

The Vasa Voice



VOLUME 61 No. 12



DECEMBER 2025

What's Happening This Month at Vasa

December 10— Vasa Family Fun Night 5:30 PM

See page 5 for details!

December 21—Children's Christmas Program

The 2025 Children's Christmas program will be held at the Lutheran Center at 10:00am. Dress Rehearsal will be that same morning at 8:45am. Remaining practices are on Sunday Dec 7 and Dec 14 during Sunday School.

Following the program, there will be a meal. Families with last names A-N will be asked to bring egg bakes and families with last names O-Z will be asked to bring fruit or juice. Cinnamon rolls will be provided on behalf of Sue H.

December 24—Christmas Eve Worship

Christmas Eve Worship services will be held at 2:00pm and 5:00pm on December 24, with coffee and Christmas treats between services.



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

P. 2 Worship volunteers, December Birthdays, Emily's Thank You Note

P. 3 Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

P. 4 Gather the Goods

P. 5 December Vasa Family Night

P. 6 Church Council Highlights,

P. 7 Treasurer's Report, Women's Bible Study, Vasa Bazaar Update

P. 8 Mark's Meditation

P. 9 Advent Meditation

P. 10 Confirmation and All Saints Photos

P. 11 December Calendar



Worship Volunteers for DECEMBER

USHER

December 7	Duane Hanson
December 14	Rick Samuelson
December 21	Marvin Fredrickson
December 24	To Be Announced
December 28	To Be Announced

READERS

December 7	Jeannette Anderson
December 14	Barry Skog
December 21	CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
December 24	Mo Hauck
December 28	To Be Announced

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

December 7	To Be Announced
December 21	Teresa Schmidt
December 24	Barry Skog

HOSPITALITY

December 7	Kent Volz
December 14	To Be Announced
December 21	CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
December 24	To Be Announced
December 28	Audrey Rosener

Dear People of Vasa,

There are not enough words to convey my gratitude for your very warm sendoff on November 9. When we moved to Connan Falls in 2016 we spent the next several years restoring our old (1870s) barn and building the houses for us and my parents. Because of how busy we were we didn't have many opportunities to meet people. But that all changed in 2019 when I discovered Vasa. In the years since, getting to know all of you was just what I needed to really make Southeast Minnesota my new community. I promise I will not be a stranger and I hope to see many of you again in the months and years to come

With thanksgiving for your friendship,

Emily



2	Nikki O'Connor
8	Andrea Gillis
9	Dahmon Romness Chris Weigman Iris Volz
12	Samantha Wetzstein Ashton Anderson Weston Anderson
13	Boedy Sense
14	Deb Donath Dustin Lindstrom
15	Melanie Carlson
16	Randy Klein Shirley Hedeem
19	Sandy Wollschlager
20	Sharon Olson
21	Andrea Mandelkow
22	Mark Hagen
23	Duane Lindstrom
27	Katie Featherstone
28	Joe Wollschlager Audrey Hyllengren Samuel Gesme
31	James Josephson Bruce Olson Jerry Rietmann Stuart Samuelson

Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

Recently I came across a passage from *Forgotten among the Lilies* by Ronald Rolheiser. He wrote: "We need a theology of brokenness. We need a theology which teaches us that even though we cannot unscramble an egg, God's grace lets us live happily and with renewed innocence far beyond any egg we may have scrambled. We need a theology that teaches us that God does not just give us one chance, but that every time we close a door, he opens another one for us."

In Acts 9:2 Saul is persecuting "followers of the Way." The phrase "the Way" is a very early reference to a group of disciples striving to follow Jesus' teachings. This first reference leads us to remember the persecution and challenges those early believers struggled with as they tried to faithfully follow Jesus' Way. Surely they failed at times. Surely they bowed to societal pressure. Surely they felt deep regret and sorrow over their failures. I'm confident that they believed in a "God [that] does not just give us one chance but....[continually] opens another one for us."

My friends, we have a God of grace. We are loved by a God who provides us with unending opportunities to follow the Way. Yes, there are times when we must suffer the earthly consequences for poor choices. But these consequences never separate us from God.

Bob, the father of four year old Sam, recently told the following story. Sam had done something that broke family rules and he needed to understand that the choices he made were wrong. As Bob put it, "Sam needed to know he absolutely could not do this again." So Bob put Sam on the time-out chair. Sam hated it. He sobbed loudly. But dad knew that this consequence was necessary for Sam to learn a

life lesson. Bob also said that he sat nearby waiting with Sam to finish his time. And when the time was up, Sam was free to leave his chair and resume his four year old life.

Sometimes from God's perspective we are like young children making bad choices. As a result we find ourselves in complicated and messy life situations. And yes, I realize that sometimes those messy life situations had nothing to do with our choices; that they occurred as a result of other people's choices. Whatever the case, that's when it can feel like we are "on God's time-out chair." It can feel like God is far, far away and angry with us. The consequences can feel like more than we can bear. That's when the final sentence in this quote resonates most strongly: "God does not just give us one chance, but every time we close a door, he opens another one for us."

Our God is a God of love; a God of grace; a God who provides a never ending supply of open doors for our benefit. Amen, let it be so!

Blessings to you,

Pastor Maureen

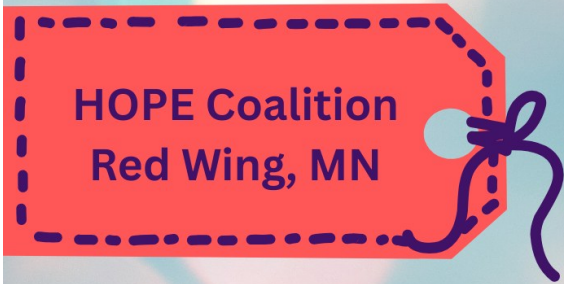


Gather the Goods

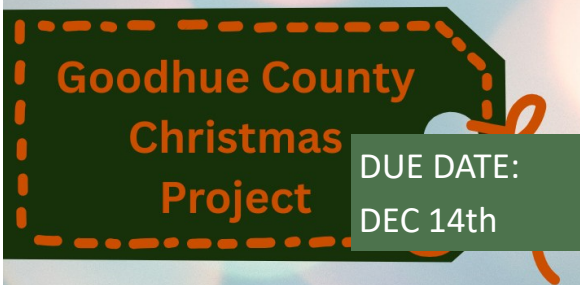
This December, join us in showing the generosity of Vasa Lutheran Church by participating in one of these multiple opportunities to bless individuals and families in our community. Pick a color coordinated tag on the giving tree to support our community. This “Gather the Goods” drive will continue through December 24th.



Valley View Recovery Center is an addiction and mental health treatment facility in Cannon Falls. We are collecting clean and gently used Men’s winter coats, shoes, and socks. Items need not be new.



HOPE Coalition is a Women’s Shelter in Red Wing. We are collecting cleaning supplies, dish soap, sponges, baby wipes, paper towels, toilet paper, laundry detergent, sanitizing wipes, and feminine products.



Goodhue County Christmas Project blesses low-income families in the county with Christmas gifts. Vasa has “adopted” two families this year.



Donate items for the local food shelves, or give a cash donation. All cash donations will be matched by two generous donors. This means a \$5 cash gift will become \$15!

Vasa Family Night

Wednesday, December 10th

5:30-7:00 pm

Vasa Lutheran Center

Fruit of the Spirit: PATIENCE

Please join us for a
Celebration of Advent:

We will sing the Holden Evening
Prayer and Christmas Carols

Fun Activities for the Kids

A Lasagna meal will be served



"YOU ARE CALLED TO LIVE WITH HUMILITY, GENTLENESS, AND PATIENCE." EPHESIANS 4:2



VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

October 13, 2025 @ Lutheran Church

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

Devotions: Andrew Featherstone

Members present and absent:

Present: Bryan Diercks, President; Randy Klein, Vice President; Kent Volz; Mo Hauck; Sue Samuelson; and Andrew Featherstone, Secretary;
6 voting members present

Unable to attend: Pastor Maureen Hagen, Pastor; Missy McCann; Barbara Weigman; Tim Carlson; and Chris Finne;

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the October 13, 2025 council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2025 council meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

Treasurer's Report (Attached)

The remaining money in Decorating Monies for sanctuary remodeling will be moved to be used for church windows.

We have enough money in fuel fund to get thru 2025 but will need donations for 2026.

Finance Report (Attached)

A candidate to replace the office administrator, Preston Parks, applied to replace Emily. The committee agreed that Pastor should offer the position to him and that he will start October 14th, 2025.

Joe plans to complete one additional stained glass window beyond the current window in progress. Sufficient funds are available to cover that cost.

Parish Life (Attached)

Family Fun Night will be on November 12th.

Children's Christmas Program is set for December 21st at 10:00AM in the Lutheran Center gym.

After Christmas it has been agreed on that we will worship in the Lutheran Center for January, February, and March except for the last Sunday of March which is Palm Sunday.

Advent meals will take place December 3, 10, and 17 at 5:30PM with Advent service to follow at about 6:00PM. This will take place at the Lutheran Center.

Property Team (Attached)

Robot vacuum is set up at the church now.

Lutheran Center furnaces have been serviced by Smith Heating. They all looked like they were in good condition.

Cemetery Board (NA)

Executive Board Report (NA)

Pastor's Report (Attached)

When the ELCA met for the national assembly in July of 2025, changes occurred in the model constitution. The Church Constitution hasn't been revised since 2016 and it's time to make revisions so as to be agreement with the national church. Pastor asked Randy Klein and Kent Volz to go over Vasa's constitution knowing there would be changes needed. The goal is to have it ready for the Annual Meeting.

There have been no baptisms since early May. There is a baptism tentatively scheduled for November 23rd.

Museum Board (NA)

Pancake breakfast will be held on October 25th between 9:00 and 11:00.

Endowment Board Report (NA)

Tabled Business: Relocation of Radio Caranavi Money- We agree to reallocate the \$1,500 to Luketekelo Faith Foundation. Kathy will issue a check before Grace leaves for Zambia.

New Business:

November meeting Dates: (Tentative schedule)

Property: Monday November 3rd @4:00pm

Finance: Monday November 3rd @5:00pm

Parish Life: Monday November 10th @5:30pm

Council: Monday November 10th @6:00pm

Devotions: Pastor Maureen

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 6:50 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Report submitted by: Andrew Featherstone, Secretary



The Ages and Stages Women's Bible Study group will meet on December 5 from 9:30-11:00, in the fellowship room of the Lutheran Center. We will meet again on December 17, same place and time, but at this meeting we will have a Christmas party with a small gift exchange. Please bring a wrapped "white elephant" gift to share! All are welcome!

CHRISTMAS
Joy ✨

Thank You!

Thank you to all who came and supported the Vasa Bazaar either through the bake sale, or the table donations. The Vasa Bazaar was able to raise \$2,115 that will be used to support the Stained Glass Window Repair/Restoration Project.

VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
 Treasurer's Report
 Oct 30, 2025

For the Month of October:

Checkbook Balance, Oct 1, 2025	\$ 68,515.23
General Fund Contributions:	9,343.58
Total Funds Available	77,858.81
Budget Approved Monthly Expenses:	<u>(16,832.34)</u>
Checkbook Balance, Oct 30, 2025	\$ 61,026.47

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

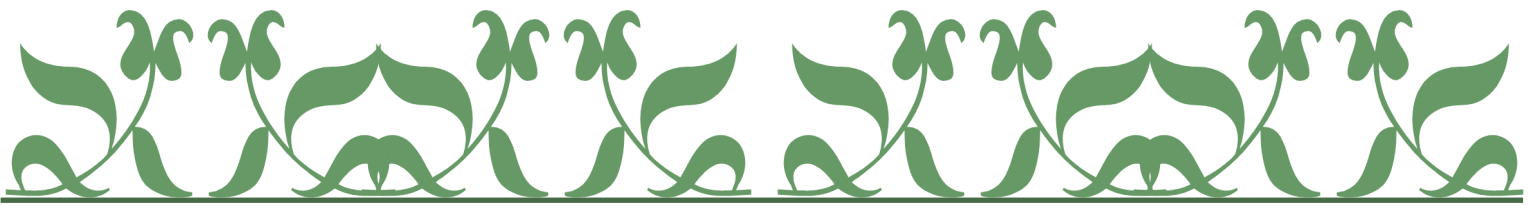
- Tim Carlson 651-442-5066
- Chris Finne 651-380-3690
- Maureen Hauck 651-331-8593
- Missy McCann 651-307-2274
- Sue Samuelson 907-250-4103
- Kent Volz 651-402-0942
- Barbara Weigman 507-202-7880

WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Indoors: Andrew Featherstone 651-470-9823

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

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



MARK'S MEDITATION

BY MARK HAGEN

Two Christmas Stories

December 2025

Soon, the youth at Vasa will present their annual Christmas program. I'm looking forward to it, partially because this will be the first time we will use the video streaming desk I constructed last spring. I'm not involved with the program content, but I'm pretty sure we will see Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds, wise men from the East, and maybe a trip to Egypt.



The story our youth will tell is a "harmonization" of the text in two of the Gospels: Matthew and Luke. It is comfortable to combine these two stories into a single narrative; the result is easily digestible for young minds. But the two stories are very different. When we conflate them, we risk losing sight of a significant portion of what each author is trying to say. So, let's look at what can we learn when we examine the differences.

Both texts include a genealogy. But they are different. Matthew connects Jesus to Abraham through David's royal line; making Jesus thoroughly Jewish and a fulfillment of that prophesy. Luke connects Jesus all the way back to Adam. Jesus, says Luke, is a messiah for all, not just Israel.

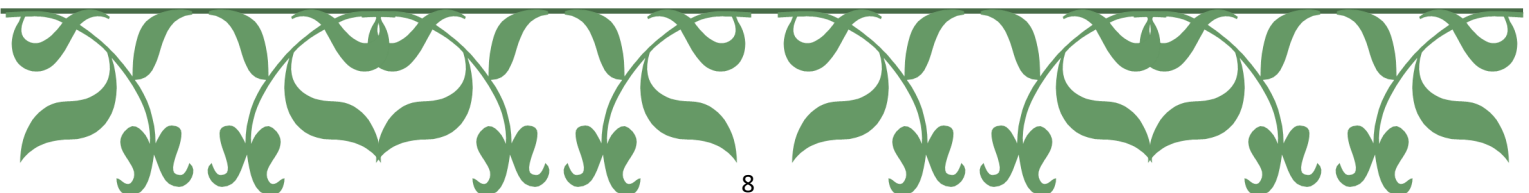
Notice also who gets the birth announcement. In Matthew, God speaks to Joseph in a dream, maintaining a patriarchal (Jewish) convention. Luke has the angel Gabriel speak directly to Mary, a young, unmarried woman with no social standing. Here again, Luke is widening the scope of Jesus' earthly mission.

Matthew wants to make the point that Jesus is the new Moses. Herod is a stand-in for Pharaoh. The "massacre of the innocents" is meant to parallel the plagues in Egypt. Mary and Joseph's flight to, and return from, Egypt is meant to parallel the Jewish Exodus. Jesus, says Matthew, is Jewish Royalty. Luke chooses to acknowledge Jesus' humble origins.

Finally, look at who shows up. Matthew brings in Persian astrologers, following cosmic signs, to proclaim who Jesus is. Luke brings into the story lowly shepherds. In so doing, Luke wants to make it clear that Jesus is the savior of all people, not just of Judea.

When we tell the Christmas story, we need to understand that this is literature, not history. In fact, the beloved nativity story in Luke chapters 1 and 2 appears to be a late addition; as Luke's narrative resets and starts over in chapter 3. Both Matthew and Luke have an important message they want to tell. To do so, they crafted stories of the nativity to convey this message.

As you watch the Christmas program this year, try to look past the stable creche; the angels, shepherds and wise men. That is just a story. Look to Jesus, in whom God is made fully human; born of a woman; one of us!



ADVENT

Meta Herrick Carlson

Speak it plain: words for worship and life together

The sacred call "Prepare!"
Does not ask for lists or logistics.
We do not "Keep Awake!" only to ensure
We are not forgotten at the rapture.
Nor is the stillness sedentary.

So do not simply go looking
For a candle scent to capture
What it means to Ponder,
Or a gift to prove your Love,
Or a tall tree to announce,
"Joy to the World!"

Advent lays bare visions of time bending
Into already and not yet,
By the God who tears apart
The hustle, the heavens, the temple curtain!
With no intention of mending
Back together our favored boundaries.

This is the thin space where
Stillness is powerful and God is changing our
hearts,
So sacred Ponder, Love, and Joy
Can birth and shelter.

The miracle grows with slow strength
In the one place we have all called home
Where we do not yet know another way,
While our fullness is being prepared,
Carried, and nourished by
The One who says, "Yes."














All Saints

NOV. 2025



CONGRATULATIONS TO : Marissa Mandelkow, Bella Otto, and Kennedy McCann who affirmed their faith on November 16!

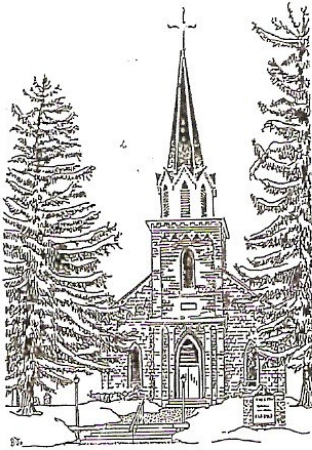


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2  9:30	3 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	4  Poinsettia Orders Due by NOON	5 Pastor's Day Off All Stages Women's Bible Study 9:30- 11:00am	6
7 9AM Second Sunday of Advent worship with Holy Commu- ion (Sunday School @ Lutheran Center -Christmas Pro- gram rehearsal)	8 TEAM MEETINGS 4PM Property 5PM Finance	9  9:30	10 VASA FAMILY NIGHT!	11	12 Pastor's Day Off	13
14 9AM Third Sunday of Advent Worship (Sunday School @ Lutheran Center – Christmas Program rehearsal)	15 5PM Parish Life 6PM CHURCH COUNCIL	16  9:30	17 All Stages Women's Bible Study 9:30- 11:00am 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	18	19 Pastor's Day Off	20
21 10:00AM Fourth Sunday of Advent worship— Children's Christ- mas Program at LC	22	23  9:30	24  Christmas Eve Worship 2:00 & 5:00 PM	25 THE JOY OF CHRIST MAS 	26 Pastor's Day Off NO SCHEDULED EVENTS AT THE LC	27
28 9AM Service of the Word	29	30  9:30	31 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship			

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!