.

BUDGET TRACKING	2025 YTD	2025 vs Budget	2025 vs 2024
General Fund Income	288,757	(64,471)	(50,744)
General Fund Expenses			
Mission and Outreach	21,823	(1,006)	(436)
Personnel	203,643	(26,520)	(35,559)
Congregational Life	19,968	2,418	5,782
Facilities and Administration	76,398	(3,085)	523
Total General Fund Expenses	321,832	(28,193)	(679)

Our mortgage will be recast on December 14 from an interest-only construction loan to a 3-year ARM with a 20-year amortization, at 6.75%. That’s a little lower than expected because of the recent drop in interest rates. Our monthly payment will be \$868, and we will be looking to apply additional donations to principal to get the balance down as quickly as possible. We received \$775 for the building fund, and spent \$1,174 on HVAC repairs. Benevolence for October raised \$880 for local health care through Our Lady of Hope and Community Connections, and \$98 for Divine Savior. Other designated income included \$6,429 for the mortgage, \$802 for youth, \$200 for the kitchen, and \$48 unspecified. Designated fund expenses included \$786 for benevolence, \$695 in mortgage interest, \$145 for the library, \$50 for music, and \$47 for the kitchen. A correction is needed to the November 2025 report: the YTD income for the designated funds was reported as \$74,669 when it should have been \$82,426.

Respectfully submitted by Ben Brothers, December 4, 2025.

BENEVOLENCE

Standing with our sister church

Each January, we begin our Benevolence calendar by lifting up our longstanding sister church, Iglesia Luterana Divino Salvador (Divine Savior), located in Cataño, Puerto Rico — a small but resilient coastal community just across the bay from Old San Juan.

Cataño is the smallest municipality in Puerto Rico by land area, yet home to more than 23,000 residents and a deep sense of local identity. Long known as *“the town that refused to die,”* Cataño has weathered economic challenges, hurricanes, and the pressures of urban density with remarkable perseverance. The daily ferry linking Cataño to Old San Juan is both a literal and symbolic reminder of the community’s connection, resilience and rhythm of life.

Divino Salvador serves this vibrant, close-knit community as part of a long Lutheran presence in Puerto Rico that dates back to the early 1900s, when Lutheran missionaries and Puerto Rican leaders worked together to establish congregations, train local pastors, and build enduring ministries rooted in faith and service. Today, Divino Salvador continues that tradition — offering spiritual grounding, stability and care in the midst of ongoing challenges.

For more than a decade, our congregation has been honored to walk alongside Divino Salvador as a sister church, sharing experiences, prayer and mutual encouragement as Lutheran communities seeking to make a difference locally and globally. When we launched our Benevolence Program, we made a commitment to support Divine Savior in two ways: through a **dedicated month of contributions** and by designating **10% of our total annual Benevolence giving** to their ministry. That support through our 2025 contributions will total **more than \$3,000** — funds that play an outsized role in helping Divino Salvador maintain its church facility and cover essential operational costs. That financial stability allows the congregation to stay focused on what matters most: serving the people of Cataño with faith, presence, and hope.

As we begin another year of Benevolence, we give thanks for our partnership with Divino Salvador and for the resilient community it serves — and we recommit ourselves to walking together in Christ’s work, near and far.

Please view our entire list of 2026 missions for our 14th year of the Benevolence Program, listed below — where you can also find our collection totals for the first 11 months of 2025.

BENEVOLENCE Cont.

We'll be collecting donations for Divino Salvador throughout January. You can contribute via:

- **Mail:** Send a check to ELC and note "Benevolence" in the memo
- **Online:** Visit the ELC website and click "Give"
- **Digitally:** Download the "GivePlus Church" mobile app, or text "Benevolence" to 608-400-0183 with the amount you wish to give.

On behalf of Benevolence,

Adam Mertz

adammertz2@gmail.com

2026 BENEVOLENCE MISSIONS

January: Divine Savior, our sister church in Puerto Rico

February: Compassion International

March: Pastor's discretionary fund

April: ELC youth programming

May: Reconciling in Christ (RIC)

June: Solstice House

July: Lutheran Social Services

August: Kiva

September: SABA, International

October: Neighbors Helping Neighbors

November: Accessible local health care: Our Lady of Hope and
Community Connections

December: Madison Area Jail Ministry

2025 BENEVOLENCE MISSIONS

January (\$1,842): Divine Savior, our sister church in Puerto Rico

February (\$1,400): Compassion International

March (\$1,245): ELC youth programming

April (\$1,089): Reconciling in Christ

May (\$1,009): Neighbors Helping Neighbors

June (\$769): Madison Area Jail Ministry

BENEVOLENCE Cont.

2025 BENEVOLENCE MISSIONS Cont.

July (\$634): Literacy Network

August (\$824): Habitat for Humanity

September (\$2,799): Saba, International

October (\$778): Lutheran Campus Ministry

November (\$978): Accessible local health care: Our Lady of Hope and Community Connections

December: Young Adults in Global Mission

(Additionally, 10% of all funds donated each

SABA INTERNATIONAL

We were overwhelmed by the response to Saba International's Benevolence presentation last fall. "Thank you" seems insufficient when so many folks come forward to support children half way around the world in Kenya. But those beautiful children, their families, and their teachers and caregivers do thank you for your faithfulness and show it regularly by praying for all of us here at ELC.

If you wish to read an update on all of Saba's organizations, there are letters on the bulletin board by the nursery, help yourself.

Helen Kahl, Treasurer, Saba, International

COUNCIL

HAPPY NEW YEAR – 2026!!!

As a congregation, we experienced lots of challenges and change in 2025. Many within the congregation stepped forward and dealt with these challenges head on. If you think about it, this is just what each of us do every day in our fluid yet changing lives. We know that God is guiding us through every challenge and change. Each of our ministry groups are now planning and working toward the needs of the church and congregation for 2026. Two of those ministry groups are the Personnel Committee and the Endowment Fund.

The Personnel Committee members are Sandra and Shawn Cannon – Co-chairs, Sue Kaletka – Secretary, Jim Mavis and Jody Morey. This group is now meeting regularly to review all position descriptions and policies to assure that the work environment at ELC is positive for all staff.

The Endowment Fund committee members are Jody Morey – Chair, Steve Hall, Kate Hook, Deb Schneider and myself as Treasurer. This Fund was established in 1981. At that time, the Fund was large enough to not only distribute benevolent gifts to organizations but also allowed the Endowment Fund to provide loans to other churches for building projects. The Endowment Fund provides on-going donations to benevolent organizations that are organized and operated to carry on Christian beliefs to support their work. In the past, this fund has received several contributions from estates as well which leaves a legacy for that person. The amount of the fund is approximately \$ 122,000.

May you have a blessed and happy 2026. Let us face all future changes and challenges with grace, kindness and guidance from Lord and Savior.

In Christ,

Ann Baumgartner

Church Council member

Liaison to Personnel Committee and Endowment Fund

January 2026

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mt. Horeb

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 9am Sewing Group	2	5:00 pm Worship/Chapel COMMUNION 3
9 am Worship 4 COMMUNION 10:15-11am Sunday School	5	6 9:30-11am Baby Caps-Faith Rm 9:30 Text Study Matthew Agape 3K & 4K resume	7 9:30-11am Coffee Time FH 7-8:30 pm 7 th & 8 th Grade Confirmation	8 9am Sewing Group	9 Agape Toddler Time Resumes	10 5:00 pm Worship/Chapel Council Retreat 9am-noon
9 am Worship 11 10:15-11am Sunday School Following Worship Endowment Committee meeting Benevolence Divine Savior Last day to order Troll Way Pizza	12 6pm-Church Council Matthew Rm 6-8 pm Transition Team Faith Rm	13 9:30 Text Study Matthew	14 7-8 pm 7 th & 8 th Grade Confirmation	15 9am Sewing Group	16	5:00 pm 17 Worship/Chapel COMMUNION 8 am-1 pm Indoor Farmer's Market
9 am Worship 18 COMMUNION 10:15-11am Sunday School 10:30-11:30 am New Member Conversations	19	20 9:30-11am Baby Caps-Faith Rm 9:30 Text Study Matthew 7 pm Sarah Circle Matthew	21 10 am Rebecca Circle Homestead 7-8:30 pm 7 th & 8 th Grade Confirmation Bowling at Norsk	22 9am Sewing Group Steeple Echoes Submissions Due	23 4-5 pm 2026 Mission Trip Meet & Eat 5:30-8 pm Parents Night Out Agape No 3K or 4K	24 No Worship Service 9:30-11 am Annual Usher's Meeting FH RIC Weekend
9 am Worship 25 10:15-11am Sunday School Following Worship Spiritual Growth & Fellowship meets RIC Weekend	26	27 9am Steeple Echoes Assembly 9:30 Text Study Matthew	28 7-8 pm 7 th & 8 th Grade Confirmation	29 9am Sewing Group	30 Blood Drive 1-6 pm ELC	31 5:00 pm Worship/Chapel COMMUNION

COUNCIL Cont.

RECAP OF DEC 8, 2025 MEETING.

Pastor Karen opened with devotions and prayer asking the Council:

1. Which of ELC's council's accomplishments are we most proud?
 - a. Bringing on Pastor Karen
 - b. Supply pastors over the summer
 - c. Dianne stepping up to be council president when Mark retired
2. What would we do differently if we could go back and do it over?
 - a. Anticipate the gaps when Pastor John left (Thank you, Brenda, for filling in on technology.
3. What opportunities await?
 - a. Looking forward to transition and constitution teams' direction
 - b. New Personnel Committee
 - c. Getting a better handle on committees' roles
 - d. Transition presents new opportunities-these are also the challenges

Pastor Report: Pastor Karen reported a busy month with one-week vacation. Vivian Stone's graveside service. Met with entire Rebecca Circle. Communion service at Lincoln Court is coming up. Evening Thanksgiving service on Wednesday before was very well received. Met with Worship and Music and then sent out drafts of Christmas Eve services. Met with transition team, reviewing past annual reports. They'll be doing another update in the new year. Will meet with Jim Cook and Matt Anderson about stewardship. Monthly meeting with other synod interims. Pastor Karen's 3-month review: We went over her contract, and all agreed to continue.

Treasurer's Report: Ben reported ELC received approximately \$86,000. from the Max Rosenbaum estate. He asked whether we should use it to pay down the mortgage or split the money between the mortgage and other needs. Barb Underwood (Max's niece-in-law) said Max would fully approve of paying down the mortgage.

DISCUSSION: Some other suggestions were:

1. Putting some in reserve for a future mortgage
2. Tech items (recommendations from Andy are forthcoming.)
3. Use something outside ELC

COUNCIL Cont.

4. Continue Conversation

New Business: Diane Bartz is requesting Council approval to have FDMH come in and do AED/CPR training and ELC provide a donation. Dianne Hirsch contacted FDMH. They don't do CPR training for the community, It was pointed out that CPR could potentially involve liability (not noticing a person was wearing a DNR bracelet). Decided to just have AED training.

Other Business:

1. Disaster Recovery Plan:

- a. Does ELC have a disaster recovery plan? Not to anyone's knowledge.
- b. Does computer back-up to off-site server? Dianne will check with Nancy.
- c. Are there examples of other churches' disaster recovery plans?
Pastor Karen will check with the synod office to see if they have any information.

2. Mutual Ministries vs: Personnel Committee, need clarification on the respective duties of each committee. They work collaboratively but are separate. At ELC, the Mutual Ministry historically supported the pastor. There should be a place for staff to go and talk. This group would meet only when needed, but pastoral support should meet regularly.

3. Review of Church Constitution: Ben and Dawn Haag have reviewed the constitution and made notes. He wondered what is the overall structure of the church (personnel, congregation, chain of command, etc.) Ben feels the Constitution should have some guidelines as to how to handle personnel matters. We need clarification as to people's roles and responsibilities. Kathy said that a flow chart was made at one time and will try to locate it. Ben will send us and the synod what they have done so far, and we'll look at it at the council retreat in January. He pointed out that we are held to the current constitution until a new constitution is in place.

Next meeting **Council Retreat SATURDAY, January 10, 2026, 9:00AM to Noon, Fellowship Hall. Council meeting Monday, January 12, 2026 at 6:00PM** in Matthew room with Finance and Budget committee.

WOMEN OF ELC

Attention: Women of ELC

Join us at the 2026 Women of ELCA 13th Triennial Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa!

July 16-19, 2026

The Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering takes place every three years and gathers 1500-3000 women leaders, participants, and newcomers for four days of worship, inspiring speakers, workshops, service projects, and more!

We invite you to join with our ministry as we seek to nourish women's faith and love and to inspire women to proclaim their identity, intent, and actions.

The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is "I Am Worthy," based on Psalm 139:14: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." This statement serves as a reminder of God's promise to be with us, even in times of devastation and division. By repeating the phrase "I am worthy," we can recognize the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives. This practice of self-affirmation opens up opportunities for healing and restoration within ourselves, our church, society, and the world. When we declare, "I am worthy," we align ourselves with God's promises. There is great power in our resolve.

If you choose not to drive to Des Moines, the Synodical Women's Organization has organized a bus so we can all travel together. The bus will pick up in Madison at the Dutch Mill Park & Ride, Platteville (Walmart parking lot), and Dubuque (Marriott Downtown) on July 16 and return on July 19. The cost is \$150 round trip, or deposit \$75 to reserve a seat now and the remaining \$75 by May 31. May be transferred but not refunded. Simply send a check for the bus transportation to:

WELCA

Sandy Seffrood

8329 County Road D

South Wayne WI 53587

Visit welcatg.org for news and to register.

WOMEN OF ELC Cont.

I attended the 2014 Triennial in Charlotte, North Carolina and returned home with renewed inspiration and joy. I talked with women from all over the United States and other countries. In talking, we found we had some connections, e.g. one person's cousin (that I knew) lived in Mt. Horeb, a woman who led one of the workshops was a sister to one of my high school classmates. Although I went by myself to Charlotte I did not feel alone. I was surrounded by strong women who had a love of God and wanted to strengthen their relationship with him. That gathering was uplifting with the bible studies, the Bishop's message, workshops and the closing worship. I would highly recommend attending this event – either by yourself or get a group of women together to go on this journey. You are worthy!

Ann Baumgartner



New Year, New Start for Spiritual Growth & Fellowship!

The Spiritual Growth & Fellowship Committee is planning a meeting in January. Please consider attending if you're interested in joining the committee or just want to offer ideas to the group. Our goals are to foster relationships among those participating in events and encourage folks to experience spirituality in new ways. We will meet on **Sunday January 25th** after worship.

TECHNOLOGY

Join the Tech Team!

Our Technology Ministry plays a vital role in worship each week—running sound, projection, and livestreaming, and keeping our equipment running smoothly. No prior experience is needed—training is provided, and there are both Sunday and weekday opportunities. If you'd like to serve, please contact Andy or Bruce, or leave a note in the church office.

PRAYER list

PLEASE PRAY FOR Jill Knuteson, Kathy Sies, Jennifer Hubert (Mary Meister's niece) Mike (Stick) Hirsch (Dianne's brother), Bryan Greve, Dani Sue Schroeder, Pauline Blum (Mary Meister's Aunt), Ruth Ann Nemet, Paul & Lois Kersch (Amy Thompson's parents), Paul Baum, Dolores Kahl, John Scheele & family (Char Smith's Brother in Law), Ken Rabideau (Helen Ladwig's Brother in Law), Joyce Fargo, Alycen McKinney, Joan Schraepfer (Rita Schraepfer-Derke's Sister in Law), Norm Hefty, Lincoln Kuhn, Ginger Quaderer (Diane Mueller's cousin), Makenzee Smith, Brock Howe, Jeannie U'Ren, Mike Olson, Carol Johnson

Our partner congregation IGLESIA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DIVINO SALVADOR (Divine Savior Lutheran Church) in Cataño,

MEMORIALS

Given For:

Sara Kittleson

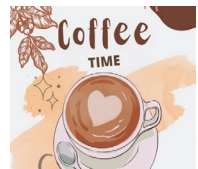
Given By:

Ann & Dave Baumgartner

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

ELC 'COFFEE TIME' 9:30 - 11 am - Join us for Coffee Time on the first Wednesday of each month in Fellowship Hall. Stop by for coffee and conversation.

Future dates: Jan 7th & Feb 4th
Come whenever you can.



CHURCH COUNCIL will meet on **Monday, January 12 at 6 pm** in the Matthew room.

ELC SEWING GROUP - wishes everyone a very blessed New Year. We are very appreciative of the on-going donations of sheets and blankets which fuel our quilting process. Since shipping in September, we have made 49 quilts for the 2026 In-Gathering. We meet every **Thursday morning from 9:00 am to Noon** in Fellowship Hall.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS Cont.

BABY CAPS - will meet **Tuesday Jan. 6 and 20, 9:30-11:00 in the Faith Room.** Meriter Hospital is always grateful for the caps we contribute! Contact Ruth at ruthheinecke@gmail.com for more information

REBECCA CIRCLE will meet at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 21st at Homestead. We will be watching Liz Curtis Higgs Youtube from Monday, January 19th.

INDOOR FARMER'S MARKET Saturday, January 17th
from 8am – 1pm at ELC

SARAH CIRCLE will meet on **Tues, Jan 20th at 7 pm in the Matthew Room.** We will do the January Bible Study from the "Gather" magazine, starting on page 26. Always welcoming new faces and those we haven't seen lately too. If you need help locating the Bible study materials you can email Connie Curran at this address: curranconnie@hotmail.com.

NEW MEMBER CONVERSATIONS –

When? Sunday, January 18th (10:30-11:30am)

Where? In Room: Matthew

We welcome anyone who has been attending worship at ELC and wants to learn more... anyone who is interested in joining our ELC membership ...anyone who simply wishes to join in on the conversations 😊

- *What does it mean to be “the church” in the world today?*
- *What does it mean to be “Lutheran”?*
- *What is distinctive about the ELCA... our teachings and understandings?*
- *What makes ELC distinct / special?*
- *How can you be part of and support this ministry?*

ANNUAL USHER'S MEETING

The meeting for all ushers, and for all congregation members who are interested in serving as ushers, will be held as follows:

Date: Saturday, January 24

Time: 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Fellowship Hall

There is a growing need for more ushers and we heartily encourage anyone interested in serving the congregation in this capacity to attend this meeting. Refreshments will be served and a good time had by all! For those seeking more detailed information, contact Jim Cook (mthorebcubfan@gmail.com)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS Cont.

RECONCILING IN CHRIST WEEKEND

As we gather for worship on **Saturday, January 24 @ 5:00pm or Sunday, January 25 @ 9:00am**, we will, with other RIC congregations across our synod and beyond, “*Celebrate Diversity as God’s Children.*” I’ve invited Pastors Loren and Linda Schumacher to be our guest preachers. They’ve served as co-pastors for over 40 years (a few years back they shared an interim at Two Steeples Parish in Mt. Horeb and Blue Mounds – perhaps your paths crossed?!). They are passionate about our Christian calling to be intentionally inclusive of and welcoming of all God’s children. I am so happy they are able to share this weekend of worship with us.

Pastor Karen

BLOOD DRIVE Friday, January 30th from 1 pm -6 pm at ELC

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Made in prayer... as prayer... for prayer, these shawls are to be passed on hand-to-hand and heart-to-heart.

If you know someone who is struggling... someone who is hurting... someone who is feeling alone or unseen, consider giving them a Prayer Shawl – made with love by members of our congregation. With this simple gift, they are reminded—in a tangible way—of our love and care for them... and of God’s unconditional love and presence as well. (**Prayer Shawls are found on a rack in Fellowship Hall).

BY THE NUMBERS: Funerals and luncheons July 2021 through December 2025

Following reopening after the pandemic, Sign-up Genius was initiated to use for getting helpers for funerals and other activities that require kitchen help.

The first funeral was for Helen Martinson on July 2, 2021. Since that funeral, we’ve hosted so far, through 2025, 48 funerals plus one other serving event, Micah Sieg’s ordination ceremony which is included in these numbers.

This has netted a total of 680 helpers! What an outpouring of volunteers! Of that number, 87 different persons have helped. Many have served multiple events but are listed one each.

Volunteers do make a difference! Anyone is welcome to Sign-up to help with this important outreach activity of ELC! Requests are always sent out via email from the ELC member list. Please add your name to the list!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS Cont.

Registration for LEAD 2026 Opens January 5, 2026!

Get ready! Registration for the 2026 LEAD Conference will open on **Monday, January 5, 2026.** The **2026 LEAD Conference** for rostered and lay leaders is: **Saturday, February 7, 2026, 9:00am to 3:30pm**
Messiah Lutheran Church in Madison
(5202 Cottage Grove Rd., Madison)

Our keynote speaker is Grace Pomroy, Director of the Stewardship Leaders Program at Luther Seminary and author of the excellent book, *Funding Forward: A Pathway to More Sustainable Models for Ministry.*

LEAD is the SCSW's annual conference for both rostered and lay leaders, offering an opportunity to come together for learning, worship, fellowship, and more. Many more details are yet to come, including the line-up of workshop opportunities. Stay tuned!



Winter Hours

Monday – Thursday 9am – Noon and 1-4pm
Fridays – 9am – Noon

STEEPLE ECHOES ARTICLES DUE BY Thursday, January 22nd for the February issue of the newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED on Tuesday, January 27th at 9am to assemble the newsletter. *Newcomers are welcome.* The assembly process usually takes about 2 hours. Please, come and enjoy the fellowship!



WEEKLY EMAIL SIGN UP -Do you receive our weekly church updates and digital newsletters? At ELC of Mt Horeb, we are able to share important information to everyone quickly by email. If you aren't receiving our emails, we encourage you to sign up through our

website. Go to elcmthoreb.org and click on the Email Signup image on the top right, add your name, email and phone number, then SUBMIT. We want to include everyone.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS SCHEDULE

	JAN 3 rd & 4 th	JAN 10 th & 11 th	JAN 17 th & 18 th	JAN 24 th & 25 th	JAN/FEB 31 st & 1 st
ACOLYTES	Sunday Sarah Zelle Leah Aeschlimann	Sunday Logan Aeschlimann Colby Johanning	Sunday Brooklyn Kreul Scarlett Ploessl	Sunday Evelyn Rameker Gabe Sadler	Sunday Parker Woolard Willie Wyse
COMM ASSIST	Sunday	No Communion	Sunday	No Communion	No Communion
READERS	Saturday Ann Baumgartner Sunday Helen Kahl	Saturday Bonny Kellogg Sunday Ben Brothers	Saturday Available Sunday Helen Kahl	Saturday Available Sunday Available	Saturday Ann Baumgartner Sunday Available
USHERS	Sunday Jim Cook Mary Gullickson- Krantz	Sunday Mary & Wayne Knudson	Sunday Doug Nesheim Gerald Stamn	Sunday John & Carol Nielsen	Sunday Betsy Baguhn Jody Morey
ALTAR GUILD	January -Cathie Field, Sara Hellenbrand, Laura Miller, Sharon Schiefelbein, Amy Kellesvig February Deb Dangerfield, Shannon Hadac, Judy Steinhauer, Joan Stensby, Jessica Powell				
COUNCIL DUTIES	January -Ann Baumgartner February Kathy O'Donnell				



JANUARY

Birthdays

1	Pat Boettcher	12	Mae Jean Zelle	23	Alexa Vesely
	Jayne Martinson	13	Devin Kahl	24	Samantha Bower
	Debby Schneider		Kim Kelliher		Morgan Monroe
3	Jim Iverson		Breanna Nesheim		
	James Morey	14	Steve Hall	25	Sarah Brothers
	Michael Powell		Pamela Larson		Robin Paske
4	Sandra Cannon		Kathy O'Donnell		Aaron Schmidt
	Zach Klassy	15	Skylaar Killinger	26	Larry Jenkins
			Christine Rinabarger		LeAnn Klaetsch
5	Amanda Field	16	Helen Kahl		Stacy Kreul
	Ross Nesheim		Renee Littel		
	Colin Schulz		Bob Schiefelbein	27	Tim Anderson
	Amber Schulz	17	Nancy Breed		Megan Ferrell
6	Kaylie Appleby		John Rosenbaum		Gabriel Guenther
	Gordy Kahl	18	Jaclyn Errthum		Hadley Kahl
	Ethan Wittman		Erik Iverson		Graham Schloesser
7	Grace Hanson		Ashley Segebrecht		
	Andrew Knudson		Kevin Thorsen	28	Kari Hustad
	Alycen McKinney	19	Ingrid Malin		Michael Miller
			Cord Spellman		Owen Rothamer
8	Daniel Edwards				
	Ken Schulenberg	20	Beverly Jewell	29	Valerie Fischer
			Evelyn Rameker		Rodney Fisher
9	Leah Gaulke		Karen Stamn		Logan Heiting
	Stacy LaBorde				
		21	Paul Heinecke	30	Kristine Aeschlimann
10	Lydia Martin		Ethan Sutter		
	Amy Mertz		Kristin Willcutt	31	Theresa Bender
	Mack Racklin		Franklin Willcutt		Deb Dangerfield
	Ethan Stange				Jenafer Festge
		22	Diane Mueller		Tim Killinger
11	Matt Anderson		Sonja Rosborough		Jeff Rasmussen
	Patricia Ellestad		Karen Tetzlaff		Kimberly Sailor
	Lisbeth Gibney				Sara Thompson

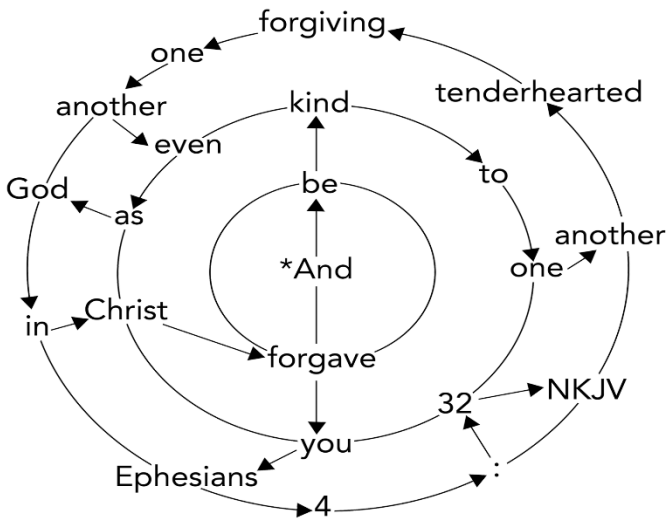
If we've missed you or a member of your family, or if we've listed your birthday incorrectly, please contact the church office.

Puzzle!

This Bible verse teaches an important lesson about how we should treat others — and why.



Start with the asterisk in the center circle and follow the arrows.
Write the words in order on the blanks below.



"And _____ ,

_____."



315 East Main St.
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STEEPLE ECHOES is the monthly newsletter of
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members & friends of the congregation.

Pastor Karen Hofstad

Ministers: All Members of the Church

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