

VOLUME 60 No. 1

JANUARY 2024

What's Happening This Month at Vasa

January 3rd—Confirmation classes for 7th / 8th graders resume at 5:45pm in the Lutheran Center. Over the next 9 weeks we will study the Ten Commandments.

January 7th—Sunday School resumes at 9:00am in the Lutheran Center.

January 10th—Vasa Family Night!

January 18th—Annual Reports due

All committees, teams and boards should have their reports turned into the Church Office for the 2023 Annual Report by Thursday, January 18th. Auditors will need all Financial books at this time as well, in order to complete their audits. Your cooperation with this deadline is greatly appreciated.

January 18th -19th — American Red Cross Blood Drive

Vasa will host the next Blood Drive at the Lutheran Center on Thursday, January 18th from 1pm until 7pm, and on Friday, January 19th from 9am—1pm. Stop in, give blood and save lives. Refreshments will be available for all donors!

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

- P. 2 Worship volunteers, January Birthdays,
- P. 3 Thoughts from Pastor Maureen,
- P. 4 Faith Formation info, Women's Bible Study
- P. 5 Blood Drive reminder
- P. 6-7 Church Council Highlights, Treasurer's Report
- P. 8 Mark's Meditation

- P. 9 The Work of Christmas (by Howard Thurman)
- P. 10 Vasa Family Night
- P. 11 January Calendar





Worship Volunteers for JANUARY

USHER

January 7

January 14

January 21

January 28

READERS

January 8

January 15

January 22

January 29

HOSPITALITY

January 8

January 15

January 22

January 29

No, Emily didn't forget to fill in the schedule—but more volunteers are needed! Please take a moment to check your calendars and then sign up on the schedule in the gathering space! The new schedule will be emailed when there are more names. Thanks for making our worship complete.

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

January 7

January 21

A New Year's Challenge

Try saying this silently to everyone and everything you see for 30 days and see what happens to your soul:

"I wish you happiness now and whatever will bring happiness to you in the future."

(Joan D. Chittister)



7th Jay Mikaelsen

9th LaVonne Carlson

Jordan Fredin

Kennedy McCann

Kaelie Nelsen

11th Max Evanson

12th Ellie Gardiner

13th Paul Mikaelsen

14th Marissa Mandelkow

Tegan Nelsen

16th Sherri Broin

Breanne Soine

Andy Nelson

17th Amber Gesme

Terry Mandelkow

18th Vicki Weckerling

Gary Samuelson

19th Nathan Lindholm

Gracie Featherstone

21st Gail Strusz-Klein

Sara Parker

23rd Wally Gardiner

24th Ava Stehr

25th David Broin

Hettie Carlson

28th John Featherstone

Randy Lindholm

29th Sue Hedeen

Hailey Mann

Jason Pagel

31st Courtney Hovel

Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

As one year closes and a new year begins people experience a mix of emotions. This past year was a rough one for the Vasa community as we lived through the deaths of several beloved members of the congregation.

We like to think of a new year as something fresh, exciting, and filled with opportunities. I suspect that the question on the minds of those who are grieving is "how can I enter this new year without the loved one who is no longer a part of my life?" For those for whom the grief is close it is probably not yet time to move on. As a community we are called to act with compassion and give them all the support and time that they need.

The death of a loved one changes one's life forever. This new year will be no different. And it will be hard. And at times it will be lonely. But I am reminded of the words of the angel to Mary when he announced that she would conceive a child. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." "Do not be afraid." Bearing a child also changes one's life forever. Mary bravely stepped into this new role and in doing so set an example for all of us.

Mary may have had some vague ideas of what it would mean to raise this special baby but she almost certainly did not foresee all of the challenges and emotional turmoil

that she would participate in during his lifetime. In spite of the unknowns, Mary bravely nurtured the infant Jesus to maturity. Not only did she bear him, she also witnessed his death (as reported in John 19:25).

It seems to me that the beginning of a new year is often like this: filled with unknowns, and emotional turmoil, as well as an expectation for change. Some of the changes will be hard while others will be welcome. Some will be frightening and some will require bravery. The words of the angel are not just for Mary, they are also for us. "Do not be afraid."

For those who are looking into the future with deep uncertainty, I encourage you to consider carefully the second phrase in the angel's proclamation to Mary, "for you have found favor with God." Like Mary we are children of God. God delights in us. God loves us. God looks at us with favor. While the new year might be filled with unknowns, we can step forward in faith because we too, "have found favor with God."

May this new year remind you that you are the blessed ones of God,

Pastor Maureen





Bible Study for women



Sunday School resumes on Sunday January 7th at 9:00am in the Lutheran Center. We will return to the Friends and Heroes curriculum featuring the animated adventures of two friends, Macky and Portia.



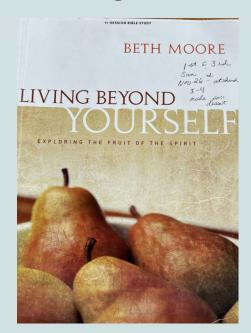
7th/8th Grade Confirmation Classes resume on Wednesday evening January 3rd at 5:45. We will study the Ten Commandments.



First Communion classes for current 5th graders begin March 3rd at 10:15am at the Lutheran Center. Mark your calendars!!

A note of appreciation...





Using the Workbook, Living Beyond Yourself, Vasa Women of All Ages and Stages are discovering how the Spirit of God lives within everyone and, more importantly, how cultivating the fruits of the spirit is dependent on one's relationship to God.

This Bible Study meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month from 9:30-11:00 at the Lutheran Center. All are welcome.



Every 2 seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood.

American Red Cross



Blood DriveVasa Lutheran Center

15235 Norelius Rd

Thursday, January 18, 2024 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Friday, January 19, 2024 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: vasa lutheran to schedule an appointment.





[74] - Order ID: 1599185 - Nem ID: 7372493 - Dty. 1 of 15 - 33354 - AR17 - 23881

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | redcrossblood.org | Download the Blood Donor App



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

Devotions: None

Members present and absent:

Present: Pastor Maureen Hagen, Bryan Diercks, President; Randy Klein, Vice President; Duane Hanson,

Kevin Eckblad, Missy McCann, Kent Volz, Mo Hauck

Eight voting members present

Unable to attend: Roger Guttromson, Ben Norman, Andrew Featherstone, Chris Finne, Barbara

Weigman

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for November 27, 2023 council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2023 council meeting with the change that the November date for the council meeting would be November 27, 2023.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

- Treasurer's Report (Attached)
 - a. Mission Investment Fund is officially closed
 - b. Church Upkeep Fund continues to grow
 - Food Shelf donations totaled \$1,245 and was matched by an anonymous donor
- Finance Report (Attached)
 - a. Organ was fixed
 - Insurance expense increase in 2024
- 3. Parish Life Report (Attached)
 - Confirmation was a success on Nov. 12, 2023
 - December Family Fun Night is "Caroling in the Village"
 - Goodhue County Social Services sponsors a Giving Tree—Vasa has 3 families
 - d. Christmas tree can be taken down any time after Jan. 7, 2024
- 4. Property Team Report (Attached)
 - a. Satellite was winterized
 - b. Kyle Gillis was hired to plow snow
 - c. Pews in the Lutheran Center hallway will be placed for sale
 - d. Bob Joseph is again shoveling the sidewalks
- Cemetery Board (NA)
- Executive Board Report (NA)

Church Council astor's Report (Attached) Highlights!

VASA CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

(CONTINUED)

Pastor will attend a class on Dec. 2, 2023 called Mental Health First Aid

- b. Confirmation classes will begin again in January
- c. Another new member Sunday will be held again soon
- Museum Board (NA)
- Endowment Committee (NA)

Tabled Business:

New Business:

Discussion concerning a portable speaker system for outdoor events Start discussion of upcoming budget for 2024 (prepare for December team meetings)

December Meetings:

Property: Monday, December 4th @ 4:00 pm Finance: Monday, December 4th @ 5:00 pm Parish Life: Monday, December 4th @ 6:00 pm

Council: Monday, December 18th @ 6:00 pm, Bryan has devotions

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:00 pm

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Report submitted by: Randy Klein, Vice President

		CHURCH COUNCIL				
VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH For the Month of November, 2023		President: Bryan Diercks Vice President: Randy Klein rdklein@mmm.com		507-259-3909 651-212-8045		
Checkbook Balance, November 1, 2023 General Fund Contributions: Total Funds Available Budget Approved Monthly Expenses: Checkbook Balance, November 30, 2023 \$63.616.55	\$ 69,131.88 9,528.65 78,660.53 15,043.98	rwfeatherstone Kevin Eckblad Chris Finne Lora Gruber Roger Guttron Duane Hanson Maureen Haue Missy McCanr Ben Norman Kent Volz	651-380-3690 51-212-3216 nson 651-308-6349 n 651-380-1763 ck 651-331-8593 n 651-307-2274 651-208-7124 651-402-0942	651-470-9823		
Mission Investment Fund, Nov. 1, 2023 Mission Investment Fund, Nov. 30, 2023	\$ 0.57 \$ 0.00	Barbara Weigman 507-202-7880 WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF E Indoors: Jim Hedeen Kitchen: Sue Hedeen Faye Drewianka Outdoors Duane Hanson Steve Hyllengren		MERGENCY 651-380-6054 651-380-6270 651-212-3209 651-380-1763 651-258-4338		



MARK'S MEDITATION

By Mark Hagen

WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

Have you ever noticed that there are two creation stories in the Bible? That there are two revelations to Jacob at Bethel; two versions of the Ten Commandments. That there are two versions of the history of the Judean kings? That there are four gospels, but only two of them tell of the birth of Jesus--and that those two stories are quite different. Have you noticed that there are two versions of the Lord's Prayer? This is not something we often teach in Sunday School.

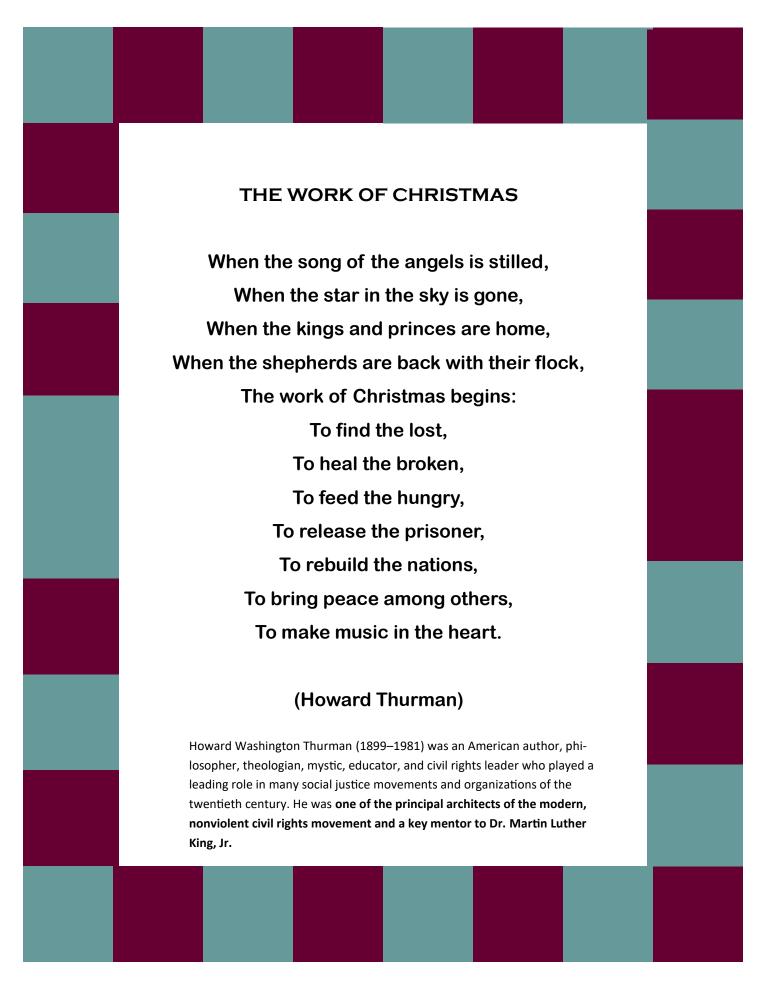
For a long time, the church taught that Moses wrote the Torah; the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. However, starting in the nineteenth century, scholars (primarily in Germany) began to look more deeply into the authorship of the 66 books in the Bible. They examined the grammar and vocabulary of these books in the original language of each book. (Hebrew for the Tora and Greek for the Gospels.) By looking carefully at the words each author chose to use, it appeared that many of the books of the bible had multiple authors. For the Torah, they could identify four different writing styles. These authors were labeled the Jahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly sources. This idea, that there were originally four independent documents which were later assembled by an editor is called the "documentary hypothesis."

Recently, biblical scholars have questioned the idea that the sources were independent. Dr. Jacob Wright in his recent book "Why the Bible Began" suggests that the process of assembling the Bible was a bit simpler. He suggests that, just like many modern books have a forward which offers commentary on the book, the different authored sections of the Bible were essentially forward commentaries on existing works. For instance, the first chapter of Genesis tells a cosmic story where an entity named God ("Elohim" in Hebrew) creates the heavens and the earth. Then the second chapter tells a different, human centered story of Adam and Eve. We think the second story is written by a different author because the second author addresses God as "the LORD" (Jehovah or Jahwe in German or YHWH in Hebrew) instead of Elohim.

What is going on here? Theologians propose that the Adam and Eve story is the older story. It describes the relationship between the Hebrews and "their" God. Later, the "Priestly" author wrote a forward. He is saying: Let me make this clear, the Jewish God is not just the God of the Hebrews, he is the God of *all creation. And to make his point he used the older, more universal, Canaanite title for God: Elohim.*

Do you need to know about the documentary hypothesis to get value out of reading the Bible? No. But it helps make sense of the contradictions you will find when you read Scripture carefully. Often, when people encounter these contradictions, they react by either rejecting faith in God all together, or by willfully ignoring them; claiming a literal, fundamentalist view of Scripture. That is too bad. Both assumptions are missing the forest for the trees. The "forest" in this case is the deep meaning behind the stories. (Not the contradictory detail in the trees.) What is that deep meaning? That God has unbounded love for us and has demonstrated it many times. And when we emulate His anointed son, we are richly blessed.





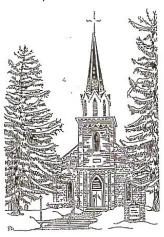


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Happy New Year!	9:30 Coffee and Conversation	5:30p Faith Formation 5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation 6:30p Wed Eve Worship		202	6
9AM Service of the Holy Communion (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Cen- ter)	8 TEAM MEETINGS 4PM Property 5PM Finance 6:00PM Parish Life	9:30 Coffee and Conversation	Wester Frankly Mark Towns (2019) Wester Frankly Mark (2019) Wester Frankly	11	Pastor's Day Off	13
9AM Service of The Word_(with Sunday School at the Lu- theran Center)	15	9:30 Coffee and Conversation	Faith Formation 5:30-6:30 5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	ANNUAL REPORTS DUE	Pastor's Day Off American Red Cross 9:00-1:00	20
9AM Service of Holy Communion (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Cen- ter)	6PM CHURCH COUNCIL	9:30 Coffee and Conversation	Faith Formation 5:30-6:30 5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	25	26 Pastor's Day Off	27
9AM Service of the Word (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)	6:30PM ENDOWMENT TEAM	9:30 Coffee and Conversation	Faith Formation 5:30-6:30 5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	1	Pastor's Day Off	3

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
Emily Peterson, Office Administrator
Melissa McCann, Custodian
Anne Anderson, Worship Accompanist
Gail Strusz-Klein, Wedding Coordinator
Paul & Jay Mikaelsen, Missionaries in La Paz Bolivia Contact: pmikaelsen@gmail.com

Website: www.caranavi.net/rtc.htm

Vasa Mission Statement

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