



The Vasa Voice



VOLUME 61 No. 2

FEBRUARY 2026



What's Happening This Month at Vasa

February 8th— New Member Reception

(If you would like to join the Vasa Congregation contact Pastor Maureen as soon as possible)

February 12th—Vasa Family Night

February 22nd—Annual Meeting

(See page 2 for details.)

April 23rd—24th



Plans are underway for the next Vasa Rummage Sale! Tell your neighbors, relatives and friends!

Item Drop-off begins April 19th
Questions?

Call Faye Drewianka
651-212-3209

Here's what's on the inside...

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Worship Volunteers for FEBRUARY

USHER

February 1 Bruce Tilderquist
 February 8 Duane Hanson
 February 15 Rick Samuelson
 February 18 ***Volunteer Needed***
 February 22 Tim Carlson

READERS

February 1 Katie Featherstone
 February 8 Barry Skog
 February 15 Sid Featherstone
 February 18 Ben Norman
 February 22 Tim Carlson

HOSPITALITY

February 1 Audrey Rosener
 February 8 B-J Norman
 February 15 Lora Gruber
 February 22 ***Volunteer Needed***

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

February 1 Barry Skog
 February 15 Marcia Featherstone
 February 18 Katie Featherstone



Vasa's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, February 22nd right after church. We need a quorum of 40 people in order to approve the budget for the next year, so please plan to attend!



Josie Finne	Feb. 3
Connor Hyllengren	Feb. 3
Chantz Nelson	Feb. 3
Parker Anderson	Feb. 5
Gloria Featherstone	Feb. 6
Cynthia Gianoli	Feb. 6
Mike Bauch	Feb. 7
Elleanor Diercks	Feb. 7
Ben Norman	Feb. 7
Lorrie Samuelson	Feb. 8
Taylor Carlson	Feb. 10
Shelley Evanson	Feb. 10
Maddisyn Safe	Feb. 10
Donna Bignell	Feb. 12
Jessica Anderson	Feb. 15
Garrett Samuelson	Feb. 15
Kathi Pearson	Feb. 18
Dora Boe	Feb. 19
Josh Erhardt	Feb. 19
Faye Drewianka	Feb. 21
Larissa Fredin	Feb. 22
Chance Rehder	Feb. 22
Michele Rehder	Feb. 22
Kyle Gillis	Feb. 23
Dawn Lindstrom	Feb. 24
Bob Sammelson	Feb. 25
Lucy Sense	Feb. 26
Oliver Erhardt	Feb. 26
Emmett Pearson	Feb. 27



Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

Isaiah 43:1-2 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

The prophet Isaiah wrote these words to a people who were living in exile in Babylon. They remembered the difficult journey to get to Babylon as they trudged over desert sands and forded dangerous rivers. They also believed the promise of God that they would eventually be allowed to return to their homes in Israel. Because of these memories they were both apprehensive and hopeful.

The prophet Isaiah brought encouraging words to them. First, do not be afraid. Second remember that you belong to God. Third, an acknowledgment that although the journey will be difficult, that God will be with them.

Vasa Congregation is about to embark on the journey of finding new pastor. God's words apply to this congregation just as they did to the Israelites.

First, do not be afraid. It's easy to be apprehensive, especially when there is so much turmoil in the world around us. Recently Bishop Hassanally reminded us that God's word encourages us exactly when we are stressed and anxious. We should strive to avoid fear.

Second, remember that Vasa Congregation belongs to God. God may have used God's servant Dr. Norelius to establish this place, but God is also the one who poured out the Holy Spirit upon every member and every pastor that served here so that this congregation might thrive.

Third, I acknowledge that my retirement means that you are going to undergo a bit of testing. There will be a void that will need to be filled. It might feel a bit like you are walking through fire. But God reassures us that if that should be the case, "you shall not be burned."

Vasa Congregation has always relied on God to lead it into the future and into new endeavors. Remember the orphanages that were established which led to Lutheran Social Services. Remember the thousands of people that this congregation fed through the Community Dinners. There will be new opportunities and new endeavors to participate in God's work in the world and your new pastor will help you.

Blessings to you in the new year,
Pastor Maureen



VASA FAMILY NIGHT

Wednesday, February 11th

5:30-7:00 pm

Vasa Lutheran Center

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: GOODNESS

Please join us for

Hot Chicken Sandwiches

&

Baked Beans

Activities for the Kids

Short Devotional



“TRUST IN THE LORD AND DO GOOD.” PSALMS 37:3



VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

December 8, 2025 @ Lutheran Church

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm by Bryan Diercks, President

Devotions: Pastor Maureen

Members present and absent:

Present: Pastor Maureen Hagen, Pastor; Bryan Diercks, President; Randy Klein, Vice President; Kent Volz; Mo Hauck; Sue Samuelson; and Andrew Featherstone, Secretary;

7 voting members present

Unable to attend: Tim Carlson; Barbara Weigman; Missy McCann; and Chris Finne;

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the December 8, 2025 council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2025 council meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

Treasurer's Report (Attached)

The checkbook balance ended the month of November at \$60,767.43. Vasa started the month at \$61,026.47.

Church Upkeep fund will be used towards stain glass windows. Rummage Sale Funds will also be used for windows.

Finance Report (Attached)

Vasa will run Holiday Worship ads in the Cannon Falls Beacon and the Red Wing Eagle for one week. The cost of both papers is \$200.00.

Giving statements were mailed November 20.

Parish Life (Attached)

Family Fun Night will be on Dec 10th. The theme will be on Patience.

Children's Christmas Program will be on Dec. 21st at 10:00 AM.

Christmas Eve Services will take place at

2:00 PM and 5:00 PM.

Take down tree and put decorations away after worship on Dec 28th.

Lenten worship will take place in the gym beginning on (Ash Wednesday) February 18th.

Property Team (Attached)

Windows are ordered for the Lutheran Center bathrooms.

We are looking into getting estimates for the Church doors. Kathy will reach out to the Amish and see if we can get an estimate.

Cemetery Board (NA)

Executive Board Report (NA)

Pastor's Report) Attached)

Dale Anderson funeral was held on Nov. 14th

7th and 8th grade confirmation unit on "Superheroes of the Old Testament" was completed on November 19th.

We witnessed the affirmation of faith for three young women of the congregation: Marissa Mandelkow, Kennedy McCann, and Bella Otto on November 16th.

Hazel Rohloff was baptized on Nov 23rd.

The season of Epiphany runs from January 4th through February 15th.

Museum Board (NA)

Endowment Board Report (NA)

Tabled Business:

New Business:

January meeting Dates: (Tentative schedule)

Property: Monday January 5th @4:00pm

Finance: Sunday January 4th @10:00am

Parish Life: Monday January 12th @5:30pm

Council: Monday January 12th @6:00pm Devotions: Missy McCann

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:15 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Report submitted by: Andrew Featherstone, Secretary



Dear Vasa Lutheran Church,

Thank you for donating cleaning & hygiene supplies to HOPE Coalition!

We appreciate your generosity and continued support

From all of us at HOPE!



Thank you for your gift of \$825 to the Cannon Falls Food Shelf

-Cannon Falls Food Shelf Board

CHURCH COUNCIL

President: Bryan Diercks, 507-259-3909
bryanddiercks@protonmail.com

Vice President: Randy Klein 651-212-8045
rdelmark@outlook.com

Secretary: Andrew Featherstone 651-470-9823
rwfeatherstonepainting@gmail.com

Tim Carlson 651-442-5066
Chris Finne 651-380-3690
Maureen Hauck 651-331-8593
Missy McCann 651-307-2274
Sue Samuelson 907-250-4103
Kent Volz 651-402-0942
Barbara Weigman 507-202-7880

WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Indoors: Andrew Featherstone 651-470-9823

Kitchen: Sue Hedeon 651-380-6270
Faye Drewianka 651-212-3209

Outdoors: Duane Hanson 651-380-1763
Steve Hyllengren 651-258-4338

VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Treasurer's Report
December 30, 2025

For the Month of December:

Checkbook Balance, Dec 1, 2025	\$ 60,767.43
General Fund Contributions:	31,424.89
Mission Endowment Offering	8,300.00
Total Funds Available	100,512.32
Budget Approved Monthly Expenses:	<u>(22,168.76)</u>
Checkbook Balance, Dec 30, 2025	\$ 78,343.56

Thrivent Choice Dollars



Procedure to direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Vasa:

1. Open your computer browser and enter: Thrivent.com
2. Log in to your personal account
3. Select: Membership Overview
4. Select: Thrivent Choice
5. Select: Direct Choice Dollars
6. Check your eligibility
7. Direct your choice dollars to: Vasa Lutheran Church
 1. If possible, print the Donated Dollars page from the Printer Friendly box
 2. Put your name at the top of the page as well as how you want your dollars directed—giving to the Gazebo fund would be much appreciated right now.
 3. Give a copy to the church treasurer or leave it in the church office.

Ready to give back?

The choice is yours.

Questions about Directing your Thrivent Choice Dollars? Contact Faye Drewianka: 651-212-3209.

If you prefer to give your Choice Dollars by phone, call: 1-800-847-4836.

Even if you have done this before, you need to re-do it every year. Dollars must be designated for 2023 by March 31, 2024.

January 15, 2026

To the congregations, members, and friends of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Minnesota:

We, the six ELCA bishops in the state of Minnesota, are writing today with a word we hope will anchor and sustain all of us in the days to come.

In recent weeks, several thousand ICE and Border Patrol agents have been sent to our state. Their tactics of stopping and questioning our neighbors and their aggressive interactions with the communities where we live have caused fear and anxiety. We grieve the killing of Renee Good on January 7.

All of this comes after other experiences of devastating violence in recent months and years.

We are tired, and our hearts are broken. Yet we are not deterred.

At every act of violence, we have seen you respond with compassion and resilience. This has been a season marked by profound grief. It is also a season in which we have refused to be defined by what the baptismal liturgy names as “the forces that defy God.”

To our pastors, deacons, chaplains and ministry leaders, we say this: we are with you. We give thanks for your faithful leadership, for your courage and discernment, and for all the ways you live into the vocation we share. Dear friends, we believe you have been called and anointed for ministry in this time and place. It is our honor to serve with you.

To all members of our congregations, and our neighbors throughout Minnesota, we say this: we commit ourselves to continue to pray, to advocate and act alongside you, and to use the resources and gifts we have to work toward the fulfillment of the reign of God, so that all may know the abundance of life Jesus comes to give (John 10:10). We encourage you to remain connected to one another and actively support the efforts in your communities to meet the needs of those directly impacted in this time of fear and intimidation.

This past Sunday, congregations across our state marked the Baptism of our Lord. It is a celebration and remembrance of the moment when Jesus himself was baptized, and the voice of God broke through the heavens to declare, “This is my Son, the beloved, with him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

We believe the voice of God still speaks. We know that all our neighbors bear the image of God. Through the waters of baptism, we have been named and claimed as beloved chil-

dren of God.

It is our sure confidence in this truth that sustains us. We know we are God’s children, and we know that you are, too. We pray that this truth will continue to anchor, guide and compel all of us as we work for justice for all people in every place.

We also know there are voices around us that challenge the truth of who we are and who our neighbors are. It is our fervent hope that every one of us would remain deeply rooted in our identity as God’s beloved. To that end, we write with a word of encouragement: go to church or your place of worship, ground yourselves in Scripture, and surround yourselves with those who will echo the voice of God for you. This is the nourishment that will sustain us.

Along with Presiding Bishop Curry, we “join calls for a thorough investigation into this case, accountability for the shooting and a de-escalation of ICE enforcement across the United States.”

When the challenges that surround us are overwhelming, we cling to what is true. We serve a God who sees us and who enters into the beauty and messiness of human life in the person of Jesus the Christ. Because of what God in Christ has done, we know that God is with us and we are not alone (Romans 8:38-39).

Until the day the reign of God arrives in full, we continue to work for justice and peace, grounded in prayer, rooted in Scripture, and compelled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In sure and confident hope,

Bishop Regina Hassanally
Southeastern Minnesota Synod

Bishop Patricia Lull
Saint Paul Area Synod

Bishop Jen Nagel
Minneapolis Area Synod

Bishop Amy Odgren
Northeastern Minnesota Synod

Bishop Dee Pederson
Southwestern Minnesota Synod

Bishop Bill Tesch
Northwestern Minnesota Synod

MARK'S MEDITATION

PAUL'S TWO VIEWS OF SALVATION

February 2026

How does salvation work? It would be great to read what Jesus wrote about a subject. But he did not leave us with any writings. Therefore, it is often best to go to our earliest author: Paul. Paul's most "systematic" text is his epistle to the Romans. Here Paul lays out his understanding of the Christian faith; including his understanding of why we need salvation. The thing is, he describes two somewhat divergent ideas for how salvation works.

His first idea, found in chapters 2-5, is the easier one; the one we find in many hymns and sermons. This is the premise that Jesus's death was a payment (atonement) for our shortcomings (sins), and that salvation (from death) comes from faith in this idea.

(Romans NLT translation) ^{2:23} For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice (the atonement) for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. ... ^{5:1} Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. ² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege.

However, starting in chapter 6, Paul goes deeper; and more mystical. Here he describes sin, not as a verb--something you do, but as a noun--a cosmic power that enslaves us.

^{7:17} I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

Paul likely concluded that sin is a noun (a spirit), not a verb, because the 1st century Mediterranean area appeared to be teeming with spirits and de-

mons. He thought "this must be the cause of self-destructive behavior"; the kind of behavior that people appear helpless to resist. Of course, today medical science has moved beyond such superstitions. Yet, Paul's understanding can be a useful metaphor for the divisions we see in American today. We seem to be *helplessly* careening off a cliff. Who will save us?

The good news is that Christ's death and resurrection represent a victory over this cosmic force; one that we get to participate in through baptism.

... ^{6:3} have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. ... ¹¹ you should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

^{6:23} For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here Paul says that God graciously and freely separates us from sin through His son, Jesus Christ. This gift includes eternal life--which, according to Paul, we will receive at the end of time. (Which he thought was coming very, very soon.) In the meantime, Christians are "saved" when they acknowledge this great gift they have received. Paul then connects this to Jesus' teachings of grace and generosity that we get in the Gospels. Paul effectively says that when you truly understand this gift, you will just want to be righteous.

2026 Lenten Focus

The “I Am” Saying’s of Jesus

Ash Wednesday falls on Wednesday, Feb. 18th this year. The season of Lent will commence with a service in the church sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. Our Scripture reading will be John 10:11-14 where Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd.”

This year’s pilgrimage through the season of Lent will include a soup supper at 5:30 in the Lutheran Center. At about 6:00 we will worship by singing Holden Evening Prayer. This service will include a brief meditation on the “I Am” saying of Jesus from the gospel of John.

February 18th— I am the **Good Shepherd** (John 10:11-14)

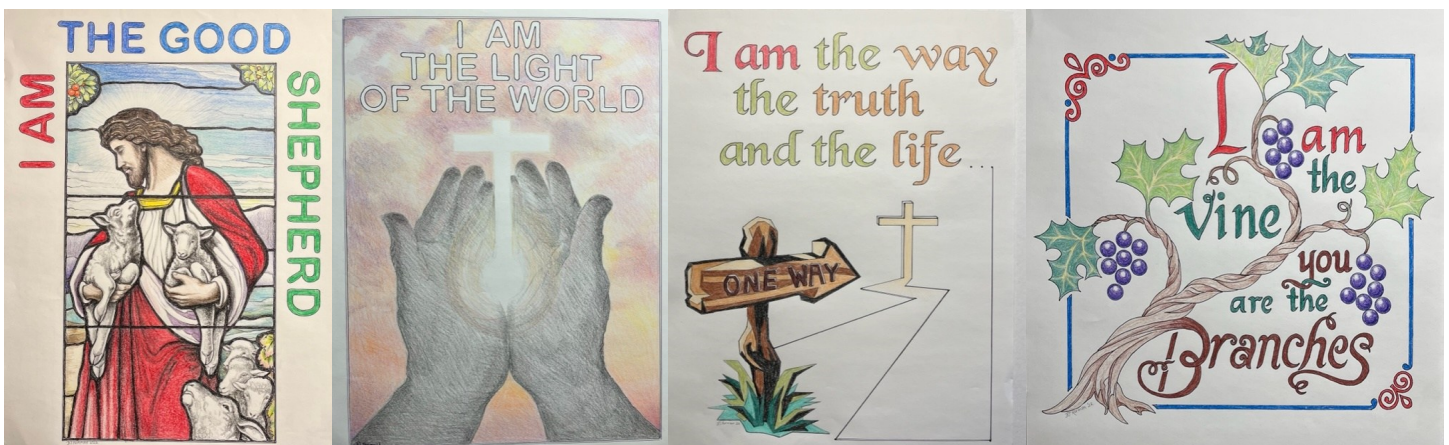
February 25th— I am the **Bread** of Life (John 6:35)


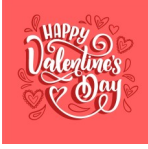

March 4th— I am the **Light** of the world (John 8:12)

March 11th— I am the **Gate/Door** (John 10:9)

March 18th— I am the **Way the Truth and the Life** (John 14:6)

March 25th— I am the **Vine** (John 15:1-5)

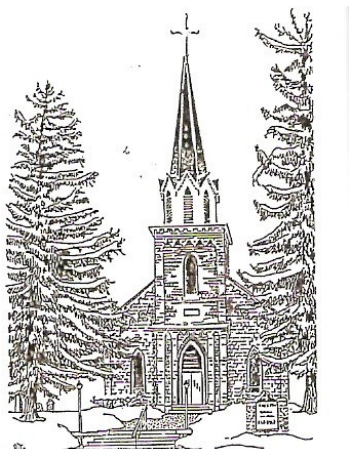


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
1 9AM Service of Holy Communion (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)	2 <u>TEAMS MEET</u> 4 PM PROPERTY 5 PM FINANCE 5:30 PM PARISH LIFE 6 PM CHURCH COUNCIL	3  9:30	4 9:30-11:00AM Women's Bible Study 5:45-6:45 7/8 Confirmation 6:45pm Wednesday Eve Worship	5	6 Pastor's Day Off	7
8 9AM Service of the Word (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)	9	10  9:30	11 5:30-7:00pm Vasa Family Night 5:45-6:45 7/8 Confirmation	12	13 Pastor's Day Off	14 
15 9AM Service of Holy Communion (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center) Cannon River Conference Meeting @2pm	16	17  9:30 Vasa Spring Garden Mutual Annual Meeting @Noon	18 7pm Ash Wednesday Worship @ Sanctuary 9:30-11:00AM Women's Bible Study	19	20 Pastor's Day Off	21
22 9AM Service of the Word (Service + Sunday School at the LC) Annual Meeting follows the church service	23	24  9:30	25 9:30-11:00 Quilts for Grads TBD 7/8 Confirmation 5:30pm Lenten Meal followed by Worship @ Lutheran Center	26	27 Pastor's Day Off	28

VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

15235 NORELIUS ROAD (in Vasa)

WELCH, MN 55089



Historic Vasa Lutheran Church Built in 1869

(Vasa Drawing by B-J Norman)

Worship Schedule

9:00AM Sundays (also live-streamed)

Wednesday Evening Worship

6:30pm Holy Communion + Everyday Bible Conversation
(Fellowship Room of Lutheran Center)

Executive Team

Bryan Diercks, Council President 507.259.3909

Randy Klein, Council Vice President 651.212.8045

Andrew Featherstone, Council Secretary 651.470.9823

Pastor Maureen Hagen

pastor@vasalutheran.org

(Cell) 507.251.5270

Church Office

651.258.4327

Church Staff

Kathy Tilderquist, Treasurer

Preston Parks, Office Administrator

Melissa McCann, Custodian

Anne Anderson, Worship Accompanist

Gail Strusz-Klein, Wedding Coordinator

Vasa Mission Statement

We, the Vasa Congregation,
Called by God, commit to:
Worshipping together,
Growing in Faith,
Serving Others, and
Welcoming and loving all!